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IB Diploma Programme Language Policy 2026-2027

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Reviewed by	IBDP Language Teachers, IBDP Coordinator
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Policy scope and audience

This policy applies specifically to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) at Vocational School for Computer Programming and Innovation (VSCPI). It is part of the school's suite of IB policies and should be read in conjunction with the Assessment Policy, Inclusion Policy, and Academic Integrity Policy.

Policy review cycle

This policy is reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if required by changes in IB requirements or school context. The review is led by the IBDP Coordinator in collaboration with the IBDP language teachers and school leadership, with opportunities for input from students and parents.

Policy approval and communication

The policy is approved by the school leadership team and the Pedagogical Council. It is made available to all stakeholders through the school website and is shared with students and parents at the start of each academic year. The policy is available in Bulgarian and English.

LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

Vocational school for Computer Programming and Innovation's language philosophy is aligned with the International Baccalaureate (IB) mission and the IB learner profile. We believe that language is central to learning, to identity, and to international-

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mindedness. Through the development of multiple languages, students become more open-minded, reflective, and caring, and are better able to understand and engage with diverse perspectives and cultures.

Vocational school for Computer Programming and Innovation's mission statement, objectives, and peace practices integrate language learning in its two-way dual immersion English and Bulgarian program. Language learning crosses multiple disciplines and is a key component of every content area. The school's goal is to develop effective communicators, who, as global citizens, appreciate and respect different cultures, identities and languages.

Students learn language best when:

- learning is applied in context across multiple disciplines.
- they feel safe to take risks.
- they are supported in their school, home and local community.

VSCPI's bilingual programme integrates Bulgarian and English in a meaningful, authentic way in which language is taught through content across subjects. Students develop their language proficiency progressively as they move through lower secondary and upper secondary education, and they are prepared to access the IB Diploma Programme in English and Bulgarian. In the upper secondary school, including the DP, students participate in English and Bulgarian programmes through an immersion approach appropriate to their language proficiency and academic needs. The ultimate goal of these

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programs is to equip students with the necessary tools to acquire academic proficiency in English and Bulgarian. Both languages are respectively taught by native or native-like language educators before students start the IB Diploma Programme and during the program. Through a curriculum that promotes academic instruction in English and Bulgarian, students receive a bilingual and biliterate education.

The IB Diploma Programme offers:

- Bulgarian A: Language and Literature SL
- English B HL
- German ab initio

The school's goal is for students to be taught a meaningful curriculum through both English, Bulgarian and German.

As part of VSCPI's core pedagogical practices, bilingual immersion and language acquisition and learning are integrated into the annual professional development plan conducted at the outset of each school year with the faculty.

The language philosophy is enacted in close connection with the school's Assessment Policy, Inclusion Policy, and Academic Integrity Policy. Together, these policies ensure that all students have equitable access to the curriculum, are supported in their language development, and understand their responsibilities as principled learners and communicators.

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SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROFILE

Vocational school for Computer Programming and Innovation believes in respect for and inclusion of home languages. However, many Vocational school for Computer Programming and Innovation students speak German, Russian, Ukrainian and other languages at home. The language of instruction in the IB Diploma Programme at VSCPI is primarily English, with Bulgarian also used as a language of instruction in specific subjects, in accordance with IB regulations. Bulgarian is the host country language and is studied by all students.

VSCPI recognizes the importance of students maintaining and developing their mother tongue(s). Where possible, the school supports students in continuing their home language through:

- encouraging the use of home languages in appropriate learning activities;
- facilitating access to community language classes or online courses;
- The school will explore the possibility of offering School-Supported Self-Taught Language A courses in the IB Diploma Programme on a case-by-case basis, where feasible and in line with IB requirements.

Students have the opportunity to connect to their mother tongue in the following ways:

- during lunch and at recess while interacting with each other
- during class activities or discussions involving cognate words

- during activities or projects where children can study/connect to other languages
- during group work where students can create a skit or piece of writing in other languages
- during IB Diploma Programme research tasks and projects, students may draw on sources in their home language(s) and then synthesize and present their learning in the language of instruction, in line with academic integrity expectations.

The students have ongoing opportunities for natural language usage and expression, in addition to daily formal Bulgarian and English instruction time (Bulgarian and Social Studies). In general, English teachers speak English to students and Bulgarian teachers speak Bulgarian to students during class time. Nevertheless, there are occasions when teachers need to revert to Bulgarian or English to accommodate lower-level language speakers who require this additional support. Students are encouraged to speak in the tuition language of the class; however, teachers are aware that some may lack the means of how to and do not require it to avoid overly stressing students or disengaging them. The school continually encourages students at these levels to look for opportunities outside the classroom to practice and enforce the use of either language they need to strengthen.

SECOND LANGUAGE CURRICULUM AND STRATEGIES

Based on the principle that all teachers are language teachers, VSCPI strives to connect language, content, and concepts in all subjects. In

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the IB Diploma Programme, all teachers are responsible for supporting students' academic language development in their subject, in collaboration with language teachers.

