



# Policy Documents

## Language Policy



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**Created by:**

Teona Odzelashvili – Former DP Coordinator in consultation with the Newton Free School Faculty

**Updated by:**

Tamari Berulava – Academic Coordinator in consultation with the Newton Free School Faculty

Tako Tchanturia – DP Coordinator in consultation with the Newton Free School Faculty

Nino Iakobishvili – MYP Coordinator in consultation with the Newton Free School Faculty

**Reviewed by:**

Giorgi Meladze – Principle

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# I. MISSION: PURPOSE AND AIMS

## A. Mission

### **Newton Free School Mission Statement**

Newton Free School's core mission is to uncover and harness its students' potential to shape them into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring people who can take the lead in making the world a better place.

To achieve this, Newton Free School aims for its students to find joy in learning and fulfil their potential within the classroom and beyond. It is our aim:

- To help our students grow into internationally minded people who can help to build a better and more peaceful world.
- To keep our pupils' learning abreast with the latest scientific achievements and provide knowledge based on ideas and issues that are of local and international significance
- To equip our students from an early age with study skills and learning habits so that they can seek and attain knowledge independently and collaboratively, understand and synthesize, analyze, dare and succeed
- To develop students who are able to think creatively and critically when addressing challenging problems
- To inspire students to become resilient and resourceful life-long learners who are always willing to grow from the experience.

### **The International Baccalaureate Mission Statement**

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the organization works with schools, governments and international organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

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These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## B. Philosophy

This language policy is a working document developed by staff and administration from each school programme (NFS Georgian Section, IBPYP, IBMYP, IBDP). The policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and is designed to help our students attain these goals.

The International Baccalaureate states that it is committed to supporting multilingualism as fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. With these aims in mind, the IB has instituted a requirement for schools to have a language policy to provide a framework that will ensure that the IB's values and aims in relation to multilingualism and access are reflected in the organization's activities.

This language policy document defines the ways in which the NFS provides support to its students and teachers for the implementation of the Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme, and Diploma Programme.

## C. Aims of language learning

The acquisition of more than one language and maintenance of the mother tongue enrich personal growth and help facilitate international understanding. NFS believes that when we can communicate in multiple languages we become citizens of the world. We become integrated and more involved in the affairs of the world. The way we learn a new language potentially changes the way we think and the way we look at our lives. NFS promotes the learning of languages through its curricula. As language, by its very nature, is integrated into all areas of the curriculum, every teacher within the school is considered a language teacher. NFS aims to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with clarity, confidence and imagination in at least two languages – the mother tongue and the English language. Language development in more than one language enriches personal growth, provides cognitive advantages and is essential to the development of international mindedness.

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At Newton Free School we believe that language is the foundation for all learning. Through language, we acquire the ability:

- To become thinkers
- To become life-long learners
- To develop social skills and values
- To develop cultural awareness

We should never forget that all students are different in regard to their experiences, skills and interests, and all these should be considered in the teaching of languages.

At NFS we offer our students an interesting, encouraging and challenging environment for language learning.

## II. LANGUAGE PROFILE AND ADMISSIONS POLICIES

### A. NFS Language Profile

Our student body speaks English as an additional language. Most of our students are locals and their mother tongue is Georgian. Georgian is widely used within the school administration. All of our administrative staff and teaching staff at IBMYP and IBDP speak English and the majority is fluent in at least one other language. Some of our teaching staff in other sections also speak English. The language of instruction and the primary language of communication in the school differs: for IBPYP and IBMYP1-3 the language of instruction is Georgian and the children are required to attend English as a Second Language (ESL) classes; for IBMYP4-5 and IBDP it is English, for the Georgian section it is Georgian. All students are required to study Georgian from Grades 1-12 in the Georgian section and in IBMYP and IBDP for Georgian students only.

While Georgian and English are the most common languages within the school, the use of other languages in appropriate circumstances is welcomed.

