



# Silver Fern International School

## Language Policy

### Rationale

Language lies at the center of all learning at SFIS and the SFIS language policy outlines how we develop language for the learners of our school.

### SFIS Language Philosophy Statement

We align our SFIS language philosophy to the mission of our school while acknowledging that every teacher needs to be a language teacher to teach the language that is important to their discipline.

1. We enquire using a well-designed curriculum within a safe and caring environment where we inspire growth socially, emotionally, physically and academically. Language is at the heart of all student learning and is fundamental to our inquiry framework as it is a basic tool of inquiry, communication and understanding. Language is acquired over time and is the fundamental glue that holds the curriculum together. Each subject has its own specific language and vocabulary, which should be displayed in the class (should be displayed in more than one language to help develop mother tongue), and that can be learned.
2. We make a difference in the world through problem solving at every level by respecting and taking responsibility for ourselves, others and the environment. Global citizenship is an integral part of the SFIS mission and we believe environmental stewardship is the responsibility of every global citizen. As a school, we support sustainability and foster this consciousness in our students as well as an awareness of the language associated with sustainability. It is therefore imperative that students are equipped with the language skills to achieve this.
3. We actively learn about different cultures, respect, appreciate and celebrate diversity, while taking action to become global citizens. Language is critical to developing and maintaining cultural identity and to learning about the culture of others. We believe that it is important for our learners to continue their language development in their MT as we believe this supports their development in English. We believe that by valuing and supporting the mother tongues in our school as best we can, that we are achieving our goal of intercultural awareness and understanding of other cultures.
4. We challenge ourselves to achieve our potential by empowering a diverse set of skills while celebrating success wherever it occurs. Acknowledgement and recognition should be given to students when they succeed or make progress in language areas. Teachers can acknowledge students in the class, at assemblies or at other important functions that are appropriate. Inform the parents of child's success or growth on a regular basis allowing the parents to get involved.



## Definition of terms:

EAL	English as an Additional Language
IEP	Individual Education Plan
L1	First language, or mother tongue. This may not be the language in which a student is most academically competent
L2	Second language; for the purposes of this document the term usually designates English where English is not a student's mother tongue, but may also mean Thai.
Language A	Language studied as the student's home language, usually the mother-tongue language.
Language B	Language studied as the student's second language where the student is not studying two Languages (A).
Push-in	EAL specialist teachers accompany EAL students to mainstream classes. EAL specialists work in collaboration with the mainstream teachers to scaffold and deconstruct language thus rendering the content more accessible to the EAL students.
Pull-out	EAL specialist teachers teach a parallel curriculum to EAL students in a sheltered environment.
MT	Mother Tongue

## Language of instruction:

At SFIS, students are supported in their development of English through our English as an Additional Language (EAL) policy. As we recognize the importance of MT development, the school also endeavors to offer support for these languages as well. At present, additional MT support is offered for only Thai and Chinese but we are working on developing these programmes further. Students who have IEP's may be exempt from studying a language in addition to English with approval from the Head of School. In the school, the teaching of English will be holistically integrated across the curriculum.

## Language of communication:

To facilitate clarity of communication and support all members of the SFIS community in receiving important information, SFIS will ensure the following:

- Across the school, teachers support L1 use in the classroom where appropriate. For example it is appropriate to use L1 to clarify and support comprehension in learning situations where students are processing new information of concepts. Students who currently lack proficiency in English may benefit from discussion with their L1 peers and/or support staff
- All staff will use English for any formal documentation to parents. This will be translated into Thai when appropriate.



- The school recognizes that some members of the community may have difficulty in accessing information given exclusively in English. When there is a significant number of students who share the same MT, or at the request of parents, the school will seek to establish appropriate volunteers from the SFIS community to provide support. For example, where possible, translation/interpretation services may be provided at parent-teacher conferences. Parents will be asked to volunteer to read during functions like mother tongue week.
- All staff and students will endeavor to use English as the language of spoken communication at SFIS. However, in social situations any language common to the whole group may be spoken, although we encourage the use of English.

## **Thai language**

Thai is offered in all grade levels beginning in EYP 1. In EYP 1 and 2, students receive four periods of Thai Language and Culture classes per week. From PYP 1 onwards, students receive five periods of Thai Language and Culture classes per week. This requirement meets demands from the Thai Ministry of Education. These Thai language classes support MT development for speakers of Thai while providing an opportunity for other speakers to learn the skills of learning a new language.

## **Chinese**

All students receive 2 periods of Chinese language and culture course from PYP 1 onwards. These Chinese language classes supports MT development for speakers of Chinese as well as additional language acquisition for students whose MT is not Chinese.

## **English A and other A Languages**

SFIS acknowledges the importance of maintaining and developing language and literacy skills in the L1. For primary students, the teaching of English is integrated into the Units of Inquiry with some specific language skills taught in discrete lessons. SFIS looks to offer individualized study in other languages and may offer extracurricular L1 support outside the timetable.

## **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

SFIS provides support to learners where English is an additional language. We recognize that all teachers are teachers of English and provide opportunities for professional development in strategies that give English L2 students access to the content of varied subject groups. SFIS provides EAL support for all students whose L1 is not English. Our EAL policy sets out the minimum standards in English for acceptance of students into the school. The EAL programme may include a combination of pull-out and push-in support across the week.