

H-FARM International School Venice | Language Policy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. H-FARM International School: A Distinctive Education	3
2. Philosophy and Purpose.....	4
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	4
3.1 The role of the teacher.....	4
3.2 The role of the student.....	4
3.3 The role of the parent.....	5
3.4 The role of the school.....	5
4. Definitions	5
4.1 Multilingualism	5
4.2 Language of access and inclusion	5
4.3 Language of instruction.....	5
4.4 Host country language	6
4.5 Students' home language.....	6
4.6 Translanguaging	6
5. School's Language Profile and Language Learning Pathways.....	6
5.1 Learning in English (English as the language of instruction).....	7
PYP Specific Practices - English Language Support	7
MYP Specific Practices	8
Transition from PYP to MYP1	9
Transitions in language phases within the MYP	9
DP Specific Practices - English Language	10
5.3 Learning Italian (a the host country language).....	10
Students' home language.....	11
PYP Specific Practices - Additional Language Learning (Italian).....	11
MYP Program Specific Practices - Italian	12
5.3 Other additional languages.....	13
MYP Specific Practices - Additional Language Learning	13
6. Students' Language Profiles	15
6.1 Student Language Profiles.....	15
6.2 Development and maintenance of home languages	16
Policy review history and timeline for review.....	16
References.....	17

1. H-FARM International School: A Distinctive Education

At H-FARM International School, we believe that the future depends on the quality of the education delivered today. Our approach to education is designed to foster lifelong learning opportunities for all, aligning with both the United Nations Development Goals and the International Baccalaureate (IB) ethos. Our mission is to prepare internationally minded citizens who are capable of thriving in an ever-evolving world and who possess the drive and skills to contribute positively to society.

Mission Statement

We empower students to shape their future in a rapidly changing global community. Through innovative learning environments, relationships founded on compassion and respect, and a commitment to academic and personal excellence, we cultivate confident, creative, and collaborative lifelong learners who are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the modern world.

Our Educational Philosophy

H-FARM fosters curiosity, adaptability, and resourcefulness in both students and teachers. Our mantra, “Is there another way? Is there a better way?” encapsulates our belief that learning is a continuous, dynamic process. We encourage a growth mindset in our community, driving us all to move from knowledge acquisition to making a positive impact.

Six Dimensions of Learning Success

At H-FARM, success is multifaceted. We celebrate six dimensions of learning success that ensure our students are well-rounded individuals:

1. **Emotional Success:** Fostering self-awareness and emotional well-being.
2. **Learning Success:** Encouraging a genuine love for learning.
3. **Community Success:** Developing a strong sense of responsibility toward family, friends, and the wider community through cultural literacy and inclusion.
4. **Language Success:** Building effective and confident communication skills in multiple languages.
5. **Prepared for the Future:** Equipping students with technological competencies and an innovator’s mindset.
6. **International-Mindedness:** Cultivating open-minded, empathetic global citizens who value diverse perspectives.

Six Principles of Learning

To support our mission of fostering lifelong learners, we adhere to six core principles of learning. These guide our approach to teaching and learning:

1. **Ask Better Questions:** Encouraging students to formulate deep, probing questions that drive learning forward.

2. **Explore Connections:** Promoting interdisciplinary thinking and the ability to make meaningful connections across subject areas.
3. **Apply Knowledge:** Ensuring students can transfer their learning to new, real-world contexts.
4. **Collaborate to Create:** Fostering a learning environment where collaboration—both with peers and technology—fuels creativity and innovation.
5. **Evidence Learning:** Encouraging reflection and the documentation of learning processes and outcomes.
6. **Reflect on Process and Product:** Instilling a habit of critical self-reflection to refine both the learning journey and the final outcomes.

By integrating these domains of success and principles of learning, we aim to create an environment where students can thrive both academically and personally, building the skills, mindset, and values to navigate the complexities of the future.

2. Philosophy and Purpose

Multilingualism is considered one of our biggest cultural assets at H-Farm International School (H-IS). We value diversity and see it as one of the most important traits of our community. Language diversity is central to this cultural diversity, and as a school we aim to put in place practices and resources to support and maintain it.

We think that being able to communicate in more than one language is a vehicle to enhance multicultural understanding and foster respect amongst communities.

