

## Language policy for the IB Diploma Programme at Nesbru videregående skole

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At Nesbru videregående skole, we are devoted to learning. We firmly believe that the development of language and literacy skills is both important and fundamental to the promotion of life-long learning. We consider multilingualism a major means of promoting international-mindedness and in increasing our intercultural awareness and understanding. Therefore, language and literacy skills are developed in all subjects across the curriculum and all teachers are considered teachers of language.

### Links to the IB Learner profile:

As IB learners we strive to be	
<p><b>COMMUNICATORS</b> We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspective of other individuals and groups.</p>	<p><b>OPEN-MINDED</b> We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and tradition of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.</p>

### Links to approaches to learning (ATL):

ATL skills that apply to language proficiency
<b>Communication skills</b>

### Relevant International Baccalaureate publications:

IB publication	Contents
<i>Language and learning in IB programmes</i>	Description of the philosophies, theories, pedagogy and policy that underpin the development of multilingualism. Also includes guidelines for developing a school language policy.
<i>Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes</i>	Introduction to a pedagogy for second language learners
<i>Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy</i>	Audit tools for schools as they review and develop their language policy
<i>Developing academic literacy in IB programmes</i>	Framework to help teachers plan for the development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)

**The aim of this policy is to:**

- Promote appreciation of the richness and diversity of language in our school community
- Promote multilingualism to increase the international-mindedness and intercultural understanding in our school community
- Emphasize that language, by its nature, is integrated into all subjects and areas of the curriculum and that all teachers within the school are considered language teachers
- Communicate the commitment of the school to provide as much diversity of language instruction as possible.
- Emphasize the importance of first language development for cultural identity and understanding one's own culture

Nesbru videregående skole provides a language education programme based on:

- The principles and practices of the Norwegian National Educational System
- The principles and practices of the IB Diploma Programme
- Support for first language development
- Support for second language acquisition and development

## 1. Diversity of the student population and overview of language requirements

The vast majority of our students have Norwegian as their first language. Others have English as their first language or are bilingual in Norwegian and English, and a small percentage are students with various other first languages. For students enrolled in the Norwegian national educational system, all students must study Norwegian in all three years of upper secondary school and English for at least one year. Students enrolled in the Educational Programme for Specialization in General Studies (*Studieforberedende utdanningsprogram*) are also required to study a second language for at least two years. The school offers classes in French, German and Spanish at various levels in this programme.

Students enrolled in IB Diploma programme must study a least two languages; one first or native language (Language A level) and one second language (Language B level) for the two years of the programme. Alternatively, bilingual students may choose to study languages at Language A level. At Nesbru videregående skole we offer classes in English A Literature and Norwegian A Literature at both Standard and Higher Level.

Alternatively, students can study their first language with school support as a Language A literature self-taught language at Standard Level. The school offers classes in Spanish, French at the Language B Standard Level when there is demand for these courses from a cohort of applicants; the second language classes that are started each Diploma Programme period depend on student interests and needs. In situations where there are not enough students to start a Language B class, the school will register students for a Language B SL or *ab initio* course with an online provider, Pamoja Education, if the course is available. Currently students are enrolled in Mandarin *ab initio* via Pamoja.

At Nesbru videregående skole, we regard the continuous development of first language as crucial for maintaining cultural identity. Furthermore, we recognize the importance of

acquiring and developing second language proficiency to allow interaction and communication with people belonging to other cultures and promote internationalism and intercultural respect. We subscribe to an extended understanding of language that also includes the visual arts and the symbol representations in mathematics and the natural sciences. The responsibilities of the various members of our school community is summarized in the table below.

