



H-FARM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Language Policy

2026-2027

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1. Mission statement

At H-FARM International School Vicenza (from now H-IS Vicenza) we are committed to empowering students to become successful lifelong learners in today's diverse global society. In a warm, stimulating learning environment, we support the potential of every child to become knowledgeable, proactive, curious students and internationally-minded citizens.

2. Purpose of this document

This policy is intended to provide an overview of language learning at H-IS Vicenza. It is written in line with the principles and practices of the International Baccalaureate (IB). The policy outlines our school language profile as well as our linguistic and academic goals. The document defines a language approach, which is designed to help our students attain these goals through authentic contexts in a stimulating environment.

3. School Language Profile

English is the primary language of instruction in our school, but as we recognise that Italian is the main official language of the country, we are committed to ensuring that all students are proficient in both languages. Vicenza is a historic town of the Veneto region in the North of Italy. Our school population is mainly Italian mother tongue, with a diverse multi-ethnic community, representing a range of nationalities. All staff speak English, and most are fluent in at least one other language. We communicate and conduct most of our school meetings and events in both languages.

Lifelong learners 7.3: Students take opportunities to develop their language profiles. (0402-07-0300)

4.1 Mother Tongue Languages at H-IS Vicenza

Mother tongue languages are valued within the whole school continuum. Teachers are aware of the language profile of their students, and this is respected and appreciated on every occasion, by providing access to resources in multiple languages both in the classroom and in the library, celebrating mother tongues and pairing up reading buddies with the same mother tongue. If new students join with an L1 which is not English, Italian or Spanish, we will buddy them up wherever possible with another student who speaks their mother tongue. All activities and learning can also be shared with family members in their mother tongue.

4.2 Language Philosophy & Practices at H-IS Vicenza

At H-IS Vicenza, we are all language learners. We believe that language is vital for the construction of meaning. Language is involved in all learning that goes on, as it is the most significant connecting element across the school. We aim for our students to be proficient and effective bilingual communicators because the ability to communicate in more than one

language supports the development of internationally minded individuals.

Language is at the heart of how we learn, think, communicate and build relationships – and central to the mission of an IB-Continuum school. As the IB itself states, multilingualism fosters intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

In our school, where we have students, parents and teachers from more than 21 countries, language is not only an academic skill but a living resource. Our language policy reflects our belief that all languages – whether the language of instruction, the host-country language, heritage languages, or additional languages – are valuable. We see each as a doorway to culture, identity, understanding, and community.

- Languages of instruction and study: English is our main language of instruction for most IB courses. In addition: Italian is taught progressively (from Reception to DP2), and Spanish is offered as a third language for all students.
- World Literature & Global Genres: Our curriculum maps world literature and a diversity of literary genres across all programmes (PYP → MYP → DP), enabling students to explore and appreciate global literary traditions in different languages.
- Mother-Tongue and Home-Language Recognition: We acknowledge and value each student's home language(s). When possible, we support students to maintain and develop their heritage languages, both orally and in writing. This contributes to identity affirmation and supports multilingual development.
- Transdisciplinary & Contextual Language Learning: Language learning is embedded across the curriculum, not confined solely to "language classes." Through content subjects, arts, PHE (Physical and Health Education), and interdisciplinary units, students use and develop language in meaningful, authentic contexts. This reflects recommended IB practice.

To bring our policy alive, we implement a variety of practices and community-oriented initiatives that every year are a solid base of our school identity:

- Cultural & Language Events: We organise events such as International Evening, Mother Languages Day, Veneto Legge (our reading event), Language Day, Library Talks and Authors Visits. These occasions allow students, families and teachers to implement, share and be proud of their native languages, poems, traditions, songs, stories and cultural heritage.
- Peer Language Exchange & Mentorship: We promote cross-grade and cross-programme reading sessions, where older students read to younger ones. This encourages language exchange, peer learning, and intergenerational connection

across linguistic backgrounds.