Language development takes a central role in our mission to support students in creating and maintaining *“relationships founded on compassion and respect, and a commitment to academic and personal excellence, we cultivate confident, creative, and collaborative lifelong learners who are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the modern world.”* (H-Farm IS Mission Statement, reference needed).

The aim of this document is to provide an outline of the school language profile, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the members of our community in regards to preserving and promoting our language diversity, give an overview of the languages offered in our curriculum and describe the main instructional strategies that we use to support students in developing as language learners.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The role of the teacher

At H-Farm International School all teachers are language teachers (IBO reference needed). Teachers are aware of their students' language profile and develop teaching strategies that recognise and accommodate learner language variability. Additionally, teachers work closely with the EAL (English as an additional Language) team to devise instructional methods and create resources that help remove barriers to accessing the curriculum, delivered largely in English.

3.2 The role of the student

Students are responsible for working towards developing their language skills across all subject areas. For this purpose, students are taught a wide range of learning strategies and skills to support language development in different contexts, and are expected to consistently engage with them to the best of their ability. Students are also expected to produce authentic work for all their

assignments as per our Academic Integrity policy, including work completed at home as per our Home Learning policy, as this is paramount not only to acquire subject-specific knowledge, but also to develop their language skills in the context of each specific subject area.

3.3 The role of the parent

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children as multilingual learners. By promoting some simple strategies such as reading, watching movies, or listening to music in different languages, parents can support their children's language profile development. In addition to this, parents are essential in supporting their children to develop as global citizens, appreciative of other cultures and more internationally minded through exposure to different cultures and languages.

3.4 The role of the school

H-Farm International School is committed to provide effective structures in terms of time, space and resources to support language learning and development, as per our Language Dimension of Learning Success. We use both the language of inclusion (English) and our host country language (Italian) in all information letters sent out to our families, to ensure that effective communication between all stakeholders takes place. Translation into the host country language (Italian) is always available in the educational workshops and informative sessions that are held in school. Likewise, we collaborate with our parent community to ensure that both our language of inclusion (English) and our host country language (Italian) are used throughout as means of communication in all organisations where parents are involved, such as PTA committee, class parent representative teams and class parent messaging groups.

4. Definitions

4.1 Multilingualism

Bilingualism involves the use and acquisition of two languages. Multilingualism involves the use and acquisition of more than two languages. In addition to being a foundational tenet of the IB programme, multilingualism is an essential aspect of developing international mindedness and intercultural understanding. As such, multilingualism is regarded as a core element of learning and teaching at H-Farm International School,

4.2 Language of access and inclusion

Throughout the PYP, MYP and DP sections, English is the language of **access** and **inclusion** for learning and other interactions. We believe that proficiency in English is a right and a responsibility for our students.

4.3 Language of instruction

At H-Farm International School the main language of instruction is English. This means that our curriculum is largely delivered in English. Exceptions to this are la gauge subjects (other than English), that are mostly taught in the target language.

4.4 Host country language

H-Farm International School is a foreign school in Italy, our host country language is Italian. We acknowledge that for a large population of our parent community Italian is their home (and sometimes only) language, and we ensure that both English and Italian are used in our communication with families.

4.5 Students' home language

This term refers to the language that students acquire without formal language acquisition training. Most often, this is the language used in the home environment.

4.6 Translanguaging

Translanguaging is the ability of the speaker to move fluidly from one language to another in order to express themselves and, in the classroom setting, it involves providing opportunities for this possibility.

For our multilingual learners, translanguaging allows them to maximise their communicative potential by drawing on all of their linguistic resources to make meaning and communicate. At H-FARM International School, translanguaging is one way our students use language effectively to mediate complex social and cognitive activities. They learn, learn through and learn about the specifics of each language while demonstrating cultural and situational flexibility with their dynamic use of a range of languages. In order to understand and be understood, our students learn to regularly access the different linguistic features or various modes of different languages. This ability helps them think and express themselves in ways that are open minded and culturally appropriate. Translanguaging and the mastery of multiple languages contributes to the cultural sensitivity and international mindedness of our students.

4.7 Language phases

In the IB language acquisition curriculum Language Phases refer to six proficiency levels that guide students through their language learning journey. These phases ensure that students develop their skills progressively, from basic communication to near-fluent proficiency.

