



SWISS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
QATAR

EAL POLICY

Staff Incharge	EAL Coordinator
Latest revision	August 2023
Approved by	Head of School
Next Revision	August 2025

Academic Year 2023 - 24



Our Vision

SISQ aims to develop learners who are
FULFILLED INSPIRED PREPARED

رؤيتنا

تهدف المدرسة السويسرية إلى تطوير متعلمين
يتصفون بأنهم

مُسْتَعِدُونَ مُلْهِمُونَ مُشَبَّعُونَ

Notre Vision

SISQ encourage les apprenants à devenir

ACCOMPLIS INSPIRÉS PRÊTS

Our Mission

Through learning that is fun, engaging, holistic, collaborative and caring, SISQ develops students who are:

- Intellectually fulfilled: they find joy in their own learning and the learning of others; they are curious, engaged and passionate about learning.
- Emotionally fulfilled: they are happy with themselves, healthy, balanced and confident.
- Socially fulfilled: they develop meaningful relationships; they are connected to others, the world around them and the environment.

Through learning that is inquiry-based, meaningful, challenging, authentic and innovative, SISQ develops students who are:

- Inspired to keep learning: they are inquisitive, questioning and willing to try new things; they take ownership of their learning and are self-motivated.
- Inspired to share and apply their learning: they can use their learning to improve their lives and the lives of others; they communicate their learning to inspire others.

Through learning that is focused on transferable skills, character, attitudes and dispositions, SISQ develops students who are:

- Prepared for the future: they embrace change and challenge; they adapt to new situations and think creatively to solve complex problems.
- Prepared to lead lives of integrity: they are principled and strong; they have a set of values that guide them when they make decisions.
- Prepared to be good global citizens: they are multilingual, open-minded and multicultural in their outlook; they are courageous, caring and prepared to take action to make their community and the world a better place.

رسالتنا

من خلال المتعة والمشاركة، والتعاون، والشمولية والاهتمام، تعمل المدرسة السويسرية على تطوير طلاب يتصفون بأنهم

- مشتتون فكرياً، يجدون الفرح في تعلمهم وتعلم الآخرين؛ إنهم فضوليون ومشاركون ومتحمسون للتعليم.
- مشبعون عاطفياً إنهم سعداء بأنفسهم، يتمتعون بصحة جيدة، ومتوازنون، وواثقون من أنفسهم.
- مشبعون اجتماعياً: يطورون علاقات ذات مغزى؛ إنهم مرتبطون بالآخرين وبالعالم من حولهم وبالبيئة.

من خلال التعلم الهادف والقائم على الاستقصاء، والتحدى والابتكار، تعمل المدرسة السويسرية على تطوير طلاب يتصفون بأنهم

- ملهمون لمواصلة التعلم؛ فهم فضوليون ومتساؤلون ومستعدون لتجربة أشياء جديدة؛ يتعلمون بدوافع ذاتية.
- ملهمون لمشاركة ما تعلموه وتطبيقه، يمكنهم استخدام ما تعلموه لتحسين حياتهم وحياة الآخرين؛ ينقلون تعلمهم لإلهام الآخرين.

من خلال التعلم الذي يركز على المهارات القابلة للنقل والمهارات الشخصية والمواقف والتصرفات تعمل المدرسة السويسرية على تطوير طلاب يتصفون بأنهم

- مستعدون للمستقبل يتبنون التغيير والتحدى؛ يتكيفون مع المواقف الجديدة ويفكرون بشكل خلاق لحل المشكلات المعقدة.
- مستعدون لعيش حياة تسم بالنزاهة: أصحاب مبادئ أقوياء؛ لديهم مجموعة من القيم التي توجههم عند اتخاذ القرارات.
- مستعدون ليكونوا مواطنين عالميين صالحين: فهم متعددون اللغات ومتفهمون ومتعدون الثقافات في نظرهم؛ إنهم شجعان ومهتمون ومستعدون لاتخاذ إجراءات لجعل مجتمعهم والعالم مكاناً أفضل.

