



# Language Policy

LULEÅ GYMNASIESKOLA

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

## Table of Contents

Purpose, profile and philosophy .....	2
Language profile .....	2
Enrollment and language placement test.....	3
Language support and needs.....	3
Language courses offered during the preparatory year .....	4
DP Language courses offered at Luleå Gymnasieskola.....	4
Group 1 (Language A).....	4
Group 2 (Language B).....	5
The role of language in the other courses .....	5
Prerequisites for the languages offered .....	5
Support for learning the Swedish language and culture.....	5
Teacher Professional Development .....	6
Bibliography .....	6

## Purpose, profile and philosophy

Luleå Gymnasieskola is one of the largest upper secondary schools in Sweden. There are 2300 students at the upper secondary school, of whom 84% are Swedish. The language policy at Luleå Gymnasieskola is to provide students and faculty an outline for ways to express themselves and communicate in a vast variety of ways.

As stated, language is one of the most important tools for learning, communicating, and developing as a person. The majority of our students at the diploma programme (DP) will come from foreign families, moving to Luleå because of job opportunities. Thus, it is important for Luleå Gymnasieskola to provide linguistic diversity and awareness among our students, teachers, and staff. We believe that language is more than just a way of expressing oneself, it is also a way of thinking, feeling, and understanding the world.

We strive to give our students the opportunity to develop their language skills in both native language and foreign languages, as well as to discover and appreciate different language cultures. We also want to stimulate students' critical and creative thinking by offering them linguistic challenges and variations in teaching. We believe that language learning is a lifelong process that enriches the development of both the individual and society.

In order to achieve our linguistic goals, we work actively to create a school environment that is language-aware, where everyone feels welcome and respected. We use different methods and materials to adapt the teaching to the students' needs and interests. We also collaborate with other schools, organizations and institutions, such as Luleå University of Technology, to exchange experiences and knowledge about language teaching and language research.

This mission in language development is aligned with the International Baccalaureate (IB) mission. The IB mission calls out for schools to foster “internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile”<sup>1</sup>. Luleå Gymnasieskola supports international-mindedness; in order to be an active citizen in an increasingly global society students must learn how to express themselves with a holistic world view. Through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP), we aim to develop students in accordance with the IB learner profile. Language is thus a vital part if we want students to become knowledgeable, inquirers, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, reflective and communicators. At the IB-programme, the language of instruction is English but students can acquire other languages during their DP years.

## Language profile

The primary working language of the school is Swedish due to the vast majority of the surrounding community having Swedish as their native language. The city of Luleå is an administrative area for the following national minority languages - Finnish, Sami and Tornedal Finnish (Meänkeli). Therefore, we provide classes in these languages to students who use these languages in their home environment.

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<sup>1</sup> International Baccalaureate Organization, Programme standards and practices, 2018.

English is the working language at Luleå Gymnasieskola IB DP.

Every member within the school – teachers, administrative staff, librarians etc. – are part of language development. The philosophy that all teachers are language teachers is based on the recognition that language is central to learning and communication in all disciplines. Language is not only a tool for expressing ideas and information, but also a way of constructing knowledge and understanding. Through language, students will learn about concepts and of the world. Language shapes our identity and culture and enables us to interact with diverse perspectives and experiences. Therefore, all teachers have a responsibility to develop their students' language skills and awareness, as well as to foster a positive attitude towards language learning and diversity.

All teachers are language teachers in three main ways: firstly, they teach through language, by using clear and appropriate language to facilitate learning and assessment; secondly, they teach about language, by helping students to analyze and reflect on how language works and how it influences meaning; and thirdly, they teach language, by providing opportunities for students to practice and improve their language proficiency in different contexts and modes. By doing so, all teachers support the development of multilingualism and intercultural understanding, which are essential for global citizenship and lifelong learning.

Everyone working within the school must read, implement, and support the language policy. Legal guardians and the school community will be informed about the policy through meetings and the school website.

### Enrollment and language placement test

Before enrollment, the pupil will have a language inventory in order to understand the student's language and background.

All students are required to have a certain proficiency in English before enrollment. A student's proficiency is determined through a placement test. We use the CEFR as reference. Students' proficiency should be on B2 level.

### Language support and needs

Luleå Gymnasieskola promotes a policy of full inclusion with linguistic and other learning support. This support may be given in-class or by means of support on additional occasions. Additional occasions could be extra study time in the studio, the study hall, which is always staffed with at least one language teacher. The studio is open during school hours, and free to use for all students.

