EPSOM COLLEGE MALAYSIA

Language Policy

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Responsibility: Deputy Head Academic and EAL Lead

1. Introduction

Epsom College Malaysia is a British international boarding and day school in Malaysia. Pupils join the School from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. English is the language of instruction and the principal medium of assessment across the Senior School.

The School community is linguistically diverse. Pupils bring with them a variety of home languages, including Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Hindi, Korean, Japanese, Cantonese, Burmese and others. The School recognises this diversity as a strength and supports pupils in developing fluency in English while also valuing and sustaining their mother tongues.

The language profile of the School is characterised by:

- English as the language of instruction and community life.
- Malay as the host country language, respected as part of the local and national culture.
- Mother tongues maintained and celebrated as central to identity.
- Modern foreign languages offered within the curriculum, currently including Mandarin, French, Spanish, German, and Bahasa Melayu.

Language is fundamental to learning, identity, and intercultural understanding. Pupils learn language, learn through language, and learn about language. All teachers are teachers of language, since pupils must learn not only subject content but also the language of each discipline.

Language Philosophy

The School believes that:

- proficiency in English is essential for academic success in IGCSE, A level, BTEC, and IB Career-related Programme (IBCP)
- mother tongues are integral to identity, wellbeing, and cognitive development
- multilingualism is an asset and a resource for learning
- learning additional languages builds empathy, cultural understanding, and global awareness
- responsibility for language development is shared by all teachers and pupils

Bahasa Melayu, as the host country language, holds a particular place in the School's language provision. The School actively encourages students to engage with Malay language and culture as part of their development as internationally minded learners rooted in the Malaysian context.

This philosophy reflects the School's values of Kindness, Integrity, and Ambition.

2. Aims

The Language Policy aims to:

- ensure that pupils achieve fluency and accuracy in English, the language of instruction
- support pupils in maintaining and developing their mother tongues
- provide opportunities for the study of additional languages
- embed academic literacy and communication skills in every subject
- ensure pupils can meet the linguistic demands of external examination programmes
- align provision with the expectations of the IB Career-related Programme (IBCP) and other awarding bodies, including Cambridge, Pearson, and Edexcel
- recognise and celebrate linguistic achievement within the School

3. Language of Instruction

English is the primary language of teaching, learning, assessment, and formal communication in the Senior School.

Pupils are expected to use English in:

- lessons
- assessments
- presentations
- written academic work
- formal school communication

Teachers may authorise the use of a pupil's mother tongue where it supports understanding, clarifies complex ideas, or assists peers who are developing English. Such use must be purposeful and directed by the teacher.

In boarding houses, pupils may use their mother tongue freely in informal contexts. During structured boarding activities and formal gatherings, English is used to ensure inclusion and shared understanding.

4. School Communication

English is the primary language of formal written communication from the School. Where reasonably possible, support may be provided to families who require clarification. In the event of translation, the English version remains the authoritative text.

5. English Language Expectations at Key Entry Points

Admission to Senior School programmes takes English proficiency into account to ensure pupils can access the curriculum safely and successfully.

Clear proficiency expectations apply at key transition points, including:

- entry into IGCSE courses
- entry into Sixth Form programmes (A level, BTEC, IBCP)

- entry into boarding where communication is essential for wellbeing and safeguarding

Where appropriate, pupils may be offered structured progression pathways to reach the required level.

6.0 English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Pupils requiring additional support in English are assessed on entry through screening and teacher observation.

EAL support may include:

- targeted small-group provision
- in-class support
- individual language development targets
- monitored progression plans

Language development is reviewed periodically. Support is adjusted or withdrawn when pupils demonstrate sustained independence in accessing the curriculum.

EAL is not regarded as a learning difficulty. Some pupils may, however, have both language needs and additional learning needs. Coordination between EAL and Inclusion provision ensures appropriate and coherent support.

Language support enables access to high expectations; it does not reduce academic standards.

Language Highlight Points

The School operates a Language Highlight Points system to recognise and reward excellent language use across all languages and all year groups. Any teacher may award a Language Highlight Point to a pupil who demonstrates notable quality, accuracy, creativity, or development in their use of language, whether in English, a mother tongue, or an additional language.

This system serves a dual purpose: it affirms the value the School places on language across the curriculum, and it ensures that EAL pupils, who are timetabled into more classes than pupils in TEAL or mainstream English groups, are not disadvantaged in the accumulation of merits relative to their peers.

