

### 3.03 KIST Language Policy

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the KIST Language Policy is to outline the school's philosophy on language teaching and learning. It states our main beliefs of how we view language in our school community. It states how language should be used in our school and also explains how the teaching and learning of languages is organized. It also shows how students are organized into the most appropriate pathways to develop their language learning.

#### **KIST Belief Statements about Language in Our School Community**

*At K. International School Tokyo, we believe that language is central to the development of a global mind for all members of the school community, allowing access to a greater range of experiences in the world.*

*We believe that language plays a significant role in the development of community identity and inclusion, and within the school environment students need to make choices about use of language that is mindful of the community in which they are part.*

*We believe that students learn language mainly by using language to achieve meaningful purposes in real contexts and so teacher instruction should provide as many opportunities for students to use language in this way as possible.*

*We believe that cultures have specific language genres to achieve specific purposes and the structure and language features of these genres can and should be explicitly taught to help students achieve those purposes.*

*We believe that language learning involves making approximations, which become closer and closer to a native-speaker norm as the learner progresses and the best way to support this progress is with specific individualized feedback on an ongoing basis.*

*We believe that each subject area has its own 'language' which needs to be learned in context and so each teacher must be a language teacher and explicitly teach the vocabulary and structures of their discipline.*

*We believe that learning language involves developing language in a communicative sense and also in an academic sense and development in both of these areas needs to continue in all a student's languages.*

#### **Language Groups**

English and Japanese are the main language groups represented in the school. Some students are native speakers or near native speakers of both. Other students who are not native speakers of Japanese are long term residents of Japan and therefore speak Japanese with relative fluency even though it is their second language. Other major language groups represented include Hindi and other languages originating in Central Asia, Korean and Arabic. The diversity of language within the school community is seen as a positive element, something to be encouraged and celebrated.

#### **Admission**

A language self-assessment is included in admissions documentation. As part of the admissions process, students also undertake an English language assessment conducted by the school. Students whose level of English language is below a level that the school considers itself able to reasonably support with its ELS programs may be denied admission. Students who are deemed to require considerable ELS support will be receive additional in class ELS support.

#### **Organization of Language Courses**

In Elementary all students have English in their regular Homeroom class from K1 to Grade 5 with ELS taking place within this context. Japanese is separated from K3 upwards into three classes per year group, Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced. In Secondary, all languages are split into Language A and Language B classes and there are English and Japanese classes in both of these groupings in all year levels. An English and Japanese Subject Area Coordinator are responsible for each of these areas from K through to 12. There is the possibility of other languages being incorporated into the taught curriculum at a later date in the future of the school.

## **Language Use**

**In the classroom (all classes with the exception of Japanese and any other world language classes that the school runs):** The language of instruction is English and the IB curriculum is delivered in the medium of English throughout the school, though it is recognized that other languages may be used for varying purposes during instructional activities. Decisions regarding language use in the classroom are at the discretion of individual teachers; however, it should always be kept in mind that becoming proficient in English is the priority to adequately access English medium subject areas in the IB curriculum. Classroom instruction is guided by the following principles:

1. During general instructional activities, decisions regarding which language(s) should be used must have the main priority that all students develop the necessary language proficiency in English to perform to their best ability on all tasks related to the curriculum.
2. It may at times be helpful for student understanding to think through or talk through unfamiliar or complex concepts in their first language before learning the vocabulary to talk about these concepts in English.
3. When whole class discussions or mixed-language group discussions / activities are taking place, it is important to use English in order to ensure the understanding of all participants.
4. Though the use of a student's first language is not banned in the school, there will often be times in the classroom where the teacher needs to stipulate that a particular activity be undertaken solely in English in order to achieve the aims stated under principle.
5. Teachers should consider language use at all stages of curriculum planning and implementation with the aim of facilitating student understanding of both the language used in the classroom and the concepts embedded in the curriculum. In support of this the school undertakes to provide ongoing professional development for teachers in the area of ELS strategies appropriate for mainstream classroom settings

**On the playground and during transitions:** In line with the general belief that diversity in language is a positive element in the school, no language is banned from use on the playground. However, as relevant, students are encouraged to communicate with their peers in the common language of English so that some students aren't excluded due to the use of an unfamiliar language.