5. School's Language Profile and Language Learning Pathways

H-Farm International School is a language diverse community. We see this diversity as a strength in our community and we aim to support it as described in this policy.

As part of developing cultural understanding and international mindedness, all H-FARM International School students, from the age of 6, learn at least one language in addition to their home language(s). These opportunities further develop our students' ability to use translanguaging to understand the world around them.

Language Learning Pathways in the IB

The development of languages in the IB is structured across six language phases, with clear learning targets and expectations for progression. Students develop communication skills in social, cultural, and academic contexts, demonstrated through:

- Expanding vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Using language in more diverse situations
- Increasing complexity and length of spoken, read, and written texts
- Engaging with both fiction and non-fiction texts

As students advance, cognitive demands grow, reflected in command terms that indicate their level of understanding and response. This structured progression ensures students develop fluency and confidence as they move through the IB language curriculum.

Progression across phases

Phase	Context	Vocabulary & Accuracy	Text complexity	Interaction & Response	Cognitive skills
1	Everyday situations	Basic vocabulary	Simple short texts appropriate to context	Simple, rehearsed exchanges	Identify & recognize language patterns
2	Familiar situations	Basic vocabulary	Simple texts appropriate to context	Basic rehearsed & some unrehearsed exchanges	Recognize & understand language patterns
3	Familiar & some unfamiliar situations	Accurate language use	Limited range of texts appropriate to context	Rehearsed & unrehearsed exchanges	Understand language patterns
4	Familiar & some unfamiliar situations	Accurate language use	A range of texts	Active engagement	Construct meaning/interpret language
5*	Social & some academic situations	Accurate & effective language use	A range of texts	Active engagement	Construct meaning/analyze language
6*	Academic situations	Accurate & effective language use including style and rhetoric	A wide range of texts of differing complexity	Active engagement	Evaluate & respond to target language

* Following the IB guidance Phases 1-4 are identified with the name 'Language Acquisition' while Phases 5-6 are identified with the name 'Language & Literature'.

5.1 Learning in English (English as the language of instruction)

The majority of our student body have a home language other than English. Given that English is the language of instruction at H-IS we recognise that learners at different English proficiency levels will need different strategies to access the curriculum.

PYP Specific Practices - English Language Support

Students who are new to the school with limited English language understanding are required to participate in a fee based English Language Support program designed to develop basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and to begin to develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). This support is provided by a trained English Language Specialist teacher and takes place throughout the student's first year enrolment in the school and potentially, for one additional year, depending on the student's English language development.

The school recognizes that the development of English language abilities is not the sole responsibility of the English Language Support teacher. English language support sessions are, in some instances, planned collaboratively with class teachers to ensure pre- and follow-up teaching as needed. Training and professional development focusing on language development and language acquisition are provided to educators working with students learning in a language other than their home language(s).

English language support lessons for PYP students take place in small groups of students from the same year level or combinations of students from different year levels depending on the needs identified. Initially, these lessons are provided on a pull-out basis with the English Language Specialist teacher working with groups of students outside the regular classroom. As the school year progresses, and individual student's English capabilities develop, some of the English language support will take place on a push-in basis in the regular classroom. These decisions are based on student progress along the continuum of the PYP Language Scope and Sequence.

MYP Specific Practices

Students identified at early stages of English language development (usually those in Language Phases 1-3) will be enrolled in English classes and also take part in one of our English as an Additional Language (EAL) programmes with the objective to help them become more confident users of English in all four language domains and participate fully in mainstream lessons where teachers are equipped with skills and resources to scaffold student learning. The EAL programmes are administered by the EAL Centre.

The EAL Centre

The EAL Centre is located in the MYP building and provides English language specialist classes to students and teachers on a daily basis. The EAL teaching team meets regularly with the teachers through collaboration cycles, transdisciplinary planning meetings and staff meetings to inform the teachers regarding EAL students and their inclusion to the mainstream classes and their progress in their language learning and abilities. For full information about the services offered by the EAL Centre please [see the briefing document](#).

5.2 English studies in the MYP (Language & Literature and Language Acquisition)

Studies of English in the MYP involve two programs:

- Language Acquisition (phases 1-4)
- Language & Literature (phases 5-6)

Students progress through these phases at their own pace.