- Parental and Community Involvement: We encourage parents and families to contribute to our language culture, whether by participating in events, sharing stories or songs from home, or providing reading material in home languages. We see parents as essential partners in maintaining a multilingual, multicultural school community.

All staff play a role in supporting students' language development, as every teacher is a language teacher, whether in science, arts, PE, or the humanities, contributing to building linguistic skills across the curriculum. Language & Literature teachers design and deliver courses in English, Italian, and Spanish and work closely with colleagues to ensure coherent, vertically aligned language learning. Library and media staff curate a multilingual collection that reflects the school community's languages and cultures, offering resources for students and families seeking texts in their home languages. School leadership and coordinators oversee the implementation of the language policy, providing resources, professional development, and regular review cycles. Parents and families also play an essential part by participating in school events, contributing home-language resources, and supporting their children's multilingual development.

This policy ensures that our teaching and community practices support multilingualism, reflect the diversity of our school body, and enable all community members to develop linguistic, cultural and global-citizen competencies.

Our language programme follows the objectives set out in the PYP scope and sequence document, which are compatible with language objectives worldwide, including those of the Italian ministerial programme. These objectives are met through all teaching and learning in the school and further supported by specialised language lessons.

The development of language involves learning about language, learning through language, and using language with others in everyday situations. This interlinked process is developed by means of a wide range of authentic language learning situations and the establishment of language-rich environments across the school.

Expectations are realistic, and time is given for children to learn and feel confident in English and in Italian. Their attempts to communicate and make themselves understood as they develop language skills are highly valued and positively received. Students are given opportunities across many disciplines and contexts to continue to develop and extend their language skills throughout their learning journey at the school.

5. Language Policy & Practices & Language support - PYP

As an IB World School, we are committed to the following Practices:

- In the Early Years, English mother tongue/ Native like teachers are assisted by

bilingual assistants (Eng/Ita). The language of instruction is English, but children are welcome to express themselves in their mother tongue until they gain confidence in English.

- In the Early Years, Italian as a second language is offered to non-Italian children on a weekly basis.
- In Elementary school, English is the language of instruction. The development of the Unit of Inquiry is conveyed through the English language and allows students to acquire Concept learning and the Transdisciplinary concepts.
- The Italian language programme is offered from Reception to Y5 and is delivered in Italian by Italian mother tongue teachers.
- A Spanish language programme is offered from Y1 to Y5 and is delivered by a Spanish mother tongue teacher.
- Single-subject teachers are bilingual and fluent in the language of instruction.
- The school also provides additional hours to support the Italian mother tongue language in Social Studies (PYP4- PYP5) and science (PYP5).
- At the end of PYP5, students take the age-appropriate State Exam in Italian. This way, they can also access the Italian school system if families decide for them to do so.
- The students who enter our school in EYU and PYP join a spontaneous pathway to learning English in a gradual way. The teaching and the learning are guided and informed by the school's language programme based on the PYP language scope and sequence.
- The students who need extra support in the learning of the language of instruction are supported either through differentiation in class or through the school's Language Support Programme (see Inclusion policy).
- With the support of all H-IS Vicenza teachers, students learn the importance of language as an essential tool to learn, communicate, and define in a complex, precise way their thoughts, creativity, and personality.
- Within the EYU, both the class teacher and the assistant play a vital role in the language learning process of the child by creating a positive environment where children are encouraged to improve their language skills.
- In the PYP, the development of language skills is led by English, Italian, and Spanish language teachers. Lessons are holistic and so contribute to developing students' communication skills - written, oral, visual, gestural, and non-verbal.

Language Support - PYP

At H-IS Vicenza, we recognize that all teachers are language teachers and that language development must be supported across the entire curriculum—not just in designated language classes. We also acknowledge that each student is a unique individual with distinct learning styles and needs. With respect to English proficiency, classroom activities are tailored to help students reach their full potential. In addition to differentiated instruction within the classroom, targeted English language support is provided for students identified as needing additional assistance.