Ways to Implement

- Use of language objectives in every class regardless of subject
- Create a conducive classroom environment.
- Establish daily routines that are conducive to language and content area development.
- Create weekly spaces for students to practice the target language.

In the IB Diploma Programme, language development is monitored through both formative and summative assessment. Teachers provide regular feedback on students' oral and written language, focusing on clarity, accuracy, and appropriateness for academic contexts. Assessment of language learning is aligned with the school's Assessment Policy and with IB expectations for DP courses.

Good Practices for Language Development

Teachers can encourage language development through the use of the following strategies:

- Maintain use of the language of instruction when possible. The students are to receive support to use the target language as they advance in the initial phases.
- Front load key content or vocabulary to newcomers before delivering whole group instruction.

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- Bilingual pairs that rotate weekly.
- Use of a dictionary (paper copy).
- Bilingual thematic vocabulary charts.
- Posting inquiry questions and key terms in both English and Bulgarian.
- Give sufficient “wait time” and be patient.
- “10 to 2”: the teachers make sure to talk no more than ten minutes straight without pausing for two minutes to allow for student processing, communicating and checking for understanding.
- Provide explicit instruction in academic language, including how to paraphrase, summarize, and reference sources appropriately, so that students can express complex ideas in their own words and uphold academic integrity.

Strategies for Engaging Parents in Crafting a Language Profile

- Individualized parent consultations are offered with parents to discuss their child's language profile, strengths, areas for improvement, and personalized strategies for language development based on the child's needs.
- Student-led conferences are scheduled at the end of each semester where parents are able to observe their child's language progress, set language development goals collaboratively, and brainstorm ways for parents to support

their child's language learning at home.

- Regular progress updates are sent by teachers to keep parents informed about their child's language progress, including both formal assessments and informal observations, to maintain transparency, encourage parental involvement, and motivate students to continue working.
- During these consultations and conferences, the school also shares key aspects of the IB DP language policy with parents, so that they understand the language pathways available and how they can support their child's language development at home.

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Language study is available to students in after school activities and service-learning projects. When out in the community for a field study or community project, students are required to interact with the local population in both English and Bulgarian in an intentional way. These are natural situations which help students apply their language skills in authentic contexts, develop confidence as communicators, and strengthen their international-mindedness and engagement with the local and global community.

LANGUAGE, INCLUSION AND ACCESS

VSCPI is committed to providing equitable access to the IB Diploma Programme for students with diverse language backgrounds and

learning needs. Language support is an integral part of the school's inclusion practices.

For students who are developing proficiency in the language(s) of instruction, the school may provide:

- differentiated tasks and scaffolding in DP subjects;
- additional language support sessions or bridging courses;
- extended time to process and produce language, where appropriate and in line with IB regulations.

Language-related accommodations and support measures are coordinated with the school's Inclusion Policy and, where relevant, with IB access arrangements. The goal is to enable all students to participate meaningfully in the DP while maintaining the standards and expectations of the programme.

LANGUAGES WITHIN THE IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Vocational School for Computer Programming and Innovation offers the following IB Diploma Programme language courses:

- Group 1 (Studies in language and literature): Bulgarian A: Language and Literature SL
- Group 2 (Language acquisition): English B HL and German ab initio SL.

Students who select a Language A course should already demonstrate near-native or native-like proficiency in that language,

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including the ability to engage with complex literary and non-literary texts. Where there is uncertainty about a student's proficiency, the school uses a combination of prior academic records, teacher recommendations, and, where necessary, a placement assessment to determine the most appropriate course (Language A, Language B, or ab initio), in line with IB guidance.

For students who do not yet have sufficient proficiency for a Language A course, the school may offer Language B or ab initio courses, as appropriate. The aim is to place each student in a course that both challenges them and allows them to succeed, while maintaining the integrity of IB course expectations.

VSCPI students may be eligible candidates for the IB bilingual diploma if they meet the IB's requirements. In particular, students may qualify if:

- they complete two Language A courses from the studies in language and literature subject group and obtain a grade 3 or higher in both; or
- they complete one Language A course from the studies in language and literature subject group and one subject from the individuals and societies or sciences subject groups in a different language and obtain a grade 3 or higher in both.

The school provides guidance to students and parents on possible pathways to the bilingual diploma during course selection and counselling meetings.

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LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

VSCPI recognizes that strong language skills are essential for students to uphold academic integrity in the IB Diploma Programme. Students are explicitly taught how to:

- express ideas in their own words through paraphrasing and summarizing;
- integrate and reference sources appropriately in written and oral work;
- use translation tools, dictionaries, and other language support resources ethically and within IB regulations.

Language support is provided in a way that promotes genuine learning and does not compromise fairness or the authenticity of student work. This section of the language policy is closely aligned with the school's Academic Integrity Policy, which provides further detail on expectations and procedures.

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