

CIS LANGUAGE POLICY

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I. Language Philosophy

The English language is most widely used as a common language among many of the nations of the world. It is the language of the global economy, and it is continually evolving. We understand and accept that there are international English which both challenge and provide opportunities from which our students can learn.

The authority of the rules of language is dependent on the national standards of the institution or organization (ie., Australian, British or Canadian) and has social and cultural implications. We believe that the best skill is to be able to adapt to any English environment.

We believe that language learning must be inclusive, which involves students who come from many nationalities and cultures, with differing skill and ability levels in language and academics. We understand that teachers must differentiate instruction and implement universal design in the classroom to meet the needs of students in terms of language proficiency, as well as skills, abilities, and interests of the students. Every student requires support from teachers and classmates, as well as the school community and home environment.

Students are also encouraged to continue building proficiency in their mother tongue at school, home, or through private instruction. Our course offerings support learning mother tongue Vietnamese and Korean.

The host country language, Vietnamese, is mandatory for all Vietnamese students. Most foreign students take French, since we are a Canadian school. Vietnamese is not mandatory for them. However, if they wish to study Vietnamese, then they may do so, in lieu of French, up to Grade 8.

We believe that building language proficiency allows for accuracy in communication, which is an ever-moving target for students learning a new language. Students learning English must first build basic interpersonal communication skills, to set a foundation for building cognitive academic language proficiency. Language is the method through which ideas are shared and common understandings emerge. Communication is semantic, semiotic and symbolic, and learning a new language grants access to a deeper understanding of a new culture.

Through a student-centered, constructivist approach, students will build language proficiency as they work through our written curriculum and applying their skills. We believe that critical thinking is important in all languages, and can be most effectively addressed in a participatory setting in which students can take risks and make mistakes, while at the same time receive positive encouragement to maintain high levels of confidence, and timely constructive feedback to ensure awareness of next steps for improvement.

At CIS, we understand that it takes several years to master a second language, and we accommodate and support language acquisition accordingly.

We believe that language is learned best in an immersion environment. Contextual situations will activate students' schemata and build on what they know. In order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, teachers of all subjects and grades should integrate language instruction in four skill areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Cumulatively, all skills complement each other across several subject areas, and are equally important. Students may not be familiar with cross-curricular instructional methods, but using these techniques will inspire confidence and continued language development.

We are cognizant of the fact that Vietnamese pedagogical approaches are very different to those used in contemporary western cultures. At CIS, we take a

participatory, flexible, multi-faceted approach to language learning. Students learning a new language are learning language at the same time as content, and are expected to communicate in both social and academic environments, regardless of language fluency level. We define fluency as being able to express oneself easily and accurately in an academic setting. Students who meet the expectations of the Ontario Curriculum or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in the senior grades will have the required language skills to be successful in internationally recognized standardized tests.

The CIS Language Philosophy is reflected in this resource for staff: [Promoting English in the Classroom](#).

II. Language profile

CIS currently has approximately 800 students from Kindergarten through Grade 12, who have a wide range of mother tongues. Approximately 60% of the student population is Vietnamese, while 14% are Korean. The remaining 26% of the student population are from Canada, USA, India, Japan, Australia, China, Taiwan, Germany, and other countries. In 2014-2015, nearly 17% of the student population from Grades 2-9 have been enrolled in ESL classes.

CIS has an English immersion environment. **With the exception of French and Vietnamese all classes are instructed in English.** According to Vietnamese law, all Vietnamese nationals must study at least 40 minutes each day of Vietnamese. The Vietnamese curriculum includes studies in Vietnamese Literature, History and Civics. Students of all other nationalities, including Korean, are enrolled in French as a Foreign Language for 40 minutes each day. All other subjects are studied in English, and Language and Literacy instruction is integrated in all subject areas.