New students enrolling in PYP Years 1 through 5 receive support in acquiring the language of instruction. Our Language Support Programme, delivered either within the classroom or in

small group settings, is led by our Language Support Teachers in close collaboration with Homeroom Teachers to set clear goals and objectives.

We also value and support the acquisition of the host country's language. Italian language support is offered to non-native speakers identified as needing help. This programme is delivered during school hours by a teacher from our Italian Department, who works closely with the classroom Italian teacher to define learning objectives and ensure coordinated support.

Approaches to teaching 5.4: Teachers support language development with consideration for the language profiles of students. (0403-05-0400)

6. Language Policy & Practices & Language support - MYP

Our language programme follows the objectives set out in the MYP subject guides, which are compatible with language objectives worldwide, including those of the Italian ministerial programme. These are met through all teaching and learning in the school and further supported by specialised language lessons.

Development of this skill involves learning about language, through language and using it. This happens not only across the school but beyond.

Expectations are realistic and time is given for students to learn and feel confident in all languages. To communicate and make themselves understood. Students are given opportunities across many disciplines and contexts to continue to develop and extend their language skills throughout their learning journey at the school.

By the end of MYP 4, all of our students should achieve MYP Phase 5 or 6 in ability in English. At the end of MYP4, students must be at B2 in English in order to proceed to MYP5. A table of language acquisition phase descriptors can be found in Appendix 1.

By MYP 5, we wish to get every student to a linguistic level capable of studying English Literature A HL as a Group 1 in DP. We anticipate external students to join H-IS Vicenza for the MYP 1 phase, and as such their mother tongue may well be another language. However, it is suggested that they show proficiency in English at a level similar to H-IS Vicenza PYP students joining the MYP 1.

The Language Acquisition course is taught in phases and new students must be able to enter the class at the same phase (or one phase above or below) as the year group they are entering. Spanish is offered as the 3rd language. This is to be reviewed yearly and consider staffing, potential student numbers etc., before other languages can be offered.

If their level is not adequate, students would be expected to study before being accepted at H-IS Vicenza or to choose another language from those being offered.

If the student is in a much higher phase than students of an equivalent age at H-IS Vicenza, the school attempts to accommodate their level of ability.

Practices at H-IS Vicenza - MYP

In the Middle school, students engage in learning languages in different ways and at different paces. English is the main language of instruction.

H-IS Vicenza supports the host country language by offering an Italian Language and Literature programme in Italian. The school is committed to the development of the Italian language by supporting students at all levels.

The school also offers a third language course in Spanish Acquisition. The Spanish Language Acquisition programme is taught in Spanish. Moreover, Mathematics support in Italian is offered to students in order to augment their mathematical knowledge in their mother tongue in preparation for the Terza Media exams.

At the end of MYP3, students can take the age-appropriate State Exam. This way they can also access the Italian school system if they decide to do so.

Students considering joining H-IS Vicenza in MYP are assessed for their Italian and English language competency. The school uses the assessment when deciding to offer the student a place at H-IS Vicenza (Admissions Policy) and to support the student. This is done by offering specific courses, both during school hours and after if necessary, thus enabling the student to improve social interaction with peers and increase engagement within lessons.

In the MYP, all teachers are responsible for the students' language development. The holistic nature of the curriculum allows the students to learn not only about language but through language.

Students study Language and Literature in Italian and in English. Spanish teachers also teach simple but significant literature and cultural topics to develop comprehension skills in Language Acquisition. Reading becomes very important as subject teachers give students the responsibility to develop their reading skills both within and outside the classroom.

All teachers at H-IS Vicenza are language teachers. Written work may be annotated whenever grammar or spelling errors are noticed, so that they can support language learning. With the support of all H-IS Vicenza teachers, students learn the importance of language in precise and interesting communication, refining and improving thought-processes and thus creating a nexus for better creativity.

