ISV Language Policy

In line with the Vision, Mission and Aims of International School of Vietnam, this Language Policy document is designed to give a dear and concise description of the role of language in our school.

ISV Vision
The International School of Vietnam aspires to nurture, empower and connect students with their local and global communities, to become international citizens who are active, compassionate and life-long learners.

ISV Mission
The International School of Vietnam empowers and inspires students to become active, lifelong learners by providing a challenging, globally relevant curriculum that meets the needs of individual learners.

Our holistic and balanced approach nurtures each student’s potential and inquiring mind. We foster international-mindedness by connecting students to local and global communities towards awareness and sustainable action.

Aims
• Provide transferable education appropriate to international students.
• Teach and learn conceptually through inquiry based units.
• Ensure quality assurance of all aspects of our school.
• Provide a first class, safe and healthy learning environment.
• Promote the internationally-minded values of the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile.
• Provide highly qualified, caring teachers who challenge students to develop intellectually, physically and socially to reach their fullest potential.
• Encourage engagement with the language, history, culture and society of the host community of Hanoi and Vietnam.
• Enable students to grow in self-esteem and self-confidence.
• Nurture - Empower - Connect all stakeholders of our community to the concept of international mindedness.

Overview
At the International School of Vietnam, we believe that ‘high quality learning thrives in an environment of tolerance, respect and cultural and linguistic diversity’. We acknowledge that language is fundamental to learning and permeates all subject areas; with learning and language being inextricably bound, the responsibility of this language policy belongs to every teacher.

ISV teachers collaboratively plan instruction in developmentally appropriate ways, which are reflective about curriculum and instruction, scaffold teaching in response to formal and informal assessment of students’ progress and model for students how to learn.

Nurture - Empower - Connect
Roles within our Learning Community

**What are the roles of the ISV pedagogical leadership team and the language specialists?**
A responsibility of ISV’s pedagogical leadership team is to support teachers. The PYP coordinator manages issues regarding curriculum, instructional techniques, assessment and student progress.

ISV language specialists (Vietnamese, EAL, etc) have knowledge of language development, culture, grade-level subject matter, instructional resources, and assessment tools. The specialists set out to reach the following goals:
- Promote effective language teaching and assessment practices
- Nurture the articulation of language expectations in all curricula and programmes
- Work with the pedagogical leadership team to enhance the language programmes

**What are the roles of ISV staff?**
Since learning and language are inextricably bound, the responsibility for the implementation of this language policy belongs to every teacher.
Specific facilitating behaviours include:
- Acquiring a professional knowledge base in additional language acquisition processes, students’ developmental language behaviours and familiarity with students’ language learning cognitive styles
- Integrating language instruction with content instruction
- Providing responsive learning conditions as recommended by the IB and Cambridge (activating background knowledge, scaffolding meaning, extending language, and affirming identity)
- Giving strategic feedback to students and parents on their linguistic and cognitive development
- Holding high language and academic expectations for all students
- Involving parents in the language and academic development of their children

**What is the role of the ISV community?**
A number of parental actions will facilitate language and academic success for ISV students. They include:
- Having a positive attitude towards English, Vietnamese, French and their mother tongues
- Modeling how much is to be gained by learning languages (other than mother tongue)
- Maintaining mother tongue literacy skills in the home
- Encouraging and emotionally supporting their children’s additional language acquisition and schooling efforts
- Supplying mother tongue materials in the home
- Having realistic expectations of their children and their school
- Sharing mother tongue resources such as books and games
- Promoting your mother tongue in school through storytelling an games with students during special school events

Parent involvement is integral to student success. The importance of ho school communication cannot be over-emphasized, and volunteering or providing assistance at school is always welcome.
Statement of Philosophy

English Language Arts
ISV is an English medium school, as such, all lessons, apart from other language courses, will be in English. We believe that all teachers at ISV are language teachers and that teachers and parents play an important role in language development. ISV has an open door English language admissions policy in the PYP, up to the second grade. Students entering ISV after the Grade 2 level must meet specifics in the ISV language entrance criteria.

Through language development, students are given the tools they need to interpret the world around them. Language is also a major component in encouraging understanding and tolerance of other culture groups and perspectives.

At ISV, English Language Arts is taught in context and addresses the following strands: speaking and listening, reading, writing, and viewing/presenting (media literacy). Instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of individuals. Language teaching occurs with the understanding that students bring their own unique cultural backgrounds to any new situation.

Teaching Methods
By integrating language into every aspect of the curriculum, ISV is teaching students the importance of culture, diversity, and sensitivity towards others, which in turn enhances their personal growth, cognitive development, and facilitates international understanding. Through the strong emphasis on language, the school’s goal is to foster a deep understanding about language and a love of literature.