Notre Mission

Au travers d'expériences d'apprentissage amusantes, intéressantes, holistiques, collaboratives, positives, SISQ encourage les apprenants à devenir:

- Intellectuellement accomplis: ils prennent plaisir à apprendre individuellement et collectivement. Ils sont curieux, intéressés et passionnés par leur apprentissage.
- Emotionnellement aptes: ils savent s'apprécier, ils sont positifs, équilibrés et sûrs d'eux-mêmes.
- Socialement compétents: ils développent des relations significatives avec les autres, ils vivent en harmonie avec les autres, le monde et l'environnement.

Au travers d'un apprentissage centré sur la recherche, significatif, comportant des défis, authentique et innovant, SISQ encourage les apprenants à devenir:

- Toujours prêts à apprendre: ils sont curieux, ils posent des questions et sont prêts à innover, ils sont responsables de leur apprentissage et intrinsèquement motivés.
- Toujours prêts à partager et à appliquer leurs connaissances: capables d'utiliser leurs compétences pour transformer positivement leur existence et celle des autres, ils transfèrent leurs apprentissages pour inspirer autrui.

Grâce à un apprentissage orienté vers des compétences de transfert, l'édification du caractère, créant des attitudes et une disposition psychologique bénéfiques, SISQ encourage les étudiants à devenir:

- Prêts pour l'avenir: ils acceptent le changement et les défis, s'adaptent à de nouvelles situations et résolvent des questions complexes grâce à leur créativité.
- Déterminés à vivre de manière éthique, ils suivent leurs principes et sont intègres. Leur valeurs les guident dans la prise de décisions.
- En tant que citoyens du monde: ils parlent plusieurs langues, pratiquent l'ouverture d'esprit en se confrontant à de multiples perspectives. Ils sont courageux, attentionnés et prêts à l'action pour transformer positivement leur communauté et le monde.



How to use this document

The main purpose of this document is to outline the EAL policy and related procedures at SISQ. This document is primarily for internal procedural purposes but it is also made available to parents and the school community.

Monitoring and reviewing of the policy

All teaching staff are responsible for implementing the policy and ensuring that their EAL practices align with the required practices outlined in this document. The Head of EAL, EAL staff and pedagogical leadership team are responsible for staff training, monitoring and quality assurance pertaining to the policy.

The Head of EAL and EAL staff are directly responsible for leading the collaborative review and update of this policy, which will be done on an annual basis, taking into account feedback from all stakeholders, including students, parents, teaching staff and the governing body.

Definitions and purpose

This section describes the international school environment, which frames the experience of students who are officially identified as children whose first language is a language other than English, known as English as an Additional Language (EAL) children.

EAL at SISQ, an IB school:

The IB publication 'Learning Diversity within the International Baccalaureate Programmes (2010)' states that "The International Baccalaureate is committed to supporting multilingualism as a fundamental part of 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".

SISQ offers an up to date, research-based, highly efficient EAL programme for students who may be new to instruction in English or continue to need English language support to access the various study programmes and subjects at all levels.

English is the primary language of instruction at SISQ. The main purpose of the EAL department is to support language development so that students build a social, emotional and academic language that is needed to learn within our IB programme of study K-12. Personally designed programmes are put in place for students to ensure they can access the whole IB programme of study and develop the four language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

Objectives of EAL at SISQ

- To speed up the successful social integration of EAL students into school life at SISQ
- To improve the language skills of newly arrived EAL students and thus enable them to access the mainstream programme of study in all IB subjects
- To provide continued support for advanced EAL students across the programme of study, including the IB Diploma Programme
- To support the transition out of the EAL programme into the mainstream programme
- To offer curriculum support to EAL students unable to access a full range of subjects
- To use EAL teaching methodologies to enhance students' subject-specific knowledge and skills across the curriculum



Rationale for methodology

- Students who feel they are learning in a secure and supportive classroom environment acquire a new language faster.
- Students who feel that their individual learning needs are being taken into consideration will be more responsive.
- Students who are aware of their actual language ability strive to improve.
- Students who are set individual language targets can see their progress along a language continuum and take pride in their achievements.
- Students who receive differentiated, structured or scaffolded tasks are more likely to achieve.
- Students who understand what is expected of them are more likely to be able to achieve learning objectives.
- Students who receive constructive, targeted feedback are more likely to improve.