## **English Language Support (ELS)**

### **Purpose:**

The school provides additional ELS support for any K3-G10 student, based on priority, who has not reached a level of English language proficiency which facilitates success in the classroom. This is to enable students the maximum opportunities to use language in meaningful contexts, particularly in their interactions with fellow students. As different students have different levels of language proficiency, the language needs of all students in the class are considered during joint planning sessions with the ELS teacher and classroom teacher and provided to students based on particular needs.

### **Assessment in the Elementary School:**

Before starting classes, students are pre-assessed by the relevant ELS or classroom teacher using a standardized English language assessment which is divided into the areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The results of the assessment are used as the first indication to the level of support which will be required from the classroom teacher and the ELS Support Teacher. Students will continuously be assessed through standardized reading level benchmarking, student work samples, participation in class discussions and observations.

### **Support in the Elementary School:**

ELS support is provided in a variety of ways to include:

- instruction in the regular classroom in conjunction with the classroom teacher
- small group pull-out sessions
- individual pull-out sessions

Pull-out support may be offered:

- for students who have no prior exposure to English, or whose English language proficiency is not such that they are able to benefit from all classroom activities and need intensive language support.

- for students who may have prior exposure to oral English, but have no prior exposure to the Roman alphabet and need to develop phonic awareness in context.

### **Assessment in the Secondary School:**

Students entering KIST will have been pre-assessed by the ELS support teacher, using world-standard diagnostics, which evaluate both oral and written communication and comprehension of various text-types. With these data, the ELS support teacher will have made a recommendation to the secondary head and the relevant curriculum coordinator as to the student's appropriateness for the Language B Advanced or Language A programme. If a student enters KIST in the Language B Advanced programme, he/she will be continually assessed for achievement with the interest that the student will progress from the Language B Advanced programme to the Language A programme.

### **Support in the Secondary School:**

ELS support is provided in two ways:

- instruction in the regular classroom in conjunction with the classroom teacher particularly in the non-language classes
- language A and B classes

In addition to the support provided by specialist ELS teachers, the school recognizes that all teachers are language teachers, and that language must be taught across the curriculum, not just in designated language activities. In order to support this, professional development programs mentioned in point 5 of the Language Use section above are utilized to support teachers.