Teachers are expected to offer conceptually based programmes that takes the language needs of the students into account. All teachers are required to attend professional development and to be responsible for ensuring EAL development is considered when carrying out curriculum planning. The EAL teacher(s) will support class teachers and will take part in collaborative planning. They will also help to prepare resources for the language needs of students and to incorporate appropriate content in their lessons.

Mother tongue and additional language learners
In Pre K to K2, the focus on language development for all students caters for the needs of EAL learners alongside those of native speakers. From Grade 1 to Grade 9, our qualified EAL teacher(s) as required will support students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Language acquisition is a developmental process that needs to be supported. While students are encouraged to use the language of instructions to include all students, the home language may be used at the teacher’s discretion to support learning, according to the age, maturity and confidence of the individual student.

By identifying our mother tongue language populations, we are able to inform our teachers and staff so that we can strengthen our learning community and integrate languages into instruction, specific to students needs. Students that are in need of additional services will be identified at the beginning of the school year or when the student enters ISV. In line with the
'Admission Policy’, the English proficiency test will be given to incoming students from Grade 2 and above. For incoming Grade 2 students, the proficiency test will be used to inform the homeroom and specialist teachers, but will have no impact on admissions.

For incoming Grade 3 students and above, the admissions test may have an impact on admissions.

Additional support for Grades 1 students and above may include: differentiated instruction in class; in class support with the EAL teacher; identified student may be pulled out for one-on-one instruction with the EAL; or all of or any combination of the aforementioned.

Students identified as in need of additional support will be tracked weekly by the EAL teacher and the classroom teacher, followed by a termly evaluation meeting to assess level of student progress and to determine if less, additional, or the same amount of support is needed for the coming term.

Diversity is something that is highly valued at ISV and having support systems in place to meet the needs of our learners from non-English speaking countries is a school priority. However, if a student has been attending ISV for two full academic years and is not progressing as expected, demonstrating an inability to access the curriculum adequately, then the parents of the students will be informed that there might be a limit to what ISV can offer. At this point, other educational institutions may be identified for more suited tuition towards their child’s needs.

Host Country Language For Students Learning Vietnamese

What is our host country language policy?
Learning languages at an early age opens one’s mind to learning about other cultures, sharpens one’s perception and promotes creative and critical thinking. Collaborative work is actively encouraged among students. In the Vietnamese class, students express ideas and explore concepts using Vietnamese; learning the language is not an end in itself.
• Students should be actively involved, feel successful and enjoy the learning experience
• Students are encouraged to take risks in Vietnamese, overcome obstacles, and accept mistakes as part of the learning process
• The ability to communicate in Vietnamese is of importance
• Learning a new language is a window to different world cultures and a path towards international-mindedness
• We acknowledge that acquiring fluency in Vietnamese requires 5-8 years of consistent exposure
• We support students wishing to deepen the knowledge of their mother tongue

What is the role of Vietnamese?
The primary focus of Vietnamese teaching at ISV is the learning of Vietnamese as an additional language. Learning Vietnamese takes on special significance as it is the language of our host country. Students study Vietnamese to gain the communication skills, both in oral and written language, to deal with familiar and practical needs for future study, work and leisure. In addition, through the teaching of Vietnamese, and through links to Vietnamese culture across
the curriculum, students develop an appreciation of our host country’s culture as well as an awareness of different perspectives. The learning of Vietnamese at ISV seeks to instill an enduring interest in Vietnamese culture alongside a lifelong enthusiasm for language learning. Mother tongue language speakers will receive differentiated instruction within the Vietnamese programme.

**Teaching Methods**

To implement the overall purpose of learning Vietnamese at ISV, a variety of teaching methods and strategies are used. These strategies address the essential elements of the PYP. The Vietnamese programme gives students practical real life language skills, which can be used outside of the classroom. Students are provided with meaningful and authentic speaking and listening, reading, writing, viewing/presenting (media literacy) tasks. Through these tasks, students develop confidence to use the language in their daily lives.

Vietnamese lessons will be offered to students from Kindergarten 2 to Grade 9. There will be Vietnamese lessons for native-speakers and non-native speakers. All students who are Vietnamese passport holders are required, by the government, to take Vietnamese classes.

**French as an Additional Language**

French is offered in other many international schools around the world, and is the second most widely taught foreign language after English. It continues to be one of the official working language in many global organizations. Learning French is also relevant in the Vietnamese context because of their historical connections. Consequently, at ISV, we also offer French for Grade 1 to 9 students.

Students that are non-Vietnamese passport holders may select either Vietnamese or French classes for their additional language learning area.

**Reviewing the Language Policy**

ISV recognises that it is important to remain abreast with best international learning practices. With this in mind, the ISV Language policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis. The next review will be on October 2016.