EAL Procedures by phase

Primary School (Pre-Kindergarten 1 to Grade 5)

- **PYP Early Years (Pre-Kindergarten 1 and 2)**

Early childhood education plays an essential role in preparing young learners for English. Students who have an opportunity to develop basic skills in language and literacy at this age will enter Kindergarten and Grade 1 ready to read and write. In Pre-Kindergarten, students are fully immersed in the main language of the school, English.

We recognise that young learners often learn best through natural, social interaction. The Pre-Kindergarten programme, therefore, provides students who are new to English with a play and inquiry-based language learning experience.

However, depending on the severity of the need and rate of progress, further EAL support is always available.

- **PYP (Kindergarten to Grade 5)**

Throughout the rest of the PYP, the process is similar to that above. Students are fully immersed in English; great importance is given to natural, social interaction, as we recognise that younger and older learners often learn best in this way. However, in order to accelerate their learning of English and their access to all class content, extra support is available when required and the following takes place:

- All students entering Kindergarten to Grade 5 have a two-week settling-in period during which time they are observed by their class teacher
- Students who appear to have language needs are referred to the EAL department Referral form
- EAL teachers then discuss the student's level of English with the class teacher and decide on the appropriate course of action
- We aim to provide tuition in or near the mainstream setting.
- Most students are withdrawn from the classroom to receive intensive, targeted support to ensure they acquire survival language skills if needed. As soon as these students are able to cope in the mainstream class, they will still continue to receive support according to their needs - a tailor-made language support program in the EAL classrooms.
- An EAL profile/folder is compiled to provide evidence of student progress along the language continuum.
- Grouping is based on age and language abilities when possible
- EAL teachers share the information above with class/subject teachers
- EAL teachers carry out regular assessments using WIDA
- For survival language and beginner learners, EAL teachers record progress on an EAL Student Tracking Sheet here designed as part of MY World Scheme of Work. We base
- Learners are graded levels 1 to 6, 6 near-native according to the WIDA criteria



Secondary School (Grades 6 to 12)

- **MYP (Grades 6 to 10)**

In the MYP, the process is similar to that above, but students are given an initial WIDA assessment to provide baseline data, and a minimum level of proficiency in the English language is required (see admission policy here). The procedure is then as follows:

- Students are placed in a Tutor Group and where possible are buddied by a speaker of their own language.
- WIDA is used to assess and track progress for secondary students
- Students who arrive and have never studied a foreign language receive EAL lessons or curriculum support during these lessons instead.
- Grouping is based on age and language abilities when possible
- EAL teachers share the information above with subject and form teachers
- EAL teachers carry out regular assessments using WIDA. Learners are graded levels 1 to 6, 6 near-native according to the WIDA criteria
- For survival language and beginner learners, EAL teachers follow Linguascope and track progress on an EAL Student Tracking Sheet here designed as part of MY World Scheme of Work.
- We collaborate with subject teachers to provide support during assessment so students can fulfil their potential without any language barriers
- All students entering Grades 6-10 have a two-week settling-in period during which time they are observed by their subject and Form teachers
- Students who appear to have language needs are referred to the EAL department Referral form
- EAL teacher observe and gather information about potential EAL students
- EAL teachers then discuss the student's level of English with the Form teacher and send a Round robin form to all concerned teachers, a decision on appropriate action is then taken.
- During Personal Studies lessons and some Language B lessons, students are withdrawn from the classroom to receive intensive, targeted support to ensure they acquire survival language skills if needed. As their level of English increases the amount of support lessons will decrease accordingly. A tailor-made language support program will be followed during EAL support sessions
- An EAL profile/folder is compiled to provide evidence of student progress along the language continuum.