Overview of Language Learning

	MYP
Staff	Mother tongue teachers for language and literature; for language acquisition classes mother tongue or assimilated teachers
Specialised Language Learning	Language and Literature MYP1-3 : English and Italian (6 lessons a week) Language acquisition MYP1-3: Spanish (3 lessons a week) Language and Literature MYP4-5: English and Italian (6 and 5 lessons a week respectively) Language acquisition MYP4-5: English and Italian (6-5 lessons a week); Spanish (optional and 3 lessons a week)
	All other subjects; language of instruction is English

Admission to Middle Years Programme

Most new students request to join H-IS Vicenza in years MYP1 and MYP4 as these are the transition years within the Italian school system. Students have to sit an appropriate entrance exam to establish their level of English.

We use the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to demonstrate to potential students the level they are expected to attain for entry into H-IS Vicenza. These expectations are based on the standards our own students will have attained at the various stages of Middle School (see Language Exams section below).

MYP 1	A2/B1
MYP 2	B1
MYP 3	B1/B2
MYP 4	B2
MYP 5	B2/C1

At present, if students are not at these levels when entering MYP, language support lessons are organised, both before they start the academic year (if required) and during the school year, to bring them to the required level as soon as possible. As the MYP course is

predominantly delivered in English and in order to be able to access course materials and e-assessments in MYP 5, students must have the minimum level of English as stated above at this stage to enter at MYP 4 and above.

Language Support/EAL - MYP

The school is able to provide language support for children entering the school who do not have either English and/or Italian as their first language. All teachers support students in their efforts to become proficient in a new language (as per the MYP Inclusion policy).

If non-mother-tongue students require support with Italian, they receive extra Italian lessons. As they become more confident, the number of lessons and amount of support decreases and eventually they participate fully in Italian lessons with their peers.

Students are encouraged to take English and/or Italian lessons before requesting admittance to H-IS Vicenza.

English Language Assessment (ELA) - MYP

We provide the opportunity for students to receive external qualifications in English through the Cambridge English Qualifications examinations. We offer preparation for these exams in the following school years, though students joining the school at different times may sit an exam best suited to them.

MYP 2: Cambridge B1 Preliminary

MYP 3: Cambridge B2 First

The exam is not obligatory and whilst the students are constantly developing and improving their language skills, the majority of preparation for these tests, in terms of exam technique and practice papers, is carried out in after-school classes and at home.

7. Language Policy & Practices - DP

In the Diploma Programme (DP), students engage in learning languages in different ways and at different levels. English is the principal language of instruction, and the development of each subject's curriculum is conveyed through the English language, which allows students to acquire concept learning and transdisciplinary skills. In the DP, English is offered as a Language A through the Language and Literature course, it is available at both standard level (SL) and higher level (HL).

H-IS Vicenza also supports the host country language by offering Italian Language and Literature (SL and HL), Italian Language B (SL and HL), and Italian Ab Initio (SL only).

The majority of students at H-IS Vicenza list either Italian or English as their primary language. By offering the Language and Literature courses of these two subjects in the Diploma Programme we are able to meet the diverse needs of our student body. Students coming into the school with a different native language than English or Italian will be offered the opportunity to take an SSST Literature SL course with the aid of an online tutor and supported by the school's SSST supervisor. This service entails an additional cost to the student's family.

The school also offers the Spanish B course in the DP, both SL and HL.

Students considering joining H-IS Vicenza in the DP are assessed for their English language competency. The school uses the assessment when deciding to offer the student a place at H-IS, further details can be found in the Admissions Policy. At the current time no Language B English is offered but Italian B and Ab Initio courses are available to match linguistic needs of the MYP5 students.

Students who wish to study an additional language have the opportunity to join the online provider Pamoja at an additional cost to the family. The DP coordinator guides the student in their choice as well as informs parents of the various requirements. A supervisor is to be appointed from within the school to follow the progress of any student engaged in a Pamoja course.

In the DP, all teachers are responsible for the students' language development. The holistic nature of the curriculum allows the students to learn not only about language but through it.

