



Language Policy

Last Review: March 2023

Review cycle: 3 years

Next Review: March 2026



Wellspring Learning Community

Language Policy

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Related Policies:

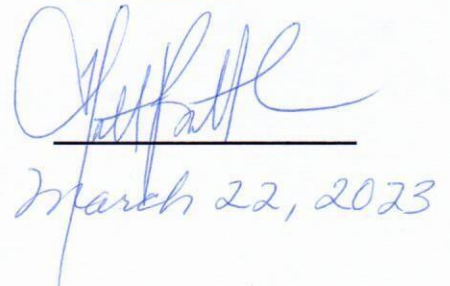
Admissions
Assessment
Promotion
Inclusion
Learning Diversity

Approvals - names and signatures:

Chairperson of the Board



Head of School



March 22, 2023

Wellspring Learning Community

Language Policy

Wellspring Learning Community's Mission Statement

Wellspring Learning Community aims to establish an inquiry-based learning environment in which students from diverse backgrounds are given every opportunity to optimize their social, emotional and academic capacities and talents. Our students will become confident, resourceful, creative, caring, responsible global and local citizens prepared to use their education to contribute in meaningful ways towards improving society, both locally and internationally.

Language Philosophy and Guiding Principles

Language Learning is a life-long process. Learning more than one language facilitates diversity and international mindedness. It is a tool for global engagement, intercultural understanding, awareness of the world, and ultimately allows students to grow as global citizens. Multilingualism is central to the identity of Wellspring and the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme. The ongoing language development of Wellspring learners is the shared responsibility of parents, students, teachers and the administration.

As Lebanon is the host country of Wellspring, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), English, and French are the written and spoken languages used (excluding the Lebanese Colloquial Arabic (LCA) which is only the spoken dialect). MSA is used in all government documents.

At Wellspring, English is the language of instruction. All three languages co-exist to prioritize developing learners' communication and interaction skills in different real-life contexts. Students develop their conceptual understanding and language skills through a range of learning engagements and opportunities offered by each of the IB programmes.

Wellspring embraces a whole-language approach to language learning. Data collected from assessments in language proficiency is used to inform instruction and plan for language support when needed.

Student Language Profile

The student language profile found in the school's Open Apply online form, provides the school with a clear idea of the student's language learning and communication history. It provides valuable information to inform good teaching practices as it informs the school of the student's home language learning and literacy, their strengths and possibly language needs. The student's language profile will guide teaching strategy choices, resource allocations, and needed interventions.

Arabic Language Requirements Issued by the Ministry of Education

According to Lebanese Law, all students, regardless of nationality, who are enrolled in a private or public school must study Arabic, the host country language, until the end of Grade 10.

Students who are Expats with only one foreign nationality, those who have dual nationalities or students who have lived and studied outside of Lebanon for a specific period of time (as of KG2) may apply for an exemption from taking the Grade 9 official exams, but there is no exemption from studying Arabic. Parents need to apply at the ministry for the test exemption.

Students who have presented their exemption from the obligation of taking the Lebanese Grade 9 official examinations will still be placed in either Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Arabic Language and Literature (ALL) or Arabic Language Acquisition (ALA) until the completion of Grade 10. Decision of placement may depend on their individual language profile and proficiency in Arabic.

Lebanese students enrolled in the DP have special requirements to fulfill regarding Arabic.

These are explained in detail in the 'Languages in the DP' section.

Home or Native Languages

Language is the most significant connecting element across the school's curriculum. Wellspring acknowledges that the development and reinforcement of home languages is crucial for the student's cognitive development and retention of cultural identity. As Wellspring is an international school, many students have home languages that are different from what is offered at school. Since Wellspring's priority is English as a main language of instruction, the host country Arabic, and French and Spanish as third languages, parents are encouraged to preserve their own languages that are important to their child's family or home culture.

Translanguaging and Multilingualism

Wellspring and the IB believe that translanguaging may be used as a learning tool that enhances the inquiry-based approach. Translanguaging provides students with opportunities to make better connections between their home language and school adopted languages, whenever necessary, in the aim of promoting understanding and content acquisition.

Translanguaging refers to the practice of adopting a multilingual approach in the classroom, whenever a student may need to revert to their linguistic repertoires to grasp the learning content. The goal of translanguaging is to help students overcome linguistic barriers that prevent them from accessing the learning.

Translanguaging strategies at Wellspring that promote multilingualism include the following practices:

- Adopt multilingual displays in classrooms
- Provide opportunities for students to use and share their home languages and cultures.
- Design activities that encourage students to use their languages in different contexts

such as singing and drama.

- Build a community of multilingual global citizens who thoughtfully seek commonality.
- Enrich Wellspring libraries with a substantial collection of multilingual resources.

English as a Second Language

English as a Second Language (ESL): Students who are not fluent in English and unable to fully access the school's academic curriculum may be required to join specialized ESL support classes during the school day. The aim of ESL is to support the learning of basic English skills and vocabulary at an intensive pace. This support is temporary, structured and formalized through two models: pull-out sessions or in-class support.

Before suggesting ESL, new students or current students will be asked to sit for a standardized WIDA assessment where their English language will be assessed. Once evaluated, the ESL teacher will propose a learning plan and number of sessions per month needed to achieve a suitable exit from the program. Before beginning the ESL program, parents will be informed, and fees will be discussed. The aim is to have the student exit the ESL program within one year.

Learning Diversity and Learning Foreign Languages

PYP and MYP learning diversity students who may not be able to function in learning additional foreign languages may be temporarily excused from one or two languages, depending on the submission of an official psycho-educational report or an official diagnosis from a treating therapist stating the learning issues and reasoning for excluding the student from such subjects. The ultimate decision of exemption rests with the Learning Diversity Coordinator (LDC) and the Head of School.

