



# Eerde IBS Language Policy

Last reviewed	Reviewed by	Role
4 October 2021	R. de Bruin	IB Coordinator

## Philosophy

Eerde's vision is for students to learn, live, and develop. A crucial part of this development is language learning--the strengthening of mother tongue languages and the acquisition of new ones. Given the realities of the modern, interconnected world, multilingualism is of enormous practical benefit, as it will open up many economic opportunities for young people. However, learning languages or improving language skills is not worth merely so one can succeed professionally or financially. If it were, it would be of only peripheral relevance to Eerde's mission. Rather, it is important because it leads to human flourishing.

First, language acquisition encourages empathy. Through acquiring the language of a culture perhaps very different from one's own, one gains understanding of that culture and empathy for the people who live it. This can lead to one questioning or reflecting on the beliefs of his or her own culture, and taking a less dogmatic and more nuanced view of the world.

Second, strengthening one's mother tongue(s) enables one to gain better access to one's own cultural traditions and to share and celebrate them. Without the ability to read long, complex texts, much of one's own culture is only partially accessible to one, and so one is unable fully to understand oneself. Similarly, without the ability to write and speak effectively, one's ideas are marginalised, and therefore unable to contribute meaningfully to social and cultural debates.

For these reasons, Eerde aims to develop amongst all members of the school community a love of and passion for language and a passion. All teachers at Eerde are language teachers and language learners, engaged in a collective endeavour with students and other members of the school community to support and celebrate linguistic diversity and promote linguistic excellence.

This document aims to articulate how Eerde puts the ideas above into practice.

## Language Profile

- The majority (current IB1 cohort 75%) of students at Eerde are second language learners
- Most students have B2 fluency or better when they enter the secondary school
- If a student enters the secondary with English proficiency lower than B2 will receive a dedicated English language acquisition programme.

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- There is no one dominant linguistic group. The largest groups at Eerde include Dutch speakers, Chinese speakers, and Russian speakers.
- Native languages amongst the teaching faculty include Dutch, English, Greek, German, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Chinese.

## Language of Instruction and Community

The language of instruction at Eerde is English. This means that all classes (except language classes) are taught entirely in English. Although there might be occasions on which it was appropriate for a student to use his or her own language in class, in general all classroom interactions occur in English.

English is also the common language of the community, and for this reason all assemblies, events, and extracurricular activities are conducted in English.

When outside of class (for instance, between lessons, at lunch time, and in the boarding houses), students and faculty may speak any language they wish. This is because the freedom to communicate ideas openly and in the form of one's choosing is essential to a healthy, vibrant community. However, students and faculty should be mindful that if they are around people who do not speak the language in which they are conversing, these people could feel excluded. This does not mean that one should only ever speak English in such situations, merely that one should be mindful and pay attention to the particular circumstances of the situation.

## Support for Mother Tongues and Multilingualism

Eerde has the following in place to support mother tongues other than English:

- The school strives to offer as many languages as possible as taught courses throughout the secondary school
- IGCSE and IB DP students have the opportunity to study their mother tongue as a Self Taught subject if Eerde does not offer it as a subject
- The school celebrates the cultural and linguistic traditions of members of the school community through celebrations such as Lunar New Year, Sintersklaas, and Santa Lucia

## Host Country Language

The school encourages all students and faculty to learn Dutch. This ensures that they have the ability to understand and to interact in the local community of which they are a part. This is particularly important in the area of the Netherlands in which the school is located, as English is not as prevalent as elsewhere in the country.

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In the IBDP, every student has the opportunity to take Dutch. The language is offered at Ab Initio, B, and A levels, ensuring that all students are catered for, no matter what their background is in the language.

## Selection of Language Levels

### English

At Eerde, we want students to challenge themselves and to strive for linguistic excellence. All students in grades 6-10 take English as a first language level, even if their first language is not English. This is appropriate, as Eerde does not generally accept students with an English language level below B2 in these grades. If a student does enter Eerde in grades 6-10 with a level below B2, they receive extra English support through the Learning Support Centre.

In the IB DP, students may take English at A Level or B Level. However, in order to ensure students challenge themselves--and in order to accord with IB regulations--students must take English A and not English B be unless

- They are entering the DP directly from Eerde's Foundation IB programme; or
- The language of instruction at their previous school(s) was (primarily) not English; or
- The language of instruction at their previous school(s) was English, but, since they began secondary education, they have studied in English for two years or fewer.

Exceptions to these guidelines may sometimes be made at the discretion of the DP Coordinator.

### Other Languages

All students at Eerde study at least two languages. The appropriate level for a student to study a language at is complex, and involves the consideration of a range of factors. These include

- Whether the student speaks the language at home
- How many years of formal instruction the student has received in the language
- Assessment data on the student's proficiency in the language

Students will not be permitted to take a language at a level that will not challenge them. Therefore, wanting to get a higher grade or to do less challenging work are not considered good reasons for a student to take a language at a particular level. This means that, for instance, a fluent Dutch speaker--even if he or she does not possess a Dutch passport--will not be permitted to take Dutch B in the IB Diploma Programme.





# Strategies to Support Language Learners

The following strategies are in place in order to support language learning across the school:

- Students who wish to gain access to the Diploma Programme but who do not have sufficiently strong English first enrol in the Foundation Programme. This year-long programme aims to strengthen students' academic English to the point where they achieve at least B2 level fluency.
- EAL support is available to students through the Learning Support Centre.
- All Eerde teaching staff receive professional training in teaching EAL learners.

