

Language Policy for BME International Secondary School

1. Introduction

The BME International School is an English language Hungarian foundation school that has students from more than 20 countries with many students functioning in two or three languages. In connection with this the school functions in two languages: English and Hungarian, but because many of the students are non-native speakers in one or both of these languages, the school acknowledges the right of parents and students to be supported in their native languages. The school also realizes that all teachers are language teachers and must support Language B learning strategies as many students learn to speak English quickly but it takes 5-7 years to become academically fluent in another language. These three principles are what guide the language policy of the school.

2. Principles into Practice

Administrative support of all Languages:

1. The administrative staff is fluent in both Hungarian and English
2. The school uses an electronic messaging system for all stakeholders (szerver.bme-intl.sulinet.hu) which is in Hungarian language
3. English translations are provided for all stakeholders to be able to use the electronic registration system.
4. Conferences for stake holders are conducted in English or Hungarian
5. In the case of stakeholders who do not know either the language, the school will make every attempt to find parties who can translate necessary information either verbally or in writing. Extra time may be needed for this.
6. The working language of the IB DP will be English.
7. Students applying to the BME International Secondary School who came from non-English language schools must score 60% on the in-house entrance exam.

Classroom Practice:

1. In the 9-10 grade the Language of instruction is English.
2. The language of instruction for the IB program is English excepting language A and B classes.
3. The school maintains an intensive ESL program for the 9-10 grades to prepare students for the IB.
4. All teachers are language teachers (required by national regulations for bilingual teaching) and develop materials for teaching based on good ESL practices as needed.
5. Under state law 10th graders are required to take a B2 level centralized English Language Exam.
6. The school's pedagogical program provides at least 1 hour of small group ESL tutoring as part of tuition as deemed necessary by teachers.

Promotion of Hungarian:

1. Our school is in Hungary therefore in the 9-10 grade all students who are not Hungarian citizens learn Hungarian as a foreign language. As a facultative program students may continue studying Hungarian as foreign language in the DP years.
2. In the 9-10 grade, all Hungarian students study Hungarian literature and language. The school offers Hungarian A: Literature for all students who choose this.
3. CAS will provide opportunities for students to work with the local Hungarian community.
4. Major school events are conducted in both Hungarian and English.

Promotion of Mother tongues other than English and Hungarian:

1. The school respects all languages as it respects all nationalities.
2. The school will make every attempt to communicate in the stakeholders' language if the stakeholder does not feel comfortable with either Hungarian or English.

3. The school will offer Language A: literature standard level self-taught subjects for students who wish to further explore their native language.
 - a. The school will inform the IB stakeholders of this opportunity.
 - b. The school will provide an English speaking language A: literature teacher to supervise and advise the self-taught candidate (as described in the Handbook of procedures B1a.6.1).
 - c. The school, working with the student, will attempt to find the necessary resources and tutor for learning the subject.
 - d. The student is responsible for paying for educational materials and tutoring as well to fulfill the requirements for Language A: literature standard level self-taught subjects.

Promotion of Learning other Languages:

1. Part of being in an international school is discovering the diversity of the world. Language diversity is a part of this and the school promotes the learning of additional languages with many students finishing the school fluent in three languages.
2. Students will learn a language other than Hungarian or English in the DP. In the 9-10th grade, all students learn another language than Hungarian or English, usually these are German or French.
3. Foreign Language study will be conducted in small groups.
4. The school will monitor which foreign languages interest students and when possible provide opportunities to learn these languages as Language B or as Language ab initio.
5. The school provides the opportunity to travel to countries where these languages are spoken although these are not necessarily included in tuition.
6. The school supports language exams outside of the school and included in the tuition is one language exam from an outside body (Goethe Institute, Cambridge exams, Academie Francais, etc.)

7. The school has special languages events that promote foreign language learning such as the Foreign Language Story Competition.

3. Conclusion

An international school is a diverse community where students learn about the vast similarities between all the peoples of the world as well as the differences. It must be a community of respect between all stakeholders – parents, students, teachers and administrators. It is also part of a wider community which must be respected – in this case the Hungarian community. A language policy for a school must promote this kind of respect. Caregivers, no matter what languages they know, must feel comfortable coming into the office or communicating with teachers. The local community should be enthusiastic about an international school and students should be enthusiastic about living in the local community. Finally students must feel that the language they were born with has value just as every language is unique and valuable. The language policy of the BME International Secondary School will promote these principals.