Termly EAL Celebration Assemblies

The School holds dedicated Termly EAL Celebration Assemblies to formally recognise the language achievements of pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Separate assemblies are held for each key stage, and recognition is given across three categories:

- Written work: acknowledging accuracy, development, and quality in written English
- Creative projects: celebrating imaginative and expressive use of language
- OPT (Oxford Placement Test) improvements: recognising measurable progress in English proficiency

These assemblies affirm the School's commitment to valuing progress as well as attainment, and provide meaningful recognition for pupils who are working hard to develop their English alongside their academic studies.

7.0 Mother Tongue Support

The School recognises the importance of maintaining and developing mother tongue languages.

Pupils are encouraged to maintain their home language through family engagement, reading, cultural participation, and, where appropriate, formal study.

Where appropriate, pupils may pursue external examination entries in additional languages or School-Supported Self-Taught pathways aligned with IBCP requirements and awarding body regulations.

Mother tongues are celebrated through assemblies, cultural events, boarding activities, and community initiatives.

8.0 Additional Languages

Mandarin, French, Spanish, German, and Bahasa Melayu are taught within the curriculum.

Pupils may continue with these languages across IGCSE, A level, and IB programmes according to their experience and progression.

In the IB Career-related Programme, language development is embedded across the programme through English-medium study, the communication requirements of the career-related qualification, and the Personal and Professional Skills course. The School ensures that pupils meet the language demands of the programme. Additional language learning opportunities may be offered subject to viability and demand.

Pupils are encouraged to pursue external language certifications (e.g. DELF, DELE, HSK, IELTS) to support university and career pathways.

9.0 Language Across the Curriculum

All teachers are responsible for developing pupils' language skills in their subject. This includes:

- explicit teaching of subject-specific vocabulary
- modelling of academic writing conventions
- structured opportunities for discussion and debate
- teaching reading strategies for complex subject texts
- supporting clarity, precision, and accuracy in written and oral work

Assessment tasks are designed to evaluate subject understanding while recognising the language development stage of multilingual pupils.

Staff receive professional development in disciplinary literacy and strategies to support multilingual learners.

10.0 Language, Assessment and Academic Integrity

Language development is closely connected to academic integrity.

Pupils are taught:

- accurate citation and referencing
- effective paraphrasing and summarising
- responsible use of translation tools
- ethical use of AI-supported language tools

Translation software and AI tools may support comprehension and research. However, submitted work must reflect the pupil's own understanding and comply with the Academic Integrity Policy. Subject teachers may specify permitted support.

11.0 Inclusion and Access

Language provision forms part of the School's broader commitment to inclusion.

Pupils with additional learning needs receive appropriate differentiation and support alongside language provision.

Access arrangements in external examinations are implemented in accordance with awarding body regulations.

Language support and inclusion provision are coordinated to ensure coherent planning and review.

12.0 Resources

The School provides access to:

- library collections supporting English and additional languages
- digital literacy resources
- subject glossaries and bilingual tools where appropriate
- reading programmes that promote both fluency and enjoyment

The Library and digital platforms support research, academic writing, and multilingual engagement.

13.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- use English as the primary medium of academic communication
- maintain and value their mother tongue
- engage responsibly with language learning and academic integrity

Prefects and Student Leadership

- promote inclusive language use in boarding and academic life
- support new pupils, especially those developing English
- help organise events celebrating linguistic diversity
- model respectful recognition of all languages

Teachers

- embed language development within subject teaching
- identify emerging language needs
- implement agreed EAL and inclusion strategies
- model accurate and confident academic language
- award Language Highlight Points to recognise outstanding language use

EAL Lead (or designated coordinator)

- oversee language screening and monitoring
- coordinate language support provision, including Language Highlight Points and Termly EAL Celebration Assemblies
- advise staff and families

School Leadership

- ensure adequate staffing and resourcing
- monitor language outcomes and progression
- ensure alignment with examination and awarding body standards

Governors

- receive periodic oversight reports on language provision and outcomes

14.0 Review

This policy is reviewed annually and fully revised every three years. Implementation is monitored through lesson observation, attainment data, EAL progression review, and stakeholder feedback.

The policy is shared through staff induction, handbooks, and the School website.