- **DP (Grades 11-12)**

In the DP the process is similar to that above, but students are given an initial English language assessment to provide baseline data; a minimum level of proficiency in the English language is required (see admission policy). The procedure is then as follows:

- When necessary, new students may be placed in a mainstream DP group that is supported by a member of the EAL department.
- Examination access for EAL students is provided according to IB requirements (See procedures for candidates with special assessment needs).



EAL Whole-school Procedures

Listening and speaking throughout SISQ.

The EAL department recognises the silent period that comes when joining a new school using a different language, we therefore target the development of listening skills first and of speaking skills thereafter; this forms the fundamental basis of all future language acquisition. The department understands that the silent period is an important stage in language development and that the student is exercising their right to remain silent while processing new information which will be recycled at a later stage in their first utterances.

In order to support the early development of early listening and speaking skills, the EAL Department operates the following policy throughout the school:

- Teachers continue to talk to the student even when the student does not respond
- EAL students are consistently included in small groups with other students
- Teachers vary question types
- When possible (if we have the tools and if EAL staff speak the language) and if necessary (it will help the student access the curriculum faster), the student's first language may be used to explain important information or to consolidate new concepts, note this is a temporary measure.
- As soon as sufficient English language skills are gained we should move away from the students' native language and practice as much English as possible.
- Initially, teachers praise any effort made to communicate or participate in class activities, this is to raise self-esteem as it is a very important part of language learning, in particular speaking in front of others
- Non-verbal responses are accepted and encouraged
- Eventually, teachers expect students to begin sounding out words with their lips, to repeat words modelled by the teacher and peers, to join in conversations even with one-word responses.
- Homeroom and subject teachers should structure teaching programmes that encourage child-to-child interaction and use role-play as students are very good at reinforcing learning.
- Activities are provided which reinforce language practice through repetition and "drilling vocabulary"

The EAL department understands that it is crucial for the vocabulary and concepts taught to have a context in the student's own sphere of experience, particularly during the first stages of language development. That is, if students are familiar with certain vocabulary in their own language or encounter the same concepts in their own world, they will internalise it quicker in their second language; hence the document name My World. For this reason, listening and speaking skills are developed in the first instance for all students using the topics and materials from My World, linguascope and other resources.

As it can take as long as seven years for students learning EAL to acquire near-native academic proficiency, EAL teachers realise that they cannot wait for students to reach this level before tackling the demands of the various IB programmes. The task of EAL, class and subject teachers is to enable students to access curriculum content whilst simultaneously learning English. As a result, the topics discussed during EAL listening and speaking sessions will also begin to reflect curriculum content as soon as possible.

The EAL department understands that topics and concepts taught during speaking and listening sessions should be practised, consolidated and extended during reading and writing sessions. Teachers do not expect students to be able to read and write about concepts that they do not already understand, or which have no context in their own world. Teachers should enable each student to personalise course content by relating it to their own cultural context.



Teachers working in the EAL department collaborate with class and subject teachers to set, monitor and review individual listening and speaking targets. This is done on a termly, half-termly, monthly or weekly basis, depending on student progress. In addition, EAL teachers help class and subject teachers to identify strategies they can use in class to enable students to reach these targets.

When staffing allows, the EAL department works in mainstream classroom settings in all grades to ensure students are given as much support as possible when they are expected to perform orally or are expected to give presentations for assessment purposes. To promote student self-esteem, the EAL department provides structured and scaffolded listening and speaking activities prior to such assessments and gives constructive feedback to foster improvement thereafter.

EAL teachers are all familiar with the concept of World Englishes: while students are expected to write in what is termed Standard English for examination purposes, there are many other forms of English from around the world that are perfectly acceptable in informal settings. These forms of English are not wrong, they are different; many have official status in the countries in which they are spoken. Although the EAL department believes that all these forms of English are equal, it understands that some may have to be modified for exam purposes.