Group	Responsibilities
<b>The School Leadership Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize resources for establishing required subject groups in first and second language as dictated by the national and IB requirements</li> <li>• Invest in qualified and professional language teachers for the language of instruction, host language and other languages</li> <li>• Promote and maintain focus on both first language and second language development</li> <li>• Promote and maintain focus on learning host language, Norwegian, for students and staff for better integration in local community</li> <li>• Promote language diversity and multilingualism as values throughout the school community</li> <li>• Promote development of literacy skills in all subjects</li> <li>• Review and update the Language profile regularly</li> <li>• Enable first language development through support of Language A Literature self-taught SL by utilizing resources for school-based coordinator and by finding suitable tutors where appropriate</li> <li>• Utilize resources to allow students that cannot access second the language classes offered by the school by supporting online learning of second languages</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the principle that all subject teachers are also considered language teachers in our school and establish classroom practice to reflect this</li> <li>• Establish classroom practice that focus on literacy skills in all subjects</li> <li>• Establish a classroom practice where teaching and learning addresses the language needs of both first language speakers and those learning in a language other than their first tongue</li> <li>• Continually evaluate the learning outcome of students through formal assessment practices and use adapted learning techniques where student language proficiency may reduce their learning outcomes</li> <li>• Seek support from student support division when required</li> </ul>
<b>Parents and legal guardians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If applicable, show support of first language development through support of Language A Literature self-taught SL by functioning informally as tutor or aiding the school in finding tutorial support.</li> </ul>

## 2. Current language practices and resources

### **Language of instruction**

The language of instruction in the Diploma Programme is English in all subjects with the exception of Norwegian A, Norwegian B and other non-English Language B classes. Student proficiency in English is evaluated as part of the admission process prior to enrolment in the Diploma Programme.

### **Language of communication**

English is the language spoken in the classroom in most subjects as described above and is the encouraged language of communication between students enrolled in the Diploma Programme and between students and staff. Although most of our student population has Norwegian as their first language, we encourage students to use English as the language of communication in order to avoid the exclusion of students who may have another first language and a limited proficiency in Norwegian whenever present. However, in situations where all students are fluent in Norwegian and these considerations do not apply, we encourage the use of Norwegian in order to better include IB students with the rest of the school community. We put no restraints on the communication between students in any way and encourage the communication in whatever language they feel most comfortable.

### **Classroom and assessment practice**

At Nesbru videregående skole, we recognize that language problems have impact on the individual student's understanding and learning outcome. As such, we acknowledge that all teachers are language teachers in their respective subjects. Teachers are role models and model language through everyday use and by directly teaching vocabulary and establish terms within and across disciplines. Our teachers create a risk-free environment to encourage a variety of means of communication and actively contribute to allow the students to improve their use of the target language in the subject with respect to correctness, precision, clarity, versatility and appropriateness. Furthermore, teachers plan for the regular use of activities that enhance basic literacy skills such as numeracy, being able to read and to express oneself orally and in writing and to use information- and communication technology (ICT) tools in all subjects. Classroom practice at the school supports multiple systems of communication, and teachers practice methods to both assess and correct language weaknesses at an individual, group or class level.

### **The library**

The library is the natural study centre at the school. The library staff works to constantly acquire new books in a variety of modern languages. The books include textbooks, fiction and nonfiction, predominantly in English and Norwegian. However, there is also a smaller section for literature for Language A Literature self-taught students. The library also has access to textbooks in Norwegian that corresponds to the national equivalents for several of the subjects offered in the Diploma Programme that can be used to aid students with Norwegian as their first language alongside IB textbooks in English to aid them in their learning. Our head librarian has also received training via IB-provided workshops

and works with each cohort of IBDP students to help them utilize the library's resources for IB reading and research projects, especially the Extend Essay.

### **Students with special needs**

The teachers and staff at our school are aware of the fact that students with special needs, both academic and social or personal, need special consideration. If differentiated teaching methods and modification of classroom practice have not solved the problems of such a student enrolled in the Diploma Programme, the counsellor, home room teacher, IB coordinator, and if needed the Head of Department for special educational needs review the student's information and decide on an action plan.

## **3. Support of first language**

The school offers two Language A subjects as well as the option to study other Language A subjects as self-taught if the school does not offer classes in their first language. Both our Language A offers are Language A Literature courses, English A literature and Norwegian A literature. We may in the future chose to change one of the two languages to the Language A Language and Literature course to allow more diversity in the Group 1 subjects.

### **Norwegian A**

As the majority of our students have Norwegian as their first language, Norwegian A Literature is a very common subject choice among our students. This is further strengthened by the national requirements to either study Norwegian A or Norwegian B in the Diploma Programme to have access to higher education in Norway and to be eligible to receive scholarships and student loan from the Norwegian State Educational Load Fund.

### **English A**

Norwegian students are generally very competent in English after having studied English since their first years in primary school. However, English A Literature is not a natural choice for many Norwegian students as they feel English B HL is more appropriate for them and their needs. As such, with English A Literature the school offers a subject that allows foreign students from English-speaking schools or Norwegians from internationally mobile families to continue studying their language of instructions in the Diploma Programme while at the same time providing a challenging course for Norwegians with a national background who want an additional challenge or who have an interest for literature.

