

International School of Tallinn Language Policy

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Guiding Statement

The official language of instruction in the school is English, and the language learning is integrated into the topics covered in the lessons. International School of Tallinn provides an opportunity to learn foreign languages either as part of the curriculum or outside the curriculum. Learning environment and organisation of studies of the International School of Tallinn supports the development of students into independent and active learner, protects and promotes the mental and physical health of children and takes into account differences and needs of students from different nationalities and cultural background.

Shared Beliefs

- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue (if possible), host country language and other languages. (“Section A: Philosophy”—standard A, 7).
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognize that all teachers are responsible for language development of students. (“Section C: Curriculum”—standard C1, 8).
- Teaching and learning address the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning in a language(s) other than mother tongue. (“Section C: Curriculum”—standard C3, 7).
- Teaching and learning demonstrate that all teachers are responsible for language development of students. (“Section C: Curriculum”—standard C3, 8).
- The school develops and implements policies and procedures that support the programme(s). (“Section B: Organization”—standard B1, 5).
- The school has developed and implements a language policy that is consistent with IB expectation.

Language Profile and Admission

The language of instruction of the International School of Tallinn is English. The school accepts both native English speakers as well as students who do not master or master it a little. In each class, it is possible to learn all or certain subjects based on an individual program according to the student's knowledge and skills (including learning difficulties and special talent).

Students who do not master the language of instruction of the school or master it to a small extent are offered support in fast learning of the school's language of instruction. If necessary, there will be intensive English language learning in all subjects. Beside knowledge defined in the curriculum, also the subject-related vocabulary is taught in the lessons. Lots of illustrating by visual aids and manual activities are used for faster acquiring of English. In addition to language learning that is integrated to the subjects, there will also be English classes prescribed by the school's curriculum. The school will have close cooperation with parents during the period of language learning and adaptation. The International School of Tallinn implements the adaptation program to help students and their parents from foreign countries to adapt.

Learning and Teaching

In our revised English curriculum, IST has adapted the different Text Types* as the context of our language teaching and learning. The curriculum is composed of language units, scope and sequence and learning experiences that are rich in specific features and usage that can be an integral part of the Program of Inquiry that will help to drive the language aspects of the inquiry process.

Learning the language of instruction (English language) takes place in the following study forms:

- Acquisition of the language in the English language and literature lessons.
- Contents of the English language and literature teaching depends on whether the language is learnt as a native language or a foreign language.
- Teaching of the language of instruction in other lessons (acquisition of subject-related vocabulary, learning environment in English in all subjects).
- Language teaching through harmonised syllabi, which ensures the acquisition of the general language competencies.
- Studies of the language of instruction of the school, foreign language A, Estonian as a second language and, if possible, student's native language is integrated.
- Events and projects.

Additional Languages

Estonian

Estonian language as a second language is taught in the International School of Tallinn from the first grade. Estonian language as the second language is taught in the first stage of study twice a week in each class, starting from the second stage of study there will be 4 lessons a week.

Estonian language as part of the studies means:

- Teaching Estonian as the second language in lessons;
- Teaching the Estonian language as integrated with other lessons;
- Teaching Estonian language and culture outside the classroom (training visits, hikes and excursions in the Estonian language and culture space, joint events with Estonian students; theatre shows in Estonian).

Learning Estonian language and culture in direct language environment takes place at least during 35 lessons in an academic year per each class. Teaching the Estonian language as the second language may take place also through participating in Estonian hobby group or training outside the school's curriculum. If studies of or activities in the Estonian language outside the curriculum enables the student to achieve learning outcomes specified in the school's or individual curriculum, the school may consider it as part taught at school.

Foreign Languages

Teaching foreign language A (mostly French; then also Russian or German language; some other language can also be considered if there are at least five interested students of the year group) starts in the International School of Tallinn from grade 3. Starting to learn foreign language A depends on the adequate command of the language of instruction of the school.

Foreign language A is the third foreign language learnt for the students who learn school's language of instruction besides Estonian as the second language and English as a foreign language.

The school organises the language and cultural studies for the students whose native language is not the school's language of instruction or who use as home language other than the language of instruction that is the native language of at least one parent, if at least ten students with the same native language or home communication language desire it. The Government of the Republic shall establish the conditions and procedure for creating the opportunities for language and cultural studies.*

Approved: Director's Order, 29 Aug 2018.

References

- Document: [IST Curriculum General](#)*
- Document: *Language and Learning in IB programmes*
- Document: *K-6 English Module, Board of Studies NSW**

A note on the process of this document

This policy must be developed as a working document through the following: [Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy](#), Published April 2008; a document provided by the IBO.