Encouraging reading

As soon as it is felt the student is ready to tackle reading skills, age-appropriate, as well as catch-up phonics, are taught. In order to maximise language learning and to give the phonics taught a context, EAL teachers recycle the topics and vocabulary taught from the My World document. This, in turn, speeds up the acquisition of reading skills.

Once the student is able to read basic CVC words (initial phonics teaching and word blending introduces children to CVC words, Consonant-Vowel-Consonant e.g. big) and has a basic sight-word vocabulary (non-phonetic words e.g. could), the EAL teacher introduces short reading books into teaching sessions which both consolidate My World vocabulary and grammar, and which provide appropriate visual stimuli for new items of vocabulary.

As the student continues to make progress, the EAL teacher liaises with PYP class teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that books of the appropriate level are provided and that progress is tracked on SISQ systems when needed.

In order to develop reading skills further, students are encouraged to take an interest in reading by choosing books that reflect their own interests.

In the later stages of EAL support at the primary level, students are involved in individual, paired, shared and group reading activities that aim to show how enjoyable reading can be.

In the Secondary School, if students arriving are new learners of English, then EAL staff follow the same procedure to teach and extend reading skills as the one for Primary. However, more age-appropriate materials are used.

After a settling in period, those who arrive with higher levels of English are assessed and book selection is monitored to ensure sufficient challenge to aid gradual improvement in reading ability and level.

During EAL sessions and English language lessons conducted by the EAL department, abridged and graded readers are used to teach both language and literature skills.



Developing writing

In Kindergarten and grade 1, the primary function of the EAL Department is to teach and improve listening and speaking skills as early writing skills are still being taught in the mainstream classroom. However, once it is felt that a student is ready to begin transferring the spoken word into written form, the Department will begin to teach these skills in conjunction with both mainstream topics and My World materials so that written skills are taught in context.

In the latter stages of Primary and in Secondary, if students arrive with weak writing skills then these are taught in conjunction with speaking, listening and reading skills from both My World and other age-appropriate materials. Throughout the school, students who arrive with some writing skills are first assessed on their ability to write about the topics covered in My World. Following this, students are set curriculum-based, individual writing targets by the EAL department and their development along the writing continuum are monitored collaboratively by EAL, class and/or subject teachers.

Whether working in withdrawal or mainstream situations, the EAL department ensures that written tasks are differentiated to include writing frames and scaffolded activities that enable students to focus on language and technique.

Differentiation

All groups contain speakers of EAL as well as native or near-native speakers of English.

Differentiation in language acquisition differs from dumbing-down the language; the diminishment of critical thought by undermining standard language and learning standards; thus trivialising academic standards, culture, and meaningful information.

Differentiation means setting suitably challenging and motivating work for all students, regardless of their proficiency in English. This is most effectively achieved when learning outcomes are explicit and shared with students, and when a variety of teaching techniques is employed.

In EAL, the purpose of differentiation is to:

1. Allow students maximum access to the material taught by class or subject teachers
2. Provide a range of activities to ensure the participation of all pupils
3. Allow different outcomes for different individuals
4. Promote gradual development of skills
5. Allow sufficient repetition to consolidate language (how to drill language here)
6. Use pupils' strengths to build confidence
7. Give students the opportunity to learn effectively in a way suited to their abilities

How to differentiate within EAL :

- Teachers should ensure that they know as much as possible about each student's linguistic needs, educational history and abilities. In addition, teachers should know which students are speakers of EAL and which students have literacy problems.
- Teachers should set optional extension activities for homework and encourage students to attempt them.
- In the early stages, tasks should be set which ensure all students achieve something but also allow gifted EAL students to excel.
- A series of open-ended tasks should be set which allow students to investigate at a level appropriate to their understanding.
- Students should be allowed time to reflect on their work.
- The pace of the lesson should take into account the different work rates of individual EAL students.
- In class, teachers should use open and closed questions and vary between those which probe the surface and those which require students to use inference.
- Groups should be carefully balanced.
- New and difficult vocabulary should be pre-taught, reviewed, practised and consolidated.
- Materials that are free of gender bias and reflect different cultural and ethnic backgrounds should be used to enrich teaching and learning.