In MYP 1-3 the sequence of progression/number of lessons per week is as follows:

Language and Literature class (6 lessons/week) <i>Available to students in phase 5-6</i>	EAL sessions on request ● Individualised sessions in EAL Centre in liaison with subject teachers as requested
Language Acquisition class (6 lessons/week) <i>Available to students in phase 4</i>	EAL Enhanced programme ● Individualised sessions in EAL Centre in liaison with families and subject teachers
Language Acquisition class (6 lessons/week) <i>For students in phases 1-3</i>	EAL Specialist programme (paid provision) ● 3 additional lessons/week in EAL Centre

In MYP4-5 the sequence of progression/number of lessons per week is as follows:

Language and Literature class	EAL sessions on request
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(5 lessons/week) <i>Available to students in phase 5-6</i>	● Individualised sessions in EAL Centre in liaison with subject teachers as requested
Language Acquisition class (5 lessons/week) <i>Available to students in phase 4</i>	EAL Enhanced programme ● Individualised sessions in EAL Centre in liaison with families and subject teachers
Language Acquisition class (5 lessons/week) <i>For students in phases 1-3</i>	EAL Specialist programme (paid provision) ● 4 additional lessons/week in EAL Centre ● es4 additional lessons of support in class

Placement in an English class

New students: all students who apply to be admitted in the MYP section of our school undertake an online-based standardised English test and produce a writing sample as per our Admissions policy. Based on the outcome of this test, they are placed in the corresponding English class.

Returning students: English department assess students' level using class work, teacher feedback and, where necessary, the online-based standardised English test as per our Admissions policy.

Transitioning between English levels

Transition from PYP to MYP1

Students from the PYP section at any of the H-FARM International School schools are automatically promoted to the MYP section of H-FARM International School Venice if they were able to access and benefit from the PYP 5 curriculum.

All transitioning PYP students are evaluated internally using class work, teacher feedback and, where necessary, the online-based standardised English test to confirm placement in the appropriate language phase and the corresponding MYP English course (Language & Literature, Language Acquisition).

Transitions in language phases within the MYP

Students who are placed in the MYP English Language Acquisition course are monitored using the MYP (English) Language Acquisition criteria. The goal of this ongoing evaluation is to determine when each student will move into the next language phase. The movement to a new phase could happen throughout the school year or at the beginning of the next school year.

DP-Specific Practices - English Language

English Pathways in DP

Students entering the DP in H-IS have the option to study English as either a Group 1 or Group 2 subject. Group 1 studies are intended for students who are home language speakers of English and / or who have demonstrated proficiency in English Literature & Language studies in the past. Proficiency is understood to be at a level at or above C1 in the CEFR. Group 2 studies of English are intended for students who are not home language speakers of English.

	Group 1 subject	Group 2 subject
EAL Specialist programme in MYP5	SL/HL Language A: Language and Literature OR Self-Taught Language A: Literature SL in home language (4/6 lessons/week)	SL/HL Language B: English OR any other additional language offered at H-IS (4/6 lessons/week)
EAL/English as First Language	SL/HL Language A: Language and Literature in English or home language (4/6 lessons/week)	SL/HL Language A: Language and Literature OR Self-Taught Language A: Literature SL in home language OR SL/HL Language B: any additional language offered at H-IS (4/6 lessons/week)

School-Supported Self-Taught Language A: Literature SL

Students who choose this course will receive one lesson per week with a language tutor. This is a service that incurs an additional fee and the SSST Coordinator will arrange for a tutor for each student in collaboration with an external provider. In addition, students will attend two lessons per week with the SSST Coordinator who will provide direct instruction in key skills, teach works in translation, and provide guidance for each assessment component. This course offers an opportunity for students to explore literary works written in their home language and share their literary and cultural heritage with others. Students will strengthen their proficiency in their home language by developing skills such as essay writing, oral presentations delivery, and critical discussion of authors' choices.

Academic Writing in DP

All DP students have the option to attend additional Academic Writing sessions led by an EAL Specialist. These sessions provide students with guidance on writing for a range of purposes, developing effective essay structures or expanding vocabulary through targeted learning strategies. Students also build their confidence in expressing complex ideas and strengthen oral skills as they

work towards their internal assessments with the EAL Specialist guiding their progress. At the request of family or the DP coordinator this service may be compulsory for some students enrolled in the DP.