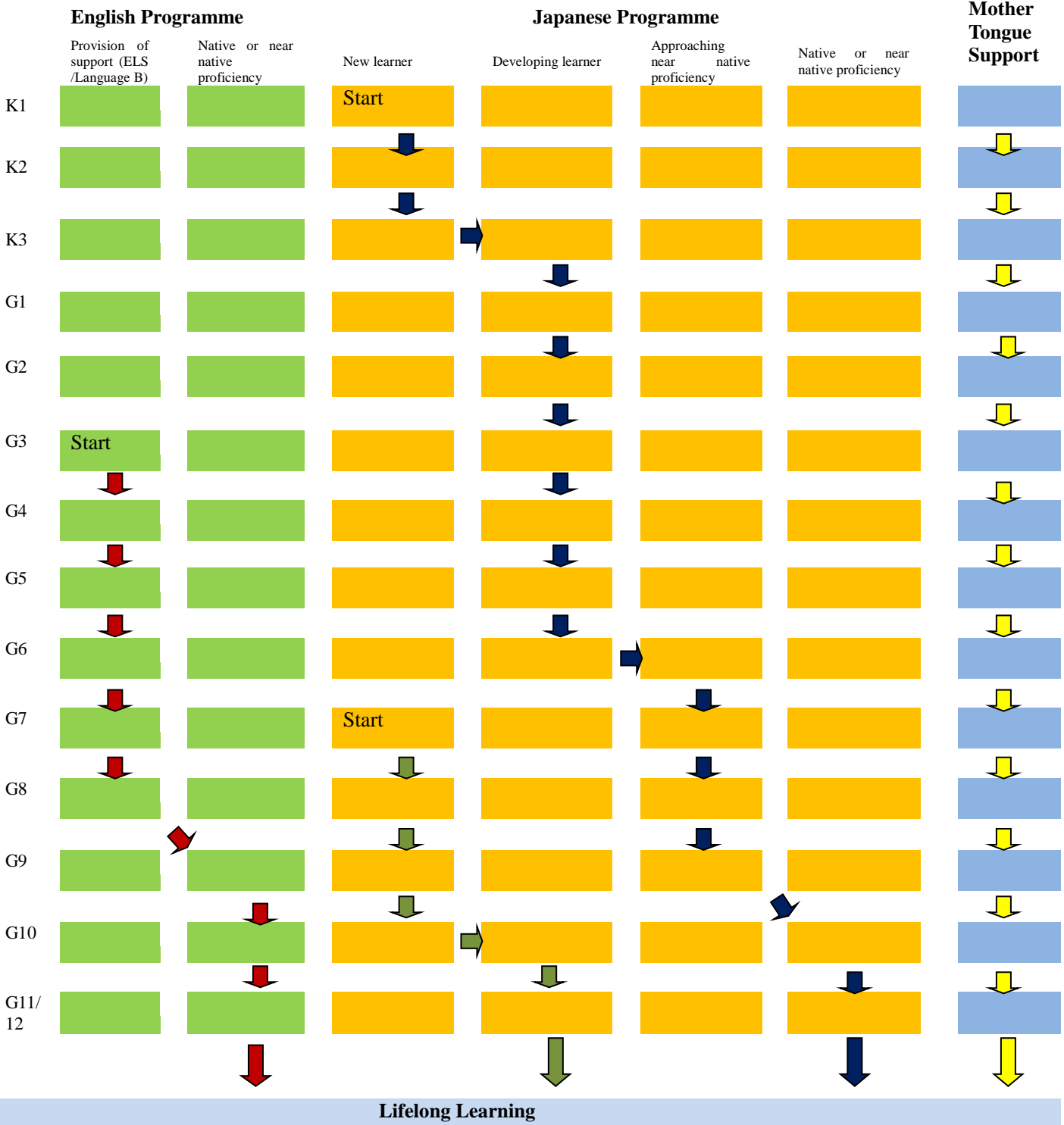
### **Mother Tongue Support:**

The school recognizes that the maintenance of each student's mother tongue is not only important for its contribution to each individual's cultural identity, but also lays the foundation of linguistic understanding upon which second and further language learning takes place. The following measures are in place to support mother tongue maintenance:

1. During admission interviews the importance of mother tongue maintenance is stressed and it is explained to all prospective parents that they will need to play a large role in this. Some appropriate strategies are also discussed.
2. The school library undertakes to include literature in a range of languages representative of the school population.
3. Parents and / or second language children will have opportunities where appropriate to share stories / drama etc. in their own language. One of the functions of such activities will be to reinforce awareness that although these students may have difficulties operating in English, they do have fluency in their native language. This is also a way of sharing culture and of making explicit the fact that language is a part of culture.
4. As stated under 'Language Use', where appropriate opportunities may be given to students to discuss / think through unfamiliar or complex concepts in their first language.
5. As a significant proportion of the school population has at least one parent for whom Japanese is a first language all official school communications to the entire school community will be in both English and Japanese.
6. The school realizes that although we are unable to translate all communications into all languages represented in the school community, an effort will be made to include languages other than English or Japanese where possible.
7. Although the school does not have any taught language classes with the exception of English and Japanese currently, members of staff with a mother tongue different from English or Japanese can start a language class as part of an after school club offering.
8. Students in Grades 11 and 12 have the opportunity to take the Group 1 Language A Literature course in their mother tongue as a formal part of their KIST IB Diploma Curriculum. This option presently is mainly suitable for students who have little experience in the Japanese language or for those who may want to return to the country of their mother tongue language for College or employment in the future.