Differentiation in Reading and Writing within EAL

- A range of appropriately challenging written tasks should be available for students to choose from.
- Teaching strategies should help students to actively decode texts: new concepts, subject-specific and key/technical vocabulary, should be pre-taught.
- Whole class, individual, paired and small group reading should take place.
- Reading tasks should be designed to increase in complexity as students move from reading for an understanding of explicit content, to decoding inference and assessing the influence of style and technique on complete meaning.

Grammar teaching

Students joining SISQ in the lower primary stage are not overtly taught grammar as the EAL Department believes that these students have arrived at the school early enough to develop an understanding of the rules of language in a more communicative and functional manner. Instead, EAL teachers help students to understand the rules they unconsciously follow by giving them the tools to describe and discuss language, and by insisting on the use of correct language forms in appropriate situations.

For students arriving later in the upper primary and in the secondary level, the EAL Department initially follows the procedures mentioned above. However, once the student possesses some basic English language skills and begins to communicate more readily, the EAL Department believes that at least a basic knowledge of grammar is intrinsic to improved language production in the long term. The department recognises that for older students, in particular, there is a link between understanding grammatical terminology and improve spoken and written language. A basic understanding of grammar is also necessary to facilitate self-study.

All EAL reading, writing, listening and speaking resources are carefully chosen and include integrated grammar, however, often we plan and deliver grammar only lessons depending on the students' needs.

Spelling

The EAL Department teaches spelling conventions to students throughout the school. For those who arrive with little or no English, spelling is taught in conjunction with My World topics and vocabulary.

The EAL department teaches phonics, blending and spelling rules to younger students. This is not limited to younger students and is often necessary for older students who may have big gaps missing from their learning of the English language.

EAL teachers understand that there are four main ways in which students process the spelling of words:

- Visual – does it look right? Looking at the shape of words and patterns or letter strings within words.
- Auditory – does it sound right? Looking at the relationship between the sounds and the letters or groups of letters.
- Linguistic – does it seem right? Based on the knowledge of derivation and relationships between words
- Kinaesthetic – did it flow right? Automatically letting the hand produce familiar movements.

The EAL Department is aware that most students rely principally on the first strategy, but that all can benefit from using a range of techniques. It also realises that individual difficulties with spelling may be due to a range of factors, including poor eyesight, hearing difficulties, poor hand-eye coordination, anxiety, or emotional problems.

Initially, a similar approach is taken with students arriving in later years, but the EAL department endeavours to teach students to be self-critical, to draft work and to use spell-checkers, dictionaries and thesauruses critically.



Homework policy

EAL follows the school homework policy.

Assessment policy

EAL follows the school assessment policy.

Display

EAL follows the school display policy. In addition, the EAL department displays work from students in all teaching groups, they are encouraged to plan, draft and write work that demonstrates maximum effort at their current level of ability. Work of all abilities and all age groups is displayed and is not expected to be perfect.

The gap between boys and girls in EAL

The gap in achievement between girls and boys is more obvious with new young learners of English, generally, boys are behind in:

- Extended writing
- Presenting, drafting, and completing tasks
- Empathising with literary characters
- Increasing their vocabulary range

Reasons

- Boys have a lower boredom threshold
- Writing that is valued in classrooms is often girl orientated
- Boys' reading matter is less valued (girl teen novels are closer to school literature than Science Fiction or computing matter)

References

International Baccalaureate Organisation (2014) Language Policy, Information on the International Baccalaureate support for languages, language courses and languages of instruction. Cardiff: IBO.

National Union of Teachers -DfES funded- (2001). Relearning to learn, UK.

Government of South Australia. Department of Education and Children's Services (2016). Teaching ESL students in mainstream classrooms: language in learning across the curriculum. Adelaide.

Frank Allen (2011) EAL specialist, Student Support at Bristol High School, UK.

Other relevant SISQ policies and documents:

- Inclusion policy
- Admission Policy
- Academic Honesty Policy
- Assessment, Feedback and Reporting Policy