5.3 Learning Italian (as the host country language)

We see the development of the Italian language as a crucial part in our students' development. For those whose Italian is their home language, they continue to learn about their own culture through Italian language and literature. For those students who are guests in Italy, learning the local language allows them to establish stronger connections with the community they now live in.

Students' home language

Italian National Exams

Many of our students (Italian Home Language speakers and non) choose to take Italian state exams at the end of PYP5 (Esame di Idoneità) and at the end of MYP3 (Terza Media). These exams are an important rite of passage for some students and a source of cultural pride.

PYP Specific Practices - Additional Language Learning (Italian)

All PYP students are provided with access to Italian language learning and Italian cultural experiences as part of the curriculum. Much of the teaching and learning associated with the Italian language is for Italian home language speakers.

The number and frequency of Italian lessons in PYP3-5 increases to support the preparation necessary for the optional Italian state exams that many of the PYP5 Italian home language speaking students take as a rite of passage and to ensure entry, if needed, into the Italian state system in the future. The school may offer alternative options for students to take the Italian Exam. PYP students who are new to Italian take part in the regular Italian lessons with their class. The Italian teacher differentiates instruction and expectations as much as possible.

Italian language sessions are planned collaboratively with the homeroom teachers to leverage connections to the conceptual understandings explored in each year level's units of inquiry. Units of Inquiry have been designed to explicitly incorporate aspects of the Italian state curriculum.

Early Years Unit: The Italian language is developed through social interactions with peers and teachers.

Schedule of Formal Italian Instruction

PYP1:

- 3 x 60 minute Italian lessons per week

PYP2:

- 3 x 60 minute Italian lessons per week

PYP3:

- 5 x 60 minute Italian lessons per week

PYP4:

- 5 x 60 minute Italian lessons per week

PYP5:

- 4 x 60 and 1 x 90 minute Italian lessons per week

Italian studies in the MYP (Language & Literature and Language Acquisition)

Studies of Italian in the MYP involve two programs:

- Language Acquisition (phases 1-4)
- Language & Literature (phases 5-6)

Students progress through these phases at their own pace.

MYP Program Specific Practices - Italian

At H-Farm International School, we offer Italian Language learning at 2 levels of proficiency.

MYP 1-2-3

Italian as first language	● Language and Literature class (6 lessons/week)	For students whose Italian is their home language
Italian Language Acquisition	● Language Acquisition class (6 lessons/week)	For students who: ● Are new to the language or have a limited understanding of it ● Have experienced Italian language in an informal context only and need to work toward mastering some language skills (for example, students who have lived abroad but one of the parents is Italian may have developed good speaking skills but no writing skills)

MYP 4-5

Italian as first language	● Language and Literature class (4 lessons/week)	For students whose Italian is their home language
Italian Language Acquisition	● Language Acquisition class (4 lessons/week)	For students who: ● Are new to the language or have a limited understanding of it ● Have experienced Italian language in an informal context only and need to work toward mastering some language skills (for example, students who have lived abroad but one of the parents is Italian may have developed good speaking skills but no writing skills)

Placement in an Italian class

All students whose home language is not Italian take an Italian diagnostic test upon enrollment in the MYP. This, alongside an evaluation of the student's language profile, allows the Italian department to place the students in the most appropriate Italian language class.

Students with an Italian proficiency level that exceeds the upper-intermediate level are assigned to the Language and Literature class. Should students encounter any difficulties, the school offers guidance and can facilitate access to additional tutoring support outside school.

To ensure appropriate placement in the Language Acquisition classes, students with mixed abilities are required to undertake a diagnostic test. This paper-based assessment evaluates grammatical competencies from beginner to upper-intermediate levels. Furthermore, an internal oral test is administered to gauge students' fluency and proficiency levels. This comprehensive assessment enables us to tailor our teaching methods to meet the specific needs of each student and place students to correct class whether Italian Language Acquisition or Italian Language and Literature.