III. The CIS Admissions Policy

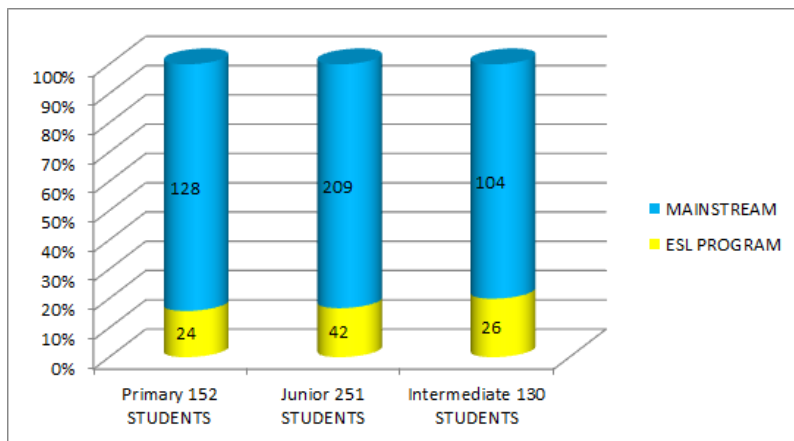
The CIS Admissions Policy (not to be confused with the IB Admissions Policy) relates to English Language proficiency, and was designed to allow students with a range of English **fluency** to enroll at CIS. The policy ensures that the student is provided appropriate support in acquiring a second language while participating the full day academic program in English. The policy is in place to support language acquisition, and becomes selective starting in Grade 7, and becomes more stringent each subsequent year. The policy for elementary applicants is in place to ensure sufficient time for adjustment to the CIS academic environment, in terms of both language proficiency and academic demands of the curricula.

The current policy, noted here, has been in effect since April 2012.

	Kindergarten - Grade 1	Grades 2-3	Grades 4-6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grades 10-12
Native English Speaker	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream
STEP 6	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream
STEP 5	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream
STEP 4	Mainstream	Mainstream	Support	Support	Intensive	ESL Credit Course	
STEP 3	Mainstream	Support	Support	Intensive			

STEP 2	Mainstream	Support	Intensive				
STEP 1	Mainstream	Support	Intensive				

Percentages of students in the Grade 2-8 ESL Program (as of November 2014):



IV. Supports for Language Learning

Student writing abilities are tracked to determine proper placement from year to year. All students in the ESL Program are tracked by the ESL teacher on a regular basis, and English Language Proficiency Reports are sent home in February and June. In the CIS Elementary Program, students from Grades 1-8 undergo school-wide assessment. Writing abilities are tracked through the Ontario Writing Assessment (OWA). In the CIS Secondary Program, students from Grades 9-11 are building Writing Portfolios, which will be used as a tool for reflection and meta-cognitive exercises.

CIS uses *Steps to English Proficiency (STEP)*, which is “a framework for assessing and monitoring language acquisition and literacy development of English language learners across The Ontario Curriculum.” The two major components are the resources for the

Initial Assessment for the time of entry to the new learning environment, and also for Ongoing Assessment once the student has entered the classroom. STEP is a resource which helps teachers to assess and track students over time. The STEP continua in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking skills support teachers to assess and record evidence of students' progress gathered, over time, in a variety of day-to-day learning experiences. The STEP criteria are not referenced to any external norm. Rather, STEP is referenced to a mastery criterion by which an individual ELL is assessed individually to the STEP language developmental continua. The STEP Framework has been developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education and can be accessed at www.edugains.ca.

V. IB Course offerings at CIS

Group 1

English A: Language and Literature SL/HL

Vietnamese A: Literature SL/HL

Korean A: Language and Literature SL/HL

School-Supported Self-Taught Language A: Literature SL

Group 2

French ab initio/B SL

English B HL

It is our belief that English proficiency is one of the most important factors in the success of a student in the IB Diploma Programme. We strive to develop our students' English language proficiency extensively throughout the younger grades in order for them to be successful in achieving the goals of the IB or the Ontario curriculum.

Since our school originally followed the Ontario curriculum for grades K-12, we chose French to be our second language option for students. Most of our IB students would have been studying French for perhaps 0-2 years, so French B would be too difficult for them. Especially considering that English is not their first language, this makes learning a third language that much more difficult.

In the future, however, as our French program improves and more students have more French experience, we will offer French B to those students who are capable and have moved beyond French ab initio.

Vietnamese students are encouraged to study French as a third language but due to government policies, **Vietnamese IB students studying French will have to study extra Vietnamese on Saturday.** This is communicated to both parents and students via information sessions, the course selection sheet, and in literature.

This policy will continue to be reviewed throughout our delivery of the IB Diploma Programme. The Language Policy Committee will meet twice a year to evaluate effectiveness of the policy. Further meetings may be held, according to needs based on feedback from stakeholders and changes in programming.