At Newton Free School six languages are taught in different grades and levels:

**Georgian:** The Georgian language is the host language and mother tongue for most of the students and their guardians. Georgian is a language of instruction and students learn

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reading and writing in Georgian from the very first grade and it is taught through to the 12th grade. Most of the books and study materials are in Georgian. The language of instruction for the IBPYP, IBMYP1-3 as well as for the standard Georgian national curriculum programme.

**English:** At NFS we emphasize teaching and learning the English Language from the very beginning. Students begin their studies in the 1st grade through to Grade 12 in the Georgian sector, however, IBPYP preschool students also learn English.

**Russian or German:** Russian or German is taught as a second language for language acquisition subjects from the 5th grade through the 12th grade. Students have an opportunity to select their preferred second language acquisition course.

**English, Russian, German, French and Spanish:** Every student at Newton Free School has a chance to acquire additional languages like English (with a Native speaker), German, French and/or Spanish. After standard lessons end, we offer our students about 60 different clubs every day, where they can enrol each semester to pursue their interests beyond the curriculum. The activities include additional language clubs as mentioned above. The clubs are available for students from grade 1.

## B. NFS IBPYP Language Guidelines

Currently, most of our PYP students are Georgian and speak Georgian as their first/native language. NFS is fully committed to developing our primary students' language skills in Georgian (mother tongue), English and other foreign languages. The primary school offers other languages such as Russian, French and German within the framework of our school's after-school programme.

### The Language of Instruction

The language of instruction in the IBPYP is Georgian, which is also our students' mother tongue. The school has recourse to the IB Language Scope and Sequence to develop language learning practices along agreed objectives and PYP conceptual frameworks. The Programme of Inquiry and Units of Inquiry are both produced in a bilingual format, Georgian and English. The language of instruction also informs the UOI when and where possible, whereas additional language skills that fall outside the remit of the UOI are planned via a stand-alone planner. Details of learning outcomes are reflected in the UOI and other relevant planning documents.

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The school is aware that not all students possess the same level of language competency even in regard to their mother tongue and to that effect differentiation in the language of instruction is offered for all our students. Those students who are designated as requiring extra support in Georgian (Georgian Language Assistance GLA)) will have Individualised Learning Plans (IEP). The homeroom teacher with the help from other teachers will create a unit plan on the GLA child's IEP and develop the language outcomes from the scope and sequence decided for the UOI. English as a Foreign Language teachers plan for differentiation for their learners within the classroom, taking into consideration varied resources, pairings, groupings, activities/tasks, and assignments.

### **English as a Foreign Language**

NFS offers all its primary students English as a Foreign Language as a separate discipline. The English language teachers play a crucial role in collaborating with homeroom and other specialist teachers in drawing up and refining the Programme of Inquiry and Units of Inquiry. They also attend weekly professional learning community meetings where the members of the PYP faculty engage in reflective discussions about the UOI and plan ahead based on language outcomes from the scope and sequence decided for the unit.

### **Mother Tongue**

Mother tongue refers to the student's first language. Where the student's mother tongue is not Georgian, the school is committed to providing some opportunities to help the students proceed to develop their mother tongue, which entails developing awareness, appreciation and curiosity for the mother tongue and culture within our school's learning community.

### **C. NFS IBMYP language guidelines**

In the MYP at Newton Free School language is perceived as the means to nurture global citizens who can effectively communicate in a connected world. We are determined to help students excel in their communication, collaboration and lifelong learning skills across the continuum of language (learning language, learning through language and learning about language). Thus, all languages are appreciated school-wide and valued as the means to diversify students' learning experiences, where all students bring their idiosyncratic cultural and linguistic backgrounds into the classroom. Language is taught at an interdisciplinary/disciplinary level and all teachers are responsible for supporting students in language learning across subject areas.



## Language of instruction

As mentioned above, the majority of our PYP students are native Georgian speakers. To ensure a smooth transition from IBPYP to IBMYP, the language of instruction is Georgian throughout the first three years of the programme (MYP years 1-3) and English for MYP Years 4 and 5. Naturally, students pursue learning English as a second language course. Learning English is further supported through utilizing subject-specific textbooks and multimodal resources devised in the English language. Thus, in this sense, all teachers are language teachers. Additionally, German or Russian are taught across the programme to support students' aspirations for multilingualism.

