

Bucharest – Beirut International School

Language Policy

BBIS Mission

Our mission is to build a knowledgeable, self-confident and principled student who is willing to take risks and face up challenges, urged by curiosity, integrity and a passion for learning.

As educators, it is our responsibility to encourage our students to be caring, thoughtful and respectful, to become open-minded global citizens and to promote multicultural understanding.

Language Philosophy

We acknowledge the role of languages in connecting all the cultures in our school, as well as all the knowledge acquired throughout the school years by each student. As language is a significant part of each individual's identity, as well as a way to get a better understanding of other cultures, we encourage our students to value their mother tongue and to be aware of the importance of language learning.

Beliefs and Aims

All teachers are language teachers regardless of the subject they teach.

As we see language as an instrument of empowering students to learn and communicate, to analyze ideas and express feelings, our aims are

- to develop students' oral and written communication
- to enhance a rich cultural and linguistic background
- to provide connections between different areas of knowledge
- to encourage students to become more creative and diverse, and to use their language skills in different contexts
- to encourage students to read, understand, analyze and value literature

School Language Profile

Most of the students in our school have two mother tongues, Arabic and Romanian, respectively Turkish and Romanian. We also have students whose mother tongues are Chinese, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Urdu and Hindi.

As BBIS is an international school, English is the language of instruction in all subjects, with the exception of language classes such as Arabic, Turkish, Romanian and French, where the target language is used. English is also the main language of communication within the school.

Our teachers come from different countries/cultures. Arabic, Turkish and Chinese teachers are native speakers, while English teachers have different nationalities.

Arabic/Turkish/Chinese, English and Romanian are taught as a first language and we also offer French classes as a second language starting from grade 7.

We offer special classes of Romanian, English and Arabic to new students whose language level is below the class standard level.

Language Programmes Overview

English

As we believe language learning is a lifelong process that involves constant instruction and improvement, we include it in our curriculum from kindergarten to high school. Our syllabus covers and assesses all macro-skills and micro-skills in a number of weekly classes that ranges from 5 to 8.

The kindergarten curriculum includes 8 classes of English weekly, in which teachers use mainly the target language, offering clarifications in the mother tongue when necessary.

Students from grades 1-7 are offered 8 classes of English/week, in which the target language is used exclusively. The classes are designed to cover and assess all the receptive and productive skills, as well as the micro-skills (grammar, vocabulary and functions).

Grades 8-12 have 5-6 classes/week that provide them with a complete learning/teaching approach with a focus on the receptive and productive skills, and on literature.

Arabic/Turkish/Chinese

Arabic is one of the three main languages offered by our school from Kindergarten to High-School, being the mother tongue of most BBIS students. The Arabic curriculum follows the Lebanese National Syllabus and the materials used are made in Lebanon.

Teaching takes place in the target language and all the mother tongue teachers (Arabic-Turkish-Chinese) are native speakers.

If the students' mother tongue level is lower than the required level, they have the option to attend lower level classes.

Romanian

Romanian is the host country language. This is a compulsory subject in the curriculum from grade 1 to grade 12. The curriculum aligns with the requirements of the national syllabus and includes language and literature. While in grades 1-8 there is a special focus on grammar, the high school curriculum focuses exclusively on literary concepts and analysis, and on writing and speaking skills.

For the students who do not speak Romanian as a main language we offer classes of Romanian as a second language (4 classes/ week).

French as a Second Language

All BBIS students are fluent in two or three languages by the time they finish Primary School. It is our intention to keep students challenged throughout the school years, to offer them the opportunity to know new cultures and open new doors to their future. In this respect, we are looking to expand our second language options.

Currently we offer French classes as a second language for students in grades 7-12.

Admission policy

When joining our school, students are required to complete a survey aimed to generate a student's language profile (mother tongue, language/s spoken at home, foreign languages

studied before). Applicants also take a placement test which determines their level of English, Romanian and Arabic.

At BBIS we offer English only as a main language. Students whose level of English is comparable with the standard grade level will join the respective class. Where the level of English is lower than the standard grade level, students are offered support consisting in after-school English classes while joining the respective class for the rest of the subjects. If the student has no prior knowledge of English, they will attend a one-year English support programme which consists in an intensive English course of 4-5h/day. At the end of the first semester they are assessed and if their mark is above 70% they can enroll in the chosen grade. If they score under 70%, they will be able to enroll in the grade the following academic year.

Applicants with the required level of Romanian/Arabic/Chinese/Turkish join the main language classes. At BBIS we also run a Special Language programme that provides Romanian/Arabic lower level classes.

Mother Tongue Support

For students whose mother tongue is not Arabic or Romanian, neither Chinese nor Turkish, the school supports the child in keeping in touch with their mother tongue and culture by raising awareness about cultural diversity, encouraging them to make references to different concepts/ terms in their native language (proverbs, superstitions, beliefs, projects) within different classes, and providing help in finding online self-study language courses.

Students are given the opportunity to perform in their native language during the end-of-year talent shows, thus maintaining their cultural identity, promoting their cultural values and together celebrating diversity.

We also encourage parents to donate books, magazines and other materials in their mother tongues to the school library, in order to ensure student's constant contact to their mother tongue.

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