



LISA Language Policy

Purpose: This language policy document serves as a framework for Lemania International School Altdorf (LISA) linguistic and learning goals and is consistent with the stated principles and practices of the IB.

School Mission Statement:

Lemania International School Altdorf believes in the curious nature of every child and our mission is to develop students as competent, curious, and engaged global citizens who help to create a more caring and peaceful world.

We are convinced that curiosity of other cultures fosters intercultural respect and understanding in an international environment.

We believe that curiosity together with open-mindedness and compassion leads to excellence in achievement and every students' realization of his or her true potential.

We believe that curiosity, in combination with a principled framework, encourages students in their learning process in key ways:

Core Values and Guiding Principles

Innovation. We lead in *innovative and creative* problem solving, across local and global settings.

Respect. We endeavour to understand ourselves and our unique perspectives whilst respecting the perspectives, values and culture of others.

Accountability. We take personal ownership of our actions and take responsibility as citizens of the world.

Communication. We understand the importance of multilingual communication, audience adaptation, and the virtue of listening in cooperating with others.

Reflective. We learn to understand our strengths and weaknesses through a guided process of self-reflection and personal development.

Academics. We strive for academic excellence and support our students to develop their individual abilities to the highest level of their potential. We provide a high quality international education, leading in pedagogy, innovation and global citizenship, within an intercultural environment.

Vision

We are committed to becoming an outstanding International Baccalaureate educational institution providing a challenging and well-rounded education to students from across the globe that imparts critical thinking skills, knowledge and a lifelong love of learning necessary for them to thrive as global citizens. We are committed to developing future generations of leaders prepared to tackle global challenges with confidence. We are committed to openness, inclusiveness, diversity, environmental sustainability, and excellence in achievement.



1. Language Philosophy

The LISA language policy provides the guiding principles and ethos for learning language. Languages are essential for identity, culture, and learning. In this light, clarity on the school's principles for the use of language and learning languages is necessary.

At LISA we believe:

- Developing students' mother tongue/first language is essential
- Developing a second language has educational, social, cognitive and professional benefits.
- Developing and mastering the English language is the key to accessing information and to communicating internationally.
- Learning the local host country language (German and French) is important and must be supported.
- English language learning occurs outside of class (halls, dining hall, school trips, sports, activities, etc.).
- All teachers are language teachers.

2. School Language Profile and Admissions Policies

A. Language Profile

English is the language of instruction throughout the school and the school's official language of communication.

The school communicates in English and when necessary in other languages to accommodate parents. All staff members (besides the Chinese teacher) speak English with students outside of class.

Teachers at LISA are fluently bilingual. All staff should have a working knowledge of English. The school makes every effort to hire staff (teaching or non-teaching) who can communicate in English.

LISA has a unique position to be comprised of 100% native Chinese speakers in its year of inception. The school celebrates the Chinese culture and supports students' maintenance of their first language. The school also recognizes the difficult challenge that this places on its long-term goal to be an English speaking international school. LISA strives to have a cultural and linguistic balance within the school community. All recruitment and advertising measures are taken to achieve our goal of becoming a multilingually balanced school. A majority of LISA students' first choice for their future career is an Anglo-Saxon university (US, Canada, UK). Every effort to introduce students to Anglo-Saxon culture is made to best prepare our students to the cultural transition during university.

Universities place a heavy importance on extracurricular experience, and through active participation in LISA's comprehensive IB CAS programme students at LISA are well prepared. LISA prepares students for English language tests, SATs, and have a process to start their portfolio in grade 10. LISA suggests additional intensive preparatory courses that



are available for students over the summer in person or online self-guided study i.e. <https://www.kaptest.com/sat>.

The languages on offer at the moment are

English A LL HL/ SL
Chinese A Lit HL/SL

English B HL/SL

Self-taught languages when feasible*

LISA also offers German and French classes that are not part of the curriculum but provide the students with an opportunity to learn the language of the country.

It is to be noted that the subject offer is reviewed every year to conform to the new cohort.

* Self-taught languages are offered under certain conditions and must be discussed during the admission process. The main conditions are:

- That it is possible for the school to provide a competent teacher in the language
- That this teacher is aligned with the IB philosophy and aware of IB requirements
- That the learning environment is sound and provides the student with the best chances of success
- That the solution provides the students with regular lessons

It is to be noted that self-taught languages are not included in the tuition fee. There will be an additional fee to be discussed with the DP Coordinator.

B. Admissions Policies

In addition to subject-specific competency tests, previous grades and former teacher and school director letters of recommendation, new applicants must complete an online background survey which outlines their language abilities in their mother tongue, English as well as any other spoken languages. If English is not the student's mother tongue, their application will need to be reviewed by the language department head.

As a rule, an intermediate English level (A2-B1) is the minimum requirement for admission into the preparatory/IGCSE year (grade 10). To be directly admitted into year 1 of IB diploma programme, students will need a minimum of a B2 English language level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/cefr/>).

The English department head oversees reviewing EAL students' applications. This includes review of each student's EAL portfolio of English language acquisition, and/or interview students in person or via skype individually before acceptance is granted into the programme.

Students entering the preparatory IB year (grade 10) are usually 15 years of age. Students at the age of 14, with the demonstrated academic knowledge and abilities, and with a minimum English level of A2 may be considered for early admittance into the preparatory/IGCSE year.