The school recognizes that not all students possess the same level of language competency even in their mother tongue and differentiation in the content, instruction and assessment of language is offered. Those students who require additional support in Georgian or English have an opportunity to attend language acquisition and language and literature clubs after classes. Additionally, the school organizes host country language clubs for international students on request.

## Language acquisition pathways

At NFS we offer our students language acquisition classes for all levels:

MYP Language Acquisition Levels	
Emergent	Phase 1
	Phase 2
Capable	Phase 3
	Phase 4
Proficient	Phase 5
	Phase 6

English Language Acquisition classes are mandatory for all MYP students. Due to NFS admission requirements, MYP students are offered ELA classes from capable level:

- MYP year 1-3 students – phase 2
- MYP year 4-5 students – phase 3

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Additional second languages (such as Russian and German) are offered from Emergent (phase 1) upwards.

Students' progress in all four skill areas (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) is monitored on a regular basis by language B teachers through formative and summative assessment tasks. Teachers use these data as a basis for the decision to move students to a higher level once achieved.

### **Mother tongue**

MYP international students at NFS are offered language and literature courses in English language. However, supporting the development of our international students' competency in their first language is our priority. For this purpose, we do not have a one-size-fits-all approach, rather the school reviews the language needs of the students on an annual basis and offers differentiated solutions to individual needs of students in developing students' competence in their mother tongue. Additionally, international students can find literature in their host language at the NFS library.

### **D. NFS IBPYP Admissions Policy**

For more detailed information about our school's admissions policy and procedures, please refer to the NFS PYP Admissions Policy document.

At NFS admissions into the Primary Years Programme first grade commence in Spring every year. The following is the outline of the application procedures:

- The parent/guardian fills out the application form provided by NFS and submits the completed form to the admissions consultant;
- The parent/guardian and the student are invited to an interview, which is facilitated by the school psychologist and primary school teachers;
- The school determines whether the child is ready to commence his or her studies at our school according to the questions posed and games facilitated by the interviewers.

Students can enrol on the Primary Years Programme throughout the academic year provided that they successfully go through the above-delineated registration process and that the number of students in the relevant year group does not exceed 20.

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## E. NFS IBMYP Admissions Policy

Applicants at NFS IBMYP complete a student background survey that indicates their proficiency in their mother tongue, English and other languages. All students who indicate in the application that their native language is different from English, are directed to the FL department to be reviewed. These students are required to either provide valid certificates or take an in-school placement/language proficiency exam. The minimum requirement for English Language knowledge for MYP years 1-3 students is B1 and for MYP years 4-5 is B2.

In the case where the English language test results are not acceptable, students may be offered a conditional placement for one semester, where students can take additional English language classes. After the end of the semester, students need to retake the language proficiency test and achieve a favourable result in order to pursue their studies at IBMYP.

## F. NFS IBDP Admissions Policy

For detailed information on admission policy and procedures at NFS, please refer to the Newton Free School's admission procedures for entry into the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP).

Applicants at NFS IBDP complete a student background survey that indicates their proficiency in their mother tongue, English and other languages. Any application for a student that indicates that English is not their mother tongue will be reviewed by the FL department as part of the admissions policy. Admissions will notify the FL department of all such student applicants. The minimum requirement for English Language knowledge is B2 level.

For this purpose, students can provide the following valid certificates and their minimum scores:

- TOEFL iBT – minimum score for admission is 85 and at least a minimum score of 20 in each section;
- IELTS - minimum score for admission is 5.5 with no sub-test less than 5;
- FCE – minimum grade for admission is B.

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In case no such certificate is available, students should take an English language exam delivered by NFS, that proves that their knowledge of the English language is equivalent to at least B2 level.

