

LANGUAGE POLICY

1. LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

At Turun normaalikoulu, we believe that good language skills support individual growth holistically, and help learners have better capabilities as a part of any community (big or small). Versatile language proficiency is an essential part of education, as it supports the formation of the individual's own cultural identity as well as understanding of other cultures. Learning languages together with others is the key to understanding other cultures, which leads to cultural awareness, which in turn makes it possible to communicate with others without prejudice and free from discrimination.

Language learning is the foundation of all learning. You learn a language by using it in varying situations. Our common goal is to educate students to become effective communicators who are competent in writing, listening, reading, viewing and speaking. This happens by improving the students' receptive, productive and communicative skills. Those skills develop when students are able to communicate both orally and in writing in a range of contexts and for different purposes. We want to develop the student's awareness of the importance of language in relation to other areas of knowledge.

We encourage our students to embrace their own language and culture. Language studies, including the mother tongue, are vital when students form their own cultural identities. As a multicultural school, we want to emphasize the equality of different cultures and languages.

Through the study of other languages, we also wish to instill in our students a sense of curiosity and open-mindedness towards other cultures as well. Our teachers are committed to creating authentic, positive, and differentiated learning experiences that foster the learning of all students.

2. LANGUAGE PROFILE

The language of instruction in the IB department is English, except for the lessons of other language subjects.

a) Languages offered in the pre-DP year

The Diploma Programme is preceded by the pre-DP year. During the pre-DP year, students must study either French, German or Spanish, the number of courses required depending on the students' prior language studies in the language concerned. See the table below.

The students, who study Finnish as their first language also study Swedish during the pre-DP year. This is because Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. These students may participate in the Finnish matriculation examination Swedish exam outside the Diploma Programme, mainly in the autumn of the DP1 year.

The students, who do not have any prior Finnish language skills must take the *Finnish for beginners* courses. After this course, they continue their Finnish studies with the other students and attend a total of 3 courses of Finnish as a foreign language during their pre-DP year.

Table 1. Subjects and number of courses offered during the pre-DP year.

Subject	Number of courses
Language A (mother tongue/most proficient language)	3
Language B: German/French/Spanish	2(intermediate/advanced) / 4(beginners)
Language B English (for students who do not take English as their language A)	3
Language B: Finnish (Students, who don't study Finnish as a language A)	3(intermediate/advanced) / 5(beginners)
Language B: Swedish (Finnish students)	6

b) Languages offered in the Diploma Programme

The language choices are made for two years (DP1 and DP2).

As language A we offer Finnish A Literature or Swedish A Literature or English A Language and Literature. All these school taught languages are offered both at standard level (SL) and higher level (HL).

In Language A: Language and Literature, students study a wide range of literary and non-literary texts in a variety of media and forms, from different periods, styles and cultures. They develop a sensitivity to the formal qualities of texts and learn to recognize how they can produce diverse responses and open up multiple meanings. Students gain skills in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting.

In Language A: Literature, students study a large variety of literary works (texts) from different time periods, countries and from different genres – prose, poetry, drama and prose: non-fiction – in order to familiarize students with different texts, ways of writing and multiple ways of using language. Students develop their own language by doing varied exercises, both orally and in written.

In addition, all students have the possibility to study their own mother tongue as Language A literature (Self-Taught School Supported Language) at standard level if the language is offered by the IBO or can be requested as a special request language. Self-taught School Supported Language students study the languages with a private teacher and have a tutor teacher at school. The student must pay the costs of the private teacher themselves. For more information about the Self-Taught School Supported language, students and guardians can contact DP coordinator or guidance counsellor.

Online courses offered by IB-approved providers widen the students' opportunities to study various languages. DP-students can study languages or other subjects as IB online subjects. When considering this option, the students must contact Diploma coordinator and Site-base coordinator. DP online courses have an additional fee that the student must pay to the provider.

In the Language acquisition group, we offer Finnish B SL/HL (for students studying other than Finnish A), German B HL and SL, German ab initio SL, French B HL and SL and French ab initio SL, Spanish B HL and SL, Spanish ab initio SL, English B SL/HL (for students studying other than English A).

The Language B course is designed for students with some (a few years) previous experience of the target language. The Language ab initio (meaning: from the beginning) course is designed for students with no or limited prior experience (pre-IB year courses) of the target language. During the courses, different themes are covered via various text types and through the lenses of key concepts. Written and oral production and reception are equally emphasized.

3. STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE STUDENTS' LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

By offering a wide range of languages, we want to offer the students the opportunity to develop their communication skills. The role of the mother tongue is essential, as understanding and thinking are based on the mother tongue. If the school does not offer the student's mother tongue or it is not possible to study it as a Self-taught School Supported Language, the student may still study their mother tongue if it is offered by the city of Turku as a different kind of course or at evening school. The student can contact the guidance counsellor for help and advice to find suitable language courses.

The students, that do not have any prior Finnish language skills must take the *Finnish for beginners* -courses. After this course, they continue their Finnish studies with other students and study 3 courses of Finnish as a foreign language during their pre-DP year. This encourages students to study more Finnish B. This helps the international students to adapt to Finnish society and culture. In addition, the Finnish B studies support the students in their further studies also in Finnish universities.

The school library and the librarian provide the students with diverse opportunities to access versatile sources of information in different languages and in different formats. This encourages students to use different sources of information also outside the school

environment. In addition, the international teacher trainees visit the language lessons and enliven the language learning.

Many students may have learning difficulties related to language learning. These students should contact the special education teacher for advice and support. The special education teacher arranges the standard tests for reading and writing challenges for all Finnish speaking students (screening) during the pre-DP and for English speaking students upon request. If the tests indicate learning challenges that affect language learning, inclusive access arrangements are planned and organised. These arrangements are specified on Wilma*) and carried out through the student's studies in the DP. If these inclusive access arrangements affect the final exams and require authorization from the IBO, the required supporting documentation is submitted to the IBO at the time of final exam registration. Please, see more information in the Inclusion and Access policy.

*) Wilma is a secured digital platform that is used for secured communication between students, teachers, school staff and guardians.

4. STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE TEACHERS' LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

All new teachers (except Finnish A, Swedish A teachers and English teachers) of Turun normaalikoulu Diploma Programme must pass the advanced level of the national certificate of language proficiency in the English language (Proficiency in English in accordance with the Section 9 (2) of the Decree on the Qualification Requirements for Teaching Staff.). As this has been a requirement for permanent teacher positions for a few years already, most of the current teachers have the certificate. English teachers have done their university studies in the English language, thus proven their competence for teaching English. The advanced level of the national certificate of language proficiency in the English language allows the teachers to prove their English skills in an officially recognised way. For more information about this certificate, please visit [National Certificates of Language Proficiency \(YKI\) | Finnish National Agency for Education](#)

As a multicultural and multilingual school, all teachers regularly participate in language trainings, lectures and workshops within the school. The teachers have attended a

”Linguistically responsible pedagogy” workshop organized by several Finnish universities and the Ministry of Education and Culture in the school year 2019-2020. This training included subtopics of the knowledge of language and the structures of languages, knowledge of subject specific language vs everyday language and ways of supporting multilingualism. During the school year 2018-2019, the teachers were trained in language awareness.

This policy is reviewed in the beginning of every second school year in September. This document has been reviewed in September 2022, January 2025 and August 2025.

5. LINKS TO THE OTHER SOURCES AND POLICIES

This document should be read together with the following documents and sources:

- School website: <https://sites.utu.fi/tnk/>
- Admission policy, Turun normaalikoulu (Turku Teacher Training School, University of Turku)
- Access and inclusion policy, Turun normaalikoulu (Turku Teacher Training School, University of Turku)
- Academic Integrity policy, Turun normaalikoulu (Turku Teacher Training School, University of Turku)
- Assessment policy, Turun normaalikoulu (Turku Teacher Training School, University of Turku),

6. SOURCES

International Baccalaureate organisation, Guidelines for developing a school language policy, 2008

International Baccalaureate organisation, Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes, 2008

International Baccalaureate organisation, Language and learning in IB programmes, 2011, updated 2014

International Baccalaureate organisation, Language A: Language and literature guide, 2025

International Baccalaureate organisation, Language A: Literature guide, 2025

International Baccalaureate organisation, Language A: Literature school supported self-taught guide, 2025

International Baccalaureate organisation, Language B guide, published 2018, updated 2021

International Baccalaureate organisation, Language ab initio guide, published 2018, updated 2021