5.3 Other additional languages

MYP Specific Practices - Additional Language Learning

In addition to learning both English and Italian, we offer our students the opportunity to learn a third language as per the information in the tables below:

MYP 1-2-3

In the lower MYP, all students are required to learn a third language of their choice. The optional subjects we offered are outlined below:

	MYP1	MYP2	MYP3
Spanish	Phase 1 (equivalent to A1 in the CEFR) Available to all students	Phase 1-2 (equivalent to A1-A2 in the CEFR) Available to: ● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class	Phase 2-3 (equivalent to A2-B1) in the CEFR) Available to: ● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class
French	Phase 1 (equivalent to A1 in the CEFR) Available to all students	Phase 1-2 (equivalent to A1-A2 in the CEFR) Available to: ● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class	Phase 2-3 (equivalent to A2-B1) in the CEFR) Available to: ● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class
German	Phase 1 (equivalent to A1 in the CEFR) Available to all students	Phase 1-2 (equivalent to A1-A2 in the CEFR) Available to: ● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class	Phase 2-3 (equivalent to A2-B1) in the CEFR) Available to: ● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class
Mandarin	Phase 1 (equivalent to A1 in the CEFR) Available to all students	Phase 1-2 (equivalent to A1-A2 in the CEFR) Available to:	Phase 1-2 (equivalent to A1-A2) in the CEFR) Available to:

		● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class	● returning students who completed successfully the subject the previous school year ● New students who show the language level proficiency needed to join the class
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MYP 4-5

In the upper MYP, students are offered the possibility of studying a third language of their choice if they so wish, this is no longer a mandatory requirement. Likewise, the school may not be able to open a language class in MYP4 or MYP5 if the number of students who wish to enroll in the class is very low (usually less than 5).

	MYP4	MYP5
Spanish	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class
French	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class
German	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class
Mandarin	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class	Phase to be determined depending on the level of the new and returning students who wish to take this subject Available to all students who show the language level proficiency required to join the class

External Exams for Additional Languages

Whenever the level of the class in a given language is appropriate, the school may offer lunch-time workshop (upon payment) to prepare students for the following external examinations

- DELE for Spanish
- DELF

6. Students' Language Profiles

6.1 Student Language Profiles

Our goal is to value and build on our students' individual language profiles to respect and support their development as language learners. Student Language Profiles are initially created in Year 5 as

a tool to support language placement in the MYP.

Records are kept and used during planning to affirm each student's (language) identity, activate their background knowledge and provide appropriate scaffolding in order to extend each student's language proficiency in multiple languages. The recognition of each child's unique language profile promotes self-efficacy as students feel pride in who they are and understand their own strengths and potential.

6.2 Development and maintenance of home languages

Language diversity is celebrated and valued in our school. The host country language of Italian is regularly used and learned as a translanguaging resource, a source of pride and access to the local culture, and to ensure success on the Italian state exams for those students who choose to take them. Other languages and cultures are celebrated through the involvement of parents and students, encouraging them to share their home languages and cultural aspects with the aim of developing our students' metalinguistic skills to help them better understand relationships to other cultural behaviors. Through various transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary units of study, students are actively encouraged to make connections between languages and learn about different languages and cultures.

Where possible, we work with parents to provide space, time, and resources to develop home languages. Any student required to take exams in their home language can also be supported by the school allocating rooms for study, access to materials, and, if necessary, time during the school day. The school is also committed to developing diverse language resources in the library to support the development of languages in addition to English and Italian.

In the DP, we offer the IB School-Supported Self-Taught (SSST) Language A option, which allows students to study their first language in a structured and supportive environment, even if that language is not directly taught at the school. We believe this promotes cultural identity and academic achievement in a student's mother tongue.

Further information about specific assessment practices can be found in the [H-FARM International School Assessment Policy](#). Further information about language requirements for admission to the school can be found in the [H-FARM International School Admissions/Promotions policy](#).

Policy review history and timeline for review

Written collaboratively - July 2009 by PYP staff and PYP coordinator

Updated - July 2015 by MYP staff and MYP Coordinator

Reviewed and updated - September 2016 by MYP staff and MYP Coordinator

Reviewed by - PYP Staff December 2016

Reviewed by - PLT throughout 20/21 school year

Reviewed by PYP and MYP Staff - June 2021

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