In the case where the English language test results are not acceptable, students may be offered a conditional placement. Conditional placement lasts for one semester and students can take additional English language classes. After the end of the semester, students need to retake the language proficiency test and achieve a favourable result in order to pursue their studies at IBDP.

### III. LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW

NFS IBDP, IBMYP and IBPYP recognize that all subject teachers are also language teachers who have the responsibility to facilitate language acquisition and promote communication skills through subject area classes. They are responsible for teaching the terminology appropriate to their subject area.

All teachers are language teachers as language transcends curriculum areas. Through the IB language programmes, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers and listeners. Language is always taught meaningfully and in context. These contexts vary but often involve the use of real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local area and a wide variety of text types. We advocate the learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with context, to explore and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each individual student knows to help move them forward.

At NFS we are committed to the following Practices:

- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those of students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue (IB Standard C3, Practice 7).
- Teaching and learning demonstrate that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students (IB Standard C3, Practice 8).
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s). (IB Standard C4, Practice 1).

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- Collaborative planning and reflection recognize that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students (IB Standard C1, Practice 8).
  - The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes (IB Standard B2, Practice 11).

## A. Professional Development for IB English B Teachers

Typical professional requirements for an English B teacher are:

- Minimum Bachelor's degree in a relevant subject;
- At least 3 years of experience in teaching English as a second language and at least 2 years of experience in teaching with English as a language of instruction;
- Prior IB teaching experience is highly desirable.

Before hiring, candidates have to successfully pass the interview process and deliver a mock lesson. Each new teacher/staff member at NFS has a probation period of 6 months. During this time the relevant department assesses the employee's strengths and weaknesses and offers appropriate training or workshops. Attendance at the relevant IBDP workshop is mandatory for every IBDP teacher and the school promises to provide access to these workshops.

NFS organizes in-school workshops, where language B teachers share language teaching strategies with subject teachers. Before the end of every academic year, NFS evaluates the school's performance, including teachers' performance. All interested parties have access to the evaluation form and are encouraged to take part in the process: students, parents, colleagues, administration staff etc.

## B. Languages in the IB Diploma Programme

For the IB Diploma Programme at NFS the following languages are used for different purposes:

**English language:** English is the main language of instruction during classes, almost all study materials are in English, IB official documentation is provided in English and it is used for communication with the IB.

We acknowledge that English will probably be a second language for most of our future students and most of them will not be familiar with studying in English. For this purpose, students have to meet additional admission criteria, i.e. fluency in English (defined in the

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Admission Policy) while applying for DP. In case of such need, NFS is ready to offer additional classes in English before the actual academic process begins or conditional placement as stated above.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes will also be provided for those students who are struggling to access the curriculum in English. The school will also strive to provide support to those teachers for whom English is not their native language in order to deliver effective lessons.

Fluency in English is required from all IB Diploma Programme staff and teachers.

At NFS English is offered as a language acquisition group subject.

**Georgian language:** Georgian will be the main language of communication with guardians and government authorities and for that purpose, this and other policies can be translated into Georgian.

Georgian Literature is offered as a Group 1, Language A; Studies in language and literature subject.

**Support of mother tongue:** At NFS, we recognize the importance of continued study of the mother tongue and maintaining it.

In reality, where teachers' resources are limited and the students come from various backgrounds, providing students with mother tongue studying abilities is a big challenge:

- If the number of students willing to study the same mother tongue is at least five, NFS will provide a teacher for the studies in language and literature.
- In case NFS cannot provide the teacher for studies in language and literature, students will be offered to study their own mother tongue as a school-supported self-taught Language A (SSST).
- NFS will, whenever possible, engage an online counsellor/tutor for SSST students from the IB world community.

In IBDP, all students are required to study one language and literature course (an A language), which in some cases may be the continued study of the student's mother tongue and one language acquisition course (a B language) or a second A language. At NFS students may take Language B, English. When students begin the IBDP programme, they may study English as their A language if their skills in all four language areas (reading, writing, listening,

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speaking) enable them to access this curriculum. Currently, NFS cannot provide A English at school but we plan to add it in the future.