### **Other Language A offers**

A student with a different first language than the two offered by the school, may study his or her first language as an independent, self-taught course, but only at standard level. In this case, the school will aid in designing a course with literature works selected according to the IB requirements and provide the student with the necessary literature. The literature works from the world literature section of the course will be selected from

the works studied by either the English A or Norwegian A Literature courses to allow the student to follow classes in another Language A course in the language that is his or her best second language of the two courses offered. Self-taught students are included in one of the two offered Language A courses whenever general skills in literary analysis are taught and when selected works in translation are analysed. However, the student will read these works in his or her chosen first language and write the required written assignments and sit the final oral and written exams in that language. The school will provide the student with a language tutor from an offered language at the school and, if available, a tutor proficient in the language in question for support. In the last two years, the school has offered students the following self-taught languages: Arabic, Spanish, and Dutch.

#### 4. Support of second language

##### **English B**

Although Norwegian students and most of our international students are competent in English, it is the school's experience that some of our students are not prepared for difficulty level English A Literature, even at standard level. This is especially apparent in some aspects of the English A subject where these students lack the cultural references to perform in accordance to the time and energy they invest in the course. As a result, the combination of Norwegian A and English B is a common choice for our students. However, we do not offer English B at standard level based on student proficiency in and previous exposure to English. Our school is considering phasing out English B altogether in the next few years, and replacing it and English A Literature with English A Language and Literature, as this course may be better suited to the English language needs of a majority of our applicants, or perhaps limiting English B as a course choice of students on a case-by-case basis.

##### **Norwegian B**

Some of our students are less fluent in Norwegian due to lack of exposure after several years in international schools around the world or due to being relatively new to our country. For these students Norwegian B is the natural choice for second language since the study of Norwegian is also a requirement for admission to Norwegian universities and future student loans. Student who are less fluent in Norwegian due to lack of exposure after studies abroad or that are relatively new to our country are given the opportunity to study Norwegian B. However, due to changes in Norwegian higher education language requirements from 2020, students planning to continue studies in Norway after completing the IBDP must have at least Norwegian B Higher Level or privately complete a state language exam or courses detailed on the website of the Norwegian Universities and College Admissions Services (*Samordna opptak*). Norwegian B is also considered an ideal course for integrating students into Norwegian society in an otherwise English-speaking programme, and students in this course range from near-fluent to perhaps only a few years of exposure. As such, there is wide variation of skills levels and language proficiency in this subject. This is further strengthened by the fact that there is no Norwegian *ab initio* subject in the IB subject offers.

## **Other Language B offers (French, Spanish and others)**

French and Spanish are only offered at Language B Standard Level at our school. As our maximum number of students is 60, upholding a varied and sustainable second language offer of these languages have been and is an ongoing challenge. The opportunity to study these languages means that the school is attractive to international students. We pride ourselves by the fact that we have managed to offer classes in both major languages at the beginning of each school year thereby enabling our students to study three languages. However, these classes are costly, and class-size can be as few as 5 students which can lead to a strained learning environment. These language offerings are also vulnerable when students change subjects after admission and some courses have had to be cancelled due to costs; also due to constraints in the timetable, students may have to prioritize other subjects over one of these language courses due to overlapping class times.

In order to provide a more stable Language B offer, the school registers students for courses with online providers such as Pamoja Education (at the cost of the student,) and has appointed a school-based coordinator to follow up these students and arrange for assessment situations as required by the provider and IB. In the last two years, the school has registered students for Mandarin *ab initio* and Spanish B. As of the 2019 – 2020 school year, we have been able to offer Spanish B Standard Level in house.

## **5. Links to other policy documents**

### **Links to the admission policy**

As part of the admission process to the Diploma programme, the language proficiency of the applicants is evaluated through formal documentation supplied as part of the application. Where in doubt, the DP coordinator may schedule an interview with the applicant. The language proficiency may affect the subjects the student is advised to study in the Diploma programme.

### **Links to the special educational needs policy**

Students with special needs may apply for special arrangements in written examinations such as extra time and the use of work processor with spell-check. In oral examination, such arrangements can include extra preparation time.