# Language Pathways at KIST: What are the possible language paths for a student at KIST?

There are different language pathways through our programmes as can be seen in the three examples below.



## How are language classes grouped at KIST?

At each step as students pass through the year levels from K1 – Grade 12 different developmental levels of students are recognized as can be seen from these groupings.

	<b>English Programme</b>		<b>Japanese Programme</b>				<b>Mother Tongue</b>
	Provision of support (ELS /Language B)	Native or near native proficiency	New learner	Learner with moderate exposure to language	Approaching near native proficiency	Native or near native proficiency	
K1	Developmental Phase 1		Developmental Phase 1				Support
K2	Developmental Phase 1		Developmental Phases 1				Support
K3	Developmental Phases 1-2		Developmental Phases 1-2				Support
G1	Developmental Phases 1-3		Dev. Phase 1	Dev. Phase 2	Dev. Phase 3		Support
G2	Developmental Phases 1-3		Dev. Phase 1	Dev. Phase 2	Dev. Phase 3		Support
G3	Developmental Phases 2-4		Dev. Phase 2	Dev. Phase 3	Dev. Phase 4		Support
G4	Developmental Phases 3-5		Dev. Phase 3	Dev. Phase 4	Dev. Phase 5		Support
G5	Developmental Phases 3-5		Dev. Phase 3	Dev. Phase 4	Dev. Phase 5		Support
G6	B Adv	A	Foundation	Standard	B Adv	A	Support
G7	B Adv	A	Foundation	Standard	B Adv	A	Support
G8	B Adv	A	Foundation	Standard	B Adv	A	Support
G9	B Adv	A	Foundation	Standard	B Adv	A	Support
G10	B Adv	A	Foundation	Standard	B Adv	A	Support
G11/12	B/A Lang & Lit/A Lit	A Lang & Lit/ A Lit	Ab initio	B	B/A Lang & Lit / A Lit		Self-Taught A Lit

## **Facilitating Clear Pathways in English and Japanese: How do students move from one course to another?**

In the MYP and DP there are specific Language A and Language B courses for both English and Japanese with developmentally appropriate objectives and assessment criteria that are used to suit the particular levels of language development of students. English and Japanese Language development in the PYP is organized into five developmental phases. Across the whole school, it is recognized that each student will be at a different developmental stage, depending on the frequency of their exposure to, and use of any given language. At every level of learning from K-12, students are exposed to a range of language strands including written (reading and writing), oral and visual language and also the culture of the language which plays a key role in language learning. These strands are all addressed in KIST curriculum scope and sequence documents.

Each of the three IB programmes at KIST has clear criteria and a clear process for evaluating and making judgments regarding the level of each student's language learning in both English and Japanese. These criteria and process are used to facilitate the movement of students' through the pathways shown above and are available from the IB Curriculum Coordinators of all three programmes or the SAC's for English and Japanese. For the entire two year duration of the DP, a student would normally continue in the course that they started in due to the majority of external assessment taking place towards the end of the second year of the programme.

In general the following guidelines apply to student pathways in both English and Japanese language classes:

- Students should only be in a Japanese Foundation or Initio pathway for a maximum of four years in there school development.
- Students should only be in the same course in a Language B pathway for a maximum of four years in there school development.
- Students can move between Language B Advanced to Language A between the MYP and the DP programmes, although it is preferable that they are in the Language A pathway for the last one to two years of MYP. This is the same for both English and Japanese but can be more challenging in the latter due to some of the distinct characteristics and features of the Japanese language.

Revised October 2009  
Updated September 2010  
Reviewed August 2011