



Kurihara Gakuen Group
Beyondia International School Ikebukuro Language Policy

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Statement of Belief

1.1 School mission

"Cultivate creative human capital who can think, act and leverage globally."

1.2 Philosophy

Purpose 1: The governing body and school leaders articulate a purpose for learning that aligns with the IB's philosophy and mission. (0101-01)

At Beyondia International School Ikebukuro (hereinafter BIS Ikebukuro), we believe in and aim for our students to acquire the ability to communicate in more than one language and cultivate their personal growth and international-mindedness. Our school's values nurture a learning environment that allows our students to appreciate the complexity and diversity of language and culture within local and global contexts. We believe that this allows our students to grow and be able to think, act, leverage (themselves) globally, and become lifelong learners in the process.

1.3 Rationale and aims

BIS Ikebukuro's Language Policy ensures that students develop the ability to communicate and express themselves to those of other backgrounds. It is key to developing the skills needed to align with our school's mission. Although English is the language of inclusion for all students at BIS Ikebukuro, our students may be encouraged to use their mother tongue as a cognitive tool to guide development during activities.

Our policy has three aims:

- 1) For students to develop a strong command of the English language alongside their first language.
- 2) For our students to apply their language and literacy skills to reach BIS Ikebukuro's [curriculum learning objectives](#).
- 3) Through language, students will be exposed to different cultural perspectives and become aware of how to communicate with people from different cultures.

1.4 Definition of Terms

First Language: refers to the first language learnt, which could be through schooling or family. It is also the language in which the individual is most fluent—often referred to as the mother tongue.

Diverse language environment: students and teachers use two or more languages (in our case, English and Japanese) to support learning outcomes.

Linguistic diversity is an umbrella term used to describe the differences in how people communicate.

1.5 Language Philosophy

BIS Ikebukuro's language philosophy follows our rationale and overall philosophy. We aim to "foster children who can express one's thoughts to people from different backgrounds." Language's uniqueness makes it stand above all other forms of communication; without language, we cannot work towards and meet our philosophy.

Through our diverse language environment, our students develop an understanding of linguistic diversity, which provides them with the skills they can later use to explore and gain a deeper understanding of cultures and the world. It is not just about the words themselves, but more importantly, acquiring the sensibility behind those words, the ability to share with others, and the quality that makes others listen to you. These are things that BIS Ikebukuro has always valued. On the other hand, the things that lie behind words, the sensibility that can empathise with others, and something that makes others listen—acquiring such sensibility, wisdom, and knowledge and thinking through them, all utilise language as a medium. Therefore, in education, learning words is at the core of learning. We are responsible for providing learning opportunities through:

- Children learning words from daily activities such as conversations, story reading, and interpreting notices.
- Learning about the structure and function of words through arranging, combining, and writing them.
- Thinking, discussing with peers, and presenting using words.

2.1 Language diversity

BIS Ikebukuro's primary language of instruction is English, and we recognise that this is not the first language of many of our students. Nevertheless, the students are required to learn English to access the IB curriculum. Alongside the IB curriculum, BIS Ikebukuro also provides specialised classes conducted in Japanese to support those with Japanese as their first language. All teachers are responsible for ensuring we can support the students in whichever language they are most comfortable speaking. While the students can choose which language(s) to converse in during non-instructional times, we encourage the children to try to use English to ensure a shared common language is spoken among all students.

At BIS Ikebukuro, we understand that a small minority of our students have neither English nor Japanese as their first language. We aim to provide resources for them to engage in their first language when they have the literacy skills which would first be acquired at home. This also means these students will be exposed to and learn Japanese as an additional language. If necessary, bilingual staff members support these students during specialised Japanese lessons.

Our teacher's nationalities currently consist of Japanese, Polish, African, British, Filipino and Fijian; their linguistic diversity matches their nationalities. All staff members are either native English speakers or have a strong command of the English language and can support our students. Those identified as needing additional support in the language of instruction have access to a teacher to provide support with whom they speak a common language.

2.2 First language support

A child's mother tongue, also referred to as their first language, is the first language acquired through schooling or socialisation, such as family, and the language most fluent. Within BIS Ikebukuro, the majority of students' first language is Japanese. We support the student's use of Japanese through extracurricular activities, free play time, and socialising with the staff and their peers. However, we recognise some students whose first language is neither Japanese nor English. We aim to support all students by;

- Providing all students with literacy resources in their first language so they can engage in them during their free time. These resources will change yearly depending on the students and will be available to parents. These materials may be virtual or physical copies.
- Encouraging first language development at home.
- Extending the library resources to include our students' first languages and sourcing e-books in other languages for them to access. Resources are purchased or donated by the learning community and parents.

2.3 Language in the Classroom

Within our classes, the students are differentiated into groups to support their language level development best. They engage in the same activities but with varying levels of difficulty. They are given support in writing, reading and conversation skills. The focus of our learning within classes and throughout the PYP programme is for the student's experience to be relevant, engaging and challenging. In addition to our English language classes and the nature of the PYP programme, our students can engage with and learn language through context

and play.

BIS Ikebukuro teachers are aware of the linguistic backgrounds of all students and understand the challenges differences in linguistic ability pose. To assist with linguistic differences outside of instructional times, teachers will:

Focus on the positive use of English with supportive comments such as

- “That was a nice conversation/sentence/discussion”
- “Now you are using much more English; your English is improving!”
- “Great job using English!”

When overhearing questions or conversations not in English, teachers encourage students to use English alongside. Examples of comments:

- “Can you try to explain a little in English too?”
- “Can I help you say the same in English?”
- “I am sorry, I do not understand Japanese. Please, may you say it in English?”
- “Excellent; how would you say that in English?”

The teachers at BIS Ikebukuro understand that these comments can support children who may feel language anxiety and an unwillingness to communicate in a foreign language. Teacher support and comments also encourage the student’s peers to respond positively to communicating in English.

2.4. Language and the Program of Inquiry

As English is used during learning time, and our Program of Inquiry is conducted in English. This allows our students to engage in critical thinking and understand key concepts and collaborative research in English, which influences the students' vocabulary and overall language skills. For more complex discussion topics, Japanese is also used to support the students' understanding if they cannot fully understand the explanations in English. If a student cannot fully comprehend the instruction language and Japanese is not their first language, the staff understands their role in working with their parents to support them fully in the Program of Inquiry. To further connect with the program of inquiry and understand the concepts involved, we have a selection of digital literature we use during story time to build a more robust understanding.

2.5 School Language Profile

At BIS Ikebukuro, our current cohort consists of the following nationalities: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and American. While the nationalities of our student cohort will change depending on admissions, at the time of writing, our students can be placed into one of the following categories:

Japanese Background	Both parents are native Japanese speakers with no other language proficiency.
Japanese-English background	One or both parents are proficient/fluent in Japanese and English.
Non-English/Japanese background	One or both parents are fluent in a different language but are also proficient/fluent in English or Japanese.

We will review and update the school language profile each year if necessary.

Policy Review

This policy is a working document and, as such, will be reviewed by the Language Committee and academic staff annually.

3. References and bibliography

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