

Language Policy for the IB Diploma Programme at Deutsche Schule Izmir

As an accredited German school abroad with currently around 180 students, we teach according to the German curriculum of the state of Baden-Württemberg in both primary and secondary school up to grade 10. The language of instruction is German throughout the curriculum. English is the second language in German school programmes and is given high priority as a basic qualification for all our students and is taught from Grade 5.

As a German school abroad, our mission is to provide a learning environment that teaches German values, culture and language, and provides students with a comprehensive education that goes beyond language acquisition. We aim to cultivate a strong sense of cultural understanding while promoting proficiency in the German language, which serves as both a gateway to academic success and a means of connecting with the global German-speaking community. From Grade 11 on, we prepare our students for the Gemischtsprachiges International Baccalaureate (GIB).

Our students basically come from two different backgrounds: The children of German businessmen or members of the German NATO contingent temporarily based in Izmir and the children of German Turkish families, who have close (cultural) ties to Germany. All students at DSI need to be German citizens to be permitted to attend our school. Parents want to ensure that their children are provided with a high-quality education based on the German curriculum, allowing their children to return to Germany for subsequent studies or apprenticeships.

For some students German is their mother tongue, whereas the rest are bilingual (German and Turkish). As a result, the German skills of our students are rather heterogeneous. This situation leads to a high degree of differentiation and makes this principle an absolute prerequisite for teaching in order to meet the very different potentials.

Language Philosophy

In alignment with the IBO's philosophy of international mindedness, we aim to foster global awareness, respect for diverse cultures, and the ability to communicate effectively in multiple languages. Our language policy supports inquiry-based learning, enabling students to not only acquire language skills but also use them as tools to critically engage with the world around them. Students should develop critical thinking, research, collaboration, creative thinking and organisational skills. They should be able to transfer the information and skills they have learnt to other subject areas. All these skills should be written and oral.

By emphasizing the importance of German and English as a language of academic and cultural exchange, we prepare our students to thrive in a globalized society, rooted in the values of understanding, tolerance, and open-mindedness. As a school, we promote multilingualism, intercultural understanding, and academic excellence. We have to create an environment where they are tolerant and respectful to other cultures to enhance learning, open to exchange their ideas and feel comfortable to discuss.

To help our students "create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" (IB Mission Statement), the importance of language proficiency cannot be overstated. At DSI, our goal is for all students to develop strong language skills. We also prioritize promoting multilingualism as a means of fostering intercultural understanding and global engagement. In doing so, we support students in maintaining their mother tongue while acquiring additional languages (English, French and Turkish). As a school, we strive to create an inclusive environment where language is seen as a valuable resource for learning. We want to enable students to express themselves fluently and accurately in various situations in written and spoken German, English and Turkish.

Building on the idea of our students as "Thinkers," it is essential to recognize that language is the primary medium through which intellectual exploration occurs. Moreover, as we view our students as "Communicators" in an increasingly international community, we place a high priority on fostering their proficiency in German, English and Turkish.

At the DSI we use Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to support the language development of every student. This means that we have focal subjects in which special attention is given to the language used to teach the subject content ("Deutscher Fachunterricht").

In pursuit of this goal, every teacher at our school assumes the role of a German language teacher and a model of linguistic excellence, committed to continuous improvement—both their own and that of their students. This requires special attention in all communication situations, along with practical strategies for addressing errors and uncertainties, without derailing or discouraging speakers. A key practice at DSI is that in non-language classes, spelling and wording errors in written tests are marked and corrected, but they do not affect the test results (unless related to subject-specific vocabulary or terminology).

Simultaneously, the school cultivates an atmosphere where differences are embraced, and all members of the school community—students, staff, parents, and others—feel accepted, regardless of cultural, national, religious, or family background. We encourage students also to develop their mother tongue, recognizing its importance for cognitive development and cultural identity, for example, by collaborating with parents and community members to support language development outside the classroom. Or provide access to resources, such as books and digital materials, in various languages.

Turkish Language Instruction at the DSI

Research presents various positive results and experiences that children and adolescents growing up bilingual or multilingual are superior to their peers in terms of concentration, divergent thinking, and linguistic creativity. Therefore, children and adolescents benefit significantly from being raised with more than one language from an early age. The school can leverage this advantage for itself and its students, serving not only as a suitable place for encountering a foreign language but also playing a significant role by providing high contact hours and enabling regular application in the establishment of early bilingualism and multilingualism.

Turkish is an important pillar of the language policy of the DSI and interacts with the areas of German in subject classes and the foreign language subjects English and French. There are connections to all these areas through the cross-sectional task of linguistic education, and it is essential to create and utilize synergies through cooperation to improve linguistic competencies and, consequently, academic performance.

For some learners, Turkish is the mother tongue, while for others, it is a foreign language that can become a second language with longer stays and support from the school and home. Initially, the focus is on improving the language knowledge of learners in Turkish (as a second and foreign language), which is beneficial for overall linguistic development and can positively support academic learning. However, the centre of Turkish instruction is language proficiency, which can also serve as a place for intercultural learning and encounters. Building linguistic, cultural, and country-specific competencies enables students to find a living and working context in both cultural spheres.

Overview of Learning Offers for Turkish

Classes are divided into two groups in Turkish instruction as native and foreign language speakers.

Grades 1-4: Two lessons per week. Playful approach, especially for foreign language learners.

Grades 5-10: Differentiated instruction from the orientation stage (grade 5); classes 5 and 6, 7 and 8, 9 and 10 are taught together for two hours a week but separated as native and foreign language speakers.

Grades 11-12: In the GiB system, further Turkish knowledge is built up as needed, especially for essay research and CAS activities.

Turkish is included as an independent subject in the school curriculum and is documented on the bi-annual school report card of every student.

It is important to note, however, that the subject is “nicht versetzungsrelevant”, meaning that Turkish is not relevant for a student’s potential promotion or demotion.

Language development

According to the IB principle, all teachers are equally responsible for the language development of pupils. It’s a very powerful tool for young people learning other languages and we will institutionalise procedures to support language learning.

We recognise that each student's language learning journey is unique. To meet different needs, we will develop individual language support plans for students who need additional support and for those who are more advanced. This ensures that students receive the right level of challenge and support.

To provide students with authentic language experiences, we will expand our cultural exchange programmes and promote partnerships with schools in countries where the target languages German and English are spoken. This will allow students to immerse themselves in the real world of the language through exchange programmes, virtual collaborations or summer language camps.

To support students in their language development, we have introduced digital tools such as language learning apps, interactive platforms and online resources for vocabulary building and grammar practice in the English language classroom.

We have introduced frequent formative language assessments, such as quizzes, oral presentations and journal entries, to measure language development and provide timely feedback. These assessments will allow students to adjust their learning strategies accordingly.

We offer extra-curricular activities such as drama clubs, debate societies and literary competitions in both German and English, allowing students to use their language skills in creative and engaging ways.

Languages of Instruction in the GIB

The GIB programme is bilingual, with German and English serving as the languages of instruction. Students are expected to demonstrate academic proficiency in both languages to succeed across all subject areas. Additional support is provided for students who require assistance to meet these expectations.

All students are required to study Language A: German Language and Literature (HL) and English B (HL).

Additional languages may be offered based on demand and available resources, for example French or Spanish ab initio.

Among the 6 subjects we offer in the IB;

2 are **taught in English**

- Group 2: Language B (English)
- Group 4: Sport, exercise and health science

OR

- Group 6: Theater

and 4 are **taught in German**

- Group 1: Language A (German)
- Group 3: History
- Group 4: Biology
- Group 5: Mathematics