

# Udon Thani International School

## Language Policy

### Rationale

*'Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom.'* (Ritchhart 2002: 141)

Language lies at the centre of all learning at UDIS and the language policy outlines how we develop language for the learners of our school.

### Purpose:

#### UDIS language philosophy statement

We align our UDIS language philosophy to the four strands of our mission for the school while acknowledging that every teacher needs to be a language teacher to teach the language that is important to their discipline.

1. We enquire using a well-designed curriculum within a safe and caring environment where we inspire growth socially, emotionally, physically and academically.

Language is at the heart of all student learning and is fundamental to our inquiry framework as it is a basic tool of inquiry, communication and understanding. Language is acquired over time and is the fundamental glue that holds the curriculum together. Each subject has its own specific language and vocabulary, which should be displayed in the class (should be displayed in more than one language to help develop mother tongue), and that can be learned.

2. We make a difference in the world through problem solving at every level by respecting and taking responsibility for ourselves, others and the environment.

Global citizenship is an integral part of the UDIS mission and we believe environmental stewardship is the responsibility of every global citizen. As a school, we support sustainability and foster this consciousness in our students as well as an awareness of the language associated with sustainability. It is therefore imperative that students are equipped with the language skills to achieve this.

3. We actively learn about different cultures, respect, appreciate and celebrate diversity, while taking action to become global citizens.

Language is critical to developing and maintaining cultural identity and to learning about the culture of others. We believe that it is important for our learners to continue their language development in their MT as we believe this supports their development in English. We believe that by valuing and supporting the mother tongues in our school as best we can, that we are achieving our goal of intercultural awareness and understanding of other cultures.

4. We challenge ourselves to achieve our potential by empowering a diverse set of skills while celebrating success wherever it occurs.

Acknowledgement and recognition should be given to students when they succeed or make progress in language areas. Teachers can acknowledge students in the class, at assemblies or at other important functions that are appropriate. Inform the parents of a child's success or growth on a regular basis allowing the parents to get involved.

## Guidelines:

### Definition of terms:

EAL	English as an Additional Language
IEP	Individual Education Plan
L1	First language, or mother tongue. This may not be the language in which a student is most academically competent
L2	Second language; for the purposes of this document the term usually designates English where English is not a student's mother tongue, but may also mean Thai.
Language A	Language studied as the student's home language, usually the mother-tongue language.
Language B	Language studied as the student's second language where the student is not studying two Languages (A).
Push-in	EAL specialist teachers accompany EAL students to mainstream classes. EAL specialists work in collaboration with the mainstream teachers to scaffold and deconstruct language thus rendering the content more accessible to the EAL students.
Pull-out	EAL specialist teachers teach a parallel curriculum to EAL students in a sheltered environment.
MT	Mother Tongue

# Languages at UDIS

## Admissions

To aid the development of English as the common language across the school, the school places a cap on admission of students who require English language support. The admissions cap limits students requiring high level EAL support at no more than 30% of the approved class size limits.

## Language of instruction:

At UDIS, students are supported in their development of English through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) policy. As we recognise the importance of MT development, the school also endeavours to offer support for these languages as well. At present, additional MT support is offered for only Thai and Chinese but we are working on developing these programmes further.

Students who have IEP's may be exempt from studying a language in addition to English with approval from the Head of School. In the school, the teaching of English will be holistically integrated across the curriculum.

## Language of communication:

To facilitate clarity of communication and support all members of the UDIS community in receiving important information, UDIS will ensure the following:

- Across the school, teachers support L1 use in the classroom where appropriate. For example it is appropriate to use L1 to clarify and support comprehension in learning situations where students are processing new information of concepts. Students who currently lack proficiency in English may benefit from discussion with their L1 peers and/or support staff
- All staff will use the UDIS Language Guide which is based on British English for any formal documentation to parents.
- The school recognises that some members of the community may have difficulty in accessing information given exclusively in English and endeavours to publish documents in Thai (or other languages as needed) where possible.
- All staff and students will endeavour to use English as the language of spoken communication at UDIS. However, in social situations any language common to the whole group may be spoken, although English is encouraged.

## Support for Thai as a language outside the IB working languages

Our school uses Thai across all levels. To support this, the Thai language teachers we hire are bilingual in English and Thai. We also do the same for Teaching Assistants (TAs) who work closely with homeroom and subject teachers. These enable our Thai language teachers to be

trained in the consistent implementation and development of the IB programme. Having teachers bilingual in English allows them to be able to attend training and access IB documentation and to ensure they are given the opportunity to understand the philosophy and implementation of the programme.

Where necessary IB documents are translated into Thai to enhance understanding of these for Thai language teachers and teaching assistants.

## Language programmes overview

### Thai language

Thai language classes at UDIS meet the requirements from the Thai Ministry of Education regarding the learning of Thai. The provision of Thai language classes also supports MT development for speakers of Thai while providing an opportunity for other speakers to learn the skills of learning a new language. All students have the opportunity to learn Thai which reflects the importance of the host country and language to UDIS.

#### Thai language in the Early and Primary Years

Thai is offered from Preschool to Year 6. In the Primary Years (PY), students receive five periods of Thai Language and Culture classes. Students are separated into Thai classes for mother tongue speakers (or proficient Thai speakers) or into Thai as an additional language (TAL) classes for other speakers.