Languages in the Primary Years Programme (PYP)

English is the language of instruction at Wellspring and in the PYP. Subjects of English, Math, Units of Inquiry, social studies, sciences, art, music, drama, physical education and ICT are taught in English by homeroom teachers and specialty teachers. Daily classes are dedicated to mother tongue Arabic (for Lebanese students) and to the instruction of English for all students.

Arabic (MSA and ALA) and French languages are Wellspring's required 2nd and 3rd language subjects. Arabic is taught both using an inquiry-based approach and stand-alone sessions. French is taught using only a stand-alone approach.

In PYP, all language teachers consider language development by using a range of assessment strategies and tools, found in Wellspring's Assessment Policy such as portfolios, conferencing, writing sample analysis, writing journal, self and peer assessment. The assessment of student learning in the language program is based on oral (listening and speaking), written (reading and writing), and visual communication (viewing and presenting) strands in PYP.

The language programs in the PYP:

1. Mother Tongue: Arabic (MSA) from age 3 (Nursery)
2. Language of Instruction: English from age 3 (Nursery)
3. English as a Second Language (ESL): Students who are unable to fully access English academic curriculum may be required to receive specialized support in English as a Second Language (ESL).
4. Arabic Language Acquisition (ALA): is required for non-Lebanese students whose home language is not Arabic and to those who hold a second foreign passport and are exempt from official exams. ALA students are placed in phases that are compatible with their abilities as determined through placement assessments.
5. French Language Acquisition (FLA): is offered to PYP students beginning in Early Years through Grade Five. The rationale for learning French is to nurture international mindedness and intercultural awareness through the acquisition of the language. FLA students are placed in phases which are complementary to their proficiency of the French language.

Languages in the Middle Years Programme (MYP)

English

English is the language of instruction and is offered as a Language and Literature (L&L) course. Students with below average fluency (the ability to read with certain speed or the ability to comprehend grade level passages) in English (using the PTE or the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System) may need to be enrolled in an ESL course in addition to their English Language and Literature (EL&L) course. In rare instances where the student's English language proficiency is three years or more below level, the student will be pulled out completely from EL&L.

Objectives of the English MYP L&L course include the ability to analyze, organize, produce text and use language. A variety of contexts and concepts are explored in the L&L course including but not limited to identity, heritage, culture, diversity, globalization, civilizations, media communication, youth, families and relationships. Accordingly, MYP students actively interact through reading and listening as well as creatively produce different literary and authentic text genres/types ranging from narratives and essays to posters, brochures and blogs.

Learning diversity (LD) students are also offered additional and differentiated support through modified and/or accommodated programs tailored to scaffold their learning (for details regarding the program, the IEPs, and track record of each student's performance, refer to the Learning Diversity Policy).

Arabic

Arabic language is offered as two different subjects:

Language and Literature (AL&L): students who communicate in Arabic conceptually, verbally, and in writing most of the time are considered native speakers. Some native speakers (if they only hold the Lebanese nationality) are required to sit for Brevet Grade 9 national exams. These are considered bilingual students as the official Grade 9 Brevet Arabic language and humanities exams are administered in Arabic while the rest of the exams are administered in English.

Language Acquisition: Expat students or Lebanese students (holding a second foreign passport) may be considered for this class.

It is important to note that Arabic as a foreign language is offered as an Arabic Language Acquisition (ALA) course for those who are exempt from the Arabic Language and Literature course. ALA students are placed in the phase most relevant to their ability, as determined by diagnostic tests. Students from different grades may be placed in classes according to the language phase. Each student is expected to progress and move through the phases of language acquisition.

In some cases, students with weak English language skills may be temporarily exempted from taking Arabic in order to focus on the learning of English.

Other Foreign Language Choices

Spanish and French are offered as additional language acquisition courses for MYP students. Students in Grade 6 will be offered the choice between French and Spanish. Their choice of language may be changed after the first year of the MYP. Students thereafter remain in their chosen language until they reach proficiency according to the IB Language Acquisition framework which is aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or have at least completed phase 4. Students who are proficient in a language are not eligible to take an acquisition (beginners) course in the language. Students sit for diagnostic tests to determine their proficiency level in the language and thus their phase. Students taking French and Spanish may sit for the official DELF and DELE standardized testing.

Languages in the Diploma Programme (DP)

English is the language of instruction for Wellspring DP students and is offered as Language A: Language and Literature, or just Literature. Provision will be made as necessary and feasible for self-taught Language A in compliance with Section A3.6.3 of the DP Handbook (2017). Due to expected English language proficiency, limited English language support can be offered and students are required to demonstrate a high level of competency so they will be able to follow other subjects that are taught in English.

Following the recent change in Lebanese law (Law #60), non-exempt (Lebanese) students may follow the IB Diploma track but must take Arabic A Language and Literature. Other students may choose from Arabic A or B; French or Spanish B or ab initio. Students may opt for a language but will be placed in appropriate levels depending on their language profile. Following the guidelines in 'DP language courses: overview and placement guidance' (IBO 2021) only students who have 'no prior experience of' or 'limited previous exposure to' the target language will be allowed to follow the ab initio course. In the school context, a student who has completed MYP phase 3 or above in a language will be expected to enter Language B in that language, or ab initio in a different language.

According to section A2.2.1 of the 'Diploma Programme Assessment procedures 2023' (IBO 2022) students who successfully complete the programme with two language A courses (in Wellspring, English and Arabic) will be awarded the IB Bilingual Diploma. This means that non-exempt students will gain the IB Bilingual Diploma.

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