Students that have not obtained the necessary language proficiency at the end of the preparatory/IGCSE will need to repeat the preparatory/IGCSE year before admittance into the IB Diploma Programme.

Students entering Grades 11 and wishing to complete their IB DP in English A, must give evidence of near native English proficiency. A table describing IB and Common European Framework language levels is available for download from the LISA website. As part of their application process, English A candidate students may be required to submit a portfolio of past work in English including academic written work and oral/video recordings, and a standardised English language acquisition test. A C1 level is the requirement for Language A students.

LISA Admissions team does not discriminate in its policies and practices and accepts qualified students of any race, colour, national, ethnic origin, and religion. LISA celebrates diversity which is a core IB value.

3. Language of Instruction

School wide practices

- Students use of English is encouraged within the school and on official class outings.
- All new students are tested to assess their English competence
- The library includes fiction and nonfiction books, classic and modern, in English, German, French, Chinese.
- The school orders the necessary novels/textbooks
- Joint events with other schools (E.g. Lemania Lausanne) and/or local clubs (E.g. Rowing club/debate clubs, poetry club) encourage the use of English, Chinese, French and German.
- Student work is frequently displayed in classrooms and the hallways.
- Debates, plays, presentations and other events are staged in front of the school and all staff to provide students an opportunity to present in English in front of a real-live audience.
- Translation services are provided for parents who do not speak English (Ex: Chinese).
- Currently, all our students are non-native English speakers. It is therefore mandatory that all teachers take training (in-school or off-site) to keep up to date with best practices in teaching EAL in the mainstream.
- Free French, German or English lessons are available to teachers.
- English Star of the Month Award is handed out and voted on by all teachers (in and out of class overall English effort)

4. Language Programme

A. Pedagogy

LISA promotes inquiry-based learning. Teachers begin each new unit with a class discussion of the learning outcomes and guiding questions. At LISA all teachers are language teachers.



Students are identified by their English teacher in case of any special language needs such as accommodations and modifications and additional scaffolding resources. In some cases, teachers may offer supplementary help or language clubs to assist those students.

EAL learners need additional support and as English language teachers, all LISA teachers use an increased amount of the following:

- Visuals
- Graphic organisers
- Collaborative activities
- Modelling
- Drama and role play
- Using learner's first language ability
- Language drills
- Scaffolding

LISA strives to achieve the goal of authentic contexts in language learning. For example, classes are often themed based, dealing with real-world, topical issues. In addition, towards the aim of authentic context language learning, LISA offers at least one-week cultural trip to London, UK each year during the spring time.

B. Assessment

At LISA there are varying levels of language abilities and rates of language acquisition. Language teachers assess all language skills including reading, writing, listening, speaking.

Differentiated assessment is offered to students to cater to their multiple intelligences, learning styles, and varying levels.

LISA places a high importance on performance assessment. This allows the students to “do” and assesses application of skills more than knowledge. It also puts a higher order on critical thinking skills and higher order on thinking skills.

LISA assessments maintain a balance of individual and group work, and a high priority is placed on project-based learning.

Formative (assessment for learning) and summative assessments (assessment of learning) are regularly used. Detailed rubrics are provided and explained to students the day the assignment is given to provide clear criterion and expectations. Students can ask specific questions about the rubric to ensure their full comprehension of the expectations.

C. Mother Tongue development, translanguaging and library

LISA believes in ‘additive bilingualism’: while learning English, it is important that students maintain and develop their first language skills and that their culture remains valued. LISA facilitates this process in and outside of the classroom. Students participate in Language A in mother tongue whether in class or self-taught when possible.

At teacher's discretion, students occasionally are provided opportunities to use their mother tongue when appropriate in order that they transfer prior knowledge from one language to



English - “translanguaging”. E.g. Take two minutes to discuss a concept/theme in Chinese during class time. Then students write in English about the discussed topic. The activity of translanguaging helps students process the information and improve communication in their second language.

The library offers books in all the languages from the school community.

D. Continued Professional Development

As all teachers are language teachers, they all receive special on-site and off-site PD opportunities (workshops, IB courses, etc) to keep up to date with EAL best practices.

The Head of EAL in concert with the school director ensure that best practices and effective EAL strategies are successfully implemented in all classes. EAL teachers also offer workshops for all teachers.

5. LISA Summer Language Program

Students are offered (not obligated) to take summer language courses in either English or German over a period of 6 weeks (mid-June to end of July). The course offers an intensive program of study whilst providing an opportunity for extracurricular and cultural activities. The course aims to increase students’ language aptitude, and to gain greater confidence in their use of the language, in and outside of the classroom.

6. Goals for the future

LISA teachers and administrators understand that the acquisition of English is facilitated when students study in a multicultural and multilingual environment. This creates a truly international environment and promotes the use of English between all pupils, while also being conducive to learning another language. In many cases in international schools, students learn a third or fourth language through constant interaction with other international students.

With this in mind, LISA is actively recruiting students and teachers across many countries to achieve our goals of becoming a truly international school that is represented by a diverse student and teacher body. Recruitment of teachers gives priority to qualified teachers with experience teaching EAL and native tongue speakers. Teachers with EAL additional qualifications are also preferred.