All Georgian nationals are strongly encouraged to take Georgian A: Literature as it is the school's belief that even if a student pursues an international career, it is essential to know one's own roots, linguistically and culturally.

## IV. LANGUAGE A AND LANGUAGE B

In NFS IBDP students study English as their language B course and Georgian as their language A course. Non-Georgian students take a school-supported self-taught language course for their language A course.

These courses follow the IBDP curriculum and develop students' language and literacy competence as well as intercultural competence.

In order to achieve the policy's purposes, all teaching staff is encouraged to engage in the following pedagogical attributes:

- Introduce students to a range of texts from different periods, styles and genres;
- Develop in students the ability to engage in close, detailed analysis of individual texts and make relevant connections;
- Develop the students' powers of expression, both in oral and written communication;
- Encourage students to recognize the importance of the contexts in which texts are written and received;
- Encourage, through the study of texts, an appreciation of the different perspectives of people from other cultures, and how these perspectives construct meaning;
- Encourage students to appreciate the formal, stylistic and aesthetic qualities of texts;
- Promote in students an enjoyment of, and lifelong interest in, language and literature.

The policy defines some strategies to promote & support language learning and development

- Ensure that policies and procedures regarding language acquisition are developed and implemented and are regularly reviewed;
- Provide funding, facilities, leadership, and resources for the successful implementation of the language policy;

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- Hold all stakeholders of the school accountable for the effective implementation of the Language Policy;
  - Attract and retain highly qualified and experienced administrators and teachers;
  - Provide academic leadership for the school;
  - Share responsibility for oversight, implementation and revision of the Language Policy and curriculum efforts;
  - Support teachers in their delivery of instruction. Provide a variety of professional development opportunities to better enable teachers to be effective instructors of students with a range of language proficiencies;
  - Promote an embedded Professional Development Model enabling collaboration concerning curriculum, instructional techniques, assessment and student progress;
  - Observe teachers and provide constructive feedback, materials, planning time and staff development opportunities;
  - Promote communication with guardians concerning students' language development and provide translators when needed;
  - Promote a co-curricular programme that encourages the use and development of the Language Policy.

## V. SUPPORT SERVICES

### A. Language learning and the library

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. An information-literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed;
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently;
- Evaluate information and sources critically.

The role of the NFS libraries is to promote and facilitate information literacy across all curricula and to all members of the NFS community.

NFS is committed to having a rich and expanding library with fiction or non-fiction literature in different languages.



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In the library, students have access to different literature in English, Georgian and any other languages they find important for them. The Library ensures that students have access to non-fiction literature in their mother tongue.

## B. Learning Support

When a student has been identified with additional learning needs including language difficulties or gifted and talented abilities, intervention and support are provided through the Learning Support programme. The Learning Support department works with teachers of all subjects to help them meet the needs of students identified with special language learning needs. This support may be formalized through an In-class Support Plan or an Individual Education Plan and may involve short and long-term interventions. If the identified student speaks English as an additional language, the FL department works closely with the Learning Support department and other teachers to provide the best service for this individual child.

## VI. COMMUNICATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY TO THE NFS COMMUNITY

The language policy will be introduced to the NFS community through a variety of pathways including staff meetings, parent meetings, and homeroom lessons. The policy and the handbook will also be available on the NFS website. New staff will be familiarized with the document during orientation. All students must abide by the decisions made about the language during the admissions process.

## VII. REVIEW PROCESS

The language policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the cycle of policy reviews, curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school improvement plan. The handbook will be updated as needed. The Leadership team will review the implementation of the policy in classrooms and throughout the school on a regular basis as part of the appraisal process.

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## IX. ABBREVIATIONS

**EAL** English as an Additional Language

**NFS** Newton Free School

**IBPYP** International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme

**IBMYP** International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme

**IBDP** International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

**IB** International Baccalaureate



**DP** Diploma Programme

**FL** Foreign Language