If a student needs extensive help with language, the student will have a standing scheduled time in the studio. This will be scheduled at an ET-meeting. ET-meetings are held every week and teachers can book a meeting if they see that a student needs extra help. The ET-meetings involve the principal, DP coordinator, career counsellor, special needs teacher, school nurse, the teacher and, in some cases, the student.

All IB Teachers are teaching writing- and presentation skills as part of their courses. All students' language needs are determined through initial and ongoing assessments by the teacher and other staff throughout the year.

Our school community offers translators in a variety of languages if needed for communication with non-English speaking legal guardians. Translators can be provided through telephone or by physical appointments.

Our school library offers a vast selection of texts in many languages. Library staff work closely with the school and supports information and services about research techniques, IT, lending out books etc.

Students will have homeroom class every week where they will be given the opportunity to learn about the culture and society of Sweden, the host country.

### Language courses offered during the preparatory year

The preparatory year (year 10) requires students to study English and Swedish, as well as a third modern language. To properly prepare students for the Diploma Programme, students will take Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 during their preparatory year.

### DP Language courses offered at Luleå Gymnasieskola

#### Group 1 (Language A)

Luleå Gymnasieskola offers the following Group 1 subjects for students:

- Swedish Language and Literature: Higher and Standard Level (HL, SL).
- English Language and Literature: Higher and Standard Level.

HL courses in Group 1 (Language and literature) are recommended for fluent language users – i.e., English/Swedish should be the student's most proficient language in both reading and writing. SL-courses is generally suitable for bilingual candidates and/or candidates with a background in schools where the language is spoken (Swedish/English speaking schools). Language and literature-courses are for whom language B courses would present little or no challenge.

- Students are allowed to select two Group 1 languages and earn the bilingual diploma. Students can also choose to do three languages.
- Students wanting to study their native language can choose to study a language A self-taught. Self-study is a form of learning that involves the student's initiative, responsibility and autonomy. The student will study the language with school support, meaning that the student will have a supervisor to help their studies and support by providing resources, guidance and feedback for the students' efforts and achievements. If a student will take language A self taught, the studies will be scheduled and monitored by the school.

## Group 2 (Language B)

Luleå Gymnasieskola offers the following Group 2 subjects for students:

- English B: Standard Level, higher level
- Spanish B: Standard Level, higher level
- Spanish Ab initio: Standard Level

All language B courses require a sufficient number of students in order to be offered.

- Language acquisition (B) is generally for a learner who has two to four years of experiences with the language.
- Language B is not available for native speakers or for students with most of their previous education in the language.

### The role of language in the other courses

IB Teachers in subject groups 3-6 are teaching writing- and presentation skills as part of their courses. All subjects have their own technical language which must be taught to the students. Teachers have the responsibility of helping students identify and comprehend the key terms and concepts that are relevant to their learning. Teachers also need to help students understand how these terms and concepts can be applied in different contexts, and how they can use them to express their ideas effectively.

If a teacher becomes aware of students having difficulties in language comprehension, they report to the coordinator and the special needs teacher who will start an investigation. The special needs teacher will test the student's language skills to see if the student should have any kind of special arrangements made.

Support for students not proficient in the language of instruction will be provided. Such needs will be evaluated and followed up in so called ET-meetings with the head of school, coordinator, SEN-teacher and career counsellor.

### Prerequisites for the languages offered

The languages offered are based on appointed teachers and estimated student number. Students attending the preparatory year will study Spanish as a modern language preparing them for further studies of Spanish in the IB DP. During the DP years, the student can then choose to either take Spanish B or Spanish ab Initio. With growing student numbers, the school will be able to provide more languages.

### Support for learning the Swedish language and culture

All students will take Swedish during their preparatory year. Swedish will initially be offered as a Language A during the DP years.

Since Luleå Gymnasieskola is a large school, there are plenty of opportunities to interact and collaborate with Swedish peers in other upper secondary programs. Collaborations that could take place are for example to work with the same fiction as a Swedish class and plan sessions for students to discuss their thoughts. Students can also start their business as UF (Ung Företagsamhet – young entrepreneurs) work closely with several programmes in the school.

Students will also have weekly homeroom classes where their homeroom teacher will work together with the class. Students will learn of and engage in the Swedish culture and society.

### Teacher Professional Development

- Swedish law requires teachers in Swedish schools to have a professional teaching degree in order to teach and grade without supervision, and a teaching certificate in order for a permanent employment.
- All teachers are required to have completed at least one IB Professional Development workshop.
- Teachers at Luleå Gymnasieskola must participate in IB workshops at least every fifth year and/or when a new course guide is implemented.

### Bibliography

International Baccalaureate Organization, Programme standards and practices, 2018.