#### Thai language in the Middle Years

Thai is offered in the Middle Years (MY) from Year 7-11. All students receive five periods in either Language Acquisition or Language and Literature in the Thai language.

#### Thai language in the Diploma Programme

Thai is offered in the Diploma Programme (DP) for Years 12-13. All Thai national students are required to do Language and Literature (Thai) to meet requirements from Thailand's Ministry of Education. These students are required to do Language and Literature (Thai) for 6 periods per week at Higher Level.

For students who were taking Thai language acquisition in Year 11, they have the choice of Mandarin Ab Initio or a Pamoja offered Ab Initio course. There is no Language Acquisition (Thai) subject offered in the Diploma Programme.

### Mandarin

UDIS offers an optional after school Mandarin language and culture course to students from K1 onwards. These Chinese language classes support MT development for speakers of Chinese.

The school also includes Mandarin Ab Initio as an optional subject within the Diploma Programme as part of subject choices within Group 2.

## English A and other A Languages

UDIS acknowledges the importance of maintaining and developing language and literacy skills in the L1. For primary students, the teaching of English is integrated into the Units of Inquiry with some specific language skills taught in discrete lessons.

UDIS looks to offer individualised study in other languages and may offer extracurricular L1 support outside the timetable.

## English as an Additional Languages (EAL)

UDIS provides support to learners where English is an additional language. We recognise that all teachers are teachers of English and provide opportunities for professional development in strategies that give English L2 students access to the content of varied subject groups and to facilitate language acquisition and the promotion of communication skills within their classes.

UDIS provides EAL support for all students whose L1 is not English. Our EAL policy sets out the minimum standards in English for acceptance of students into the school. The EAL programme may include a combination of pull-out and push-in support across the week. The EAL testing used determines which students study the EAL programme and in the MYP, which students access the language acquisition subject.

## Mother tongue programmes and Language and Literature

We believe that developing a child's mother tongue can accelerate the rate of English language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, increase self-esteem, and enhance intercultural understanding and international mindedness.

In the MYP and DP, all students are required to study one language and literature course (an A language), which in some cases may be the continued study of the students' mother tongue (e.g. English or Thai). UDIS offers English and Thai as A languages.

In order to fulfil the certification requirements of Year 11 (MYP5), all students must study one language and literature course (an A language) and one language acquisition course (a B language) or a second A language.

For DP requirements (Year 12-13) for both language and literature and language acquisition, please see IB DP handbook.

## A. English language

In each level of the school, students study English (Language and Literature or Language Acquisition). When students begin the MYP or DP programmes, they may study English as their A language if their skills in all four language areas (reading, writing, listening, speaking) enable them to access this curriculum. If students do not study English as Language A, then they instead study Language Acquisition in English which is timetabled at the same time.

## B. Thai language

Native Thai speakers receive language instruction in their mother tongue beginning in Early Years. Nearly all native Thai speakers in the MYP programmes study Thai at A language level. Other students who have reached native language proficiency in Thai may also study Thai at the A language level in the MYP and DP.

All students who do not study Thai language at the A language level instead study the Language Acquisition subject in Thai. These students study Language Acquisition at the same time as other students study Language and Literature in Thai.

## C. Other Mother Tongues

Mother tongue opportunities are offered for students on a regular basis from Primary Years (PY) through to the Middle Years (MY) primarily through the school's Extracurricular Programme (ECA). The school will review the language needs of the students on an annual basis. The term 'mother tongue' may denote the language learned first and/or the language identified with as a "native" speaker. For the purpose of the MYP, "mother tongue" includes both these definitions and describes the language that the student uses at home and/or outside the classroom environment. The school supports the ongoing development of mother tongues in formal and informal settings. This course of study supports students to develop their mother tongue, sustain cognitive and academic development and maintain their cultural identity.

When there is a significant number of students who share the same MT, or at the request of parents, the school will seek to establish appropriate volunteers from the UDIS community to provide support. For example, where possible, translation/interpretation services may be provided at parent-teacher conferences. Parents may be asked to volunteer to read during functions like mother tongue week for instance.

The school will provide school facilities by negotiation with groups looking to study particular mother tongues at school.

## References

Any references used for this policy are here

- IB documents

- MYP Principles to Practice (2014)
- Guidelines for developing a school language policy (2008)
- Other schools
  - Bavarian International School Language Policy Handbook (2014)

These documents and resources are also available for reference:

- Language and learning resources from the IB (link to PRC)
- Language and learning stories from the IB (link to PRC)
- Diploma Programme: From principles into practice .pdf

## Related documents/policies/procedures

Related policies, documents and procedures can be found here:

- English as an additional language policy

## Policy extensions

As a working document, these areas could be developed or extended:

- PSP2020
  - Make the importance of international mindedness to language development more explicit within the policy
  - Make the learner profile, and its links to language development, more explicit within the policy
  - Make multilingualism more explicit within the policy as a fact, a right and a resource for learning (0301-04-0200))
- Roles and responsibilities
  - To develop the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders within the language policy. E.g. what is the role of parents, teachers and school leadership in language development

## Review cycle:

The Language Policy has a two year review cycle that is coordinated between the PYP, MYP and DP Coordinators.

Date adopted:	26/5/2014
Last modified:	3/2/2023
Last reviewed:	20/4/2022
Next review date (2 year review cycle):	20/4/2024

Board approved date:	9/3/2018
----------------------	----------