Students can study Language and Literature in Italian and in English. The Spanish and Italian B courses also teach simple but significant literature and cultural topics to develop comprehension skills in Language Acquisition. Reading and writing become very important as subject teachers give students the responsibility to develop their skills both within and outside the classroom.

With the support of all H-IS Vicenza teachers, students learn the importance of language in precise and interesting communication, refining and improving thought-processes and thus creating a nexus for better creativity.

Admission to Diploma Programme

In order to enter the DP, students need to demonstrate a level of English sufficient to allow them to access the Language A English Language and Literature course. This is determined through the use of a school entrance exam or an internationally recognised language

certificate for external students. Students who took part in the MYP at H-IS Vicenza are judged through their MYP English grades. Further information can be found in the Admissions policy. If a student is unable to meet the level of English required they are asked to take an additional language course before entry or else asked to defer entry into the DP for a year while they engage in MYP5.

Language Acquisition

At H-IS Vicenza, we make every effort to support the linguistic development of our students. However, due to the challenging nature of the Diploma Programme, a high level of linguistic command in English is needed prior to entry. The school has a Language Acquisition Department, which is available to assist students as and when needed.

The school library and librarian also play an important role in developing the language abilities of students through the resources and activities planned. The school librarian encourages book borrowing at all levels of the school, both for pleasure as well as study.

Further details of the language support available to DP students can be found in the Inclusion Policy.

8. Review cycle

Recognising that our community may evolve (new nationalities, shifting languages, changing needs), our language policy remains a living document. We commit to periodic review, involving teachers, administrators, parents and (where appropriate) students, to reflect on practices, identify new needs, and adapt accordingly. This aligns with good practice suggested by IB guidelines.

This Assessment Policy is reviewed annually by the end of August by a committee that includes the Head of School, the Leadership team, the IB Coordinator, teachers, as well as representatives from the Parent and Student Councils.

Culture 4: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language (0301-04)

Appendix 1

Progression along the continuum
(from the IB MYP Language Acquisition Guide, May 2014)

For the purpose of planning, teaching and assessment, the language acquisition skills are also mapped on continuums to show clearly the expectations for each phase. Learning targets have been set for each phase, and underneath the expectations are examples of

what constitutes evidence to indicate the student is ready to progress to the next phase of learning.

As students progress through the six phases, they are expected to develop the competencies to communicate appropriately and effectively in an increasing range of social, cultural and academic contexts, and for an increasing variety of audiences and purposes. This is demonstrated by:

- the variety and sophistication of vocabulary and structures used
- the scope of situations in which the language is used
- the increasing length of text spoken, read and written
- the increasing complexity of text spoken, viewed, read and written
- the increasing variety of forms of both fiction and non-fiction handled.

As students develop their understanding, increasing cognitive and skills demands are also set. These are expressed as command terms. The following table illustrates this progression along the additional language learning continuum.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
In a limited range of everyday situations	In a limited range of familiar situations	In familiar and some unfamiliar situations	In familiar and unfamiliar situations	In social situations and some academic situations	In social and academic situations
Some aspects of register	Some aspects of register	Appropriate register	Appropriate register	Appropriate register	Appropriate register
A very limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts	A limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts	A limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts	A range of interpersonal and cultural contexts	A range of interpersonal and cultural contexts	A wide range of interpersonal and cultural contexts
Use basic vocabulary	Use basic vocabulary	Use language accurately	Use language accurately	Use language accurately and effectively	Use oratory technique

Simple short texts	Simple texts	A limited range of texts	A range of texts	A range of texts	A wide range of texts
Interact in simple and rehearsed exchanges	Interact in basic rehearsed and some unrehearsed exchanges	Interact in rehearsed and unrehearsed exchanges	Engage actively	Engage actively	Engage actively
Understand and respond	Understand and respond	Understand and respond	Interpret and respond	Analyse and respond	Evaluate and respond
Identify and recognize	Recognize and understand	Understand	Construct meaning/interpret	Construct meaning/analyse	Evaluate

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