

## Introduction

At Sha Tin College, language is more than a tool for communication, it is central to how we learn, connect, and grow. These Language Guidelines reflect our commitment to supporting every student in developing their full linguistic potential in an environment that values identity, intercultural understanding, and academic excellence.

Sha Tin College recognizes that a student's home language is not just a tool, but a right. We commit to protecting this right by encouraging students to maintain their linguistic heritage through our Language pathways and by validating their home cultures in the curriculum. We believe that linguistic diversity is a prerequisite for true equity and access.

Aligned with the principles of the International Baccalaureate and the diverse linguistic profiles of our learners, our approach to language is grounded in the four core values of our school.

- **Be Curious**



We aim to develop students as internationally-minded thinkers and communicators who seek to understand the world and others through the exploration of language. By learning additional languages, students develop a profound awareness of different cultures and foster a natural curiosity about diverse perspectives. To support this, we consistently engage with current best practices in language pedagogy, actively reflecting on how these approaches support deeper conceptual learning. Within our framework, all teachers are recognized as language teachers because language development is integrated across every subject and discipline. We view language learning as a developmental and flexible process that encourages students to explore a wide range of texts and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the use of multilingual resources, including digital platforms and first-language texts, enriches the learning experience and encourages curiosity that extends well beyond the classroom.

- **Be Inclusive**



At Sha Tin College, we celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of our students, staff, and the broader community, recognizing that multilingualism is a fact, a right, and a resource for learning. We acknowledge each student's home language and culture as vital to their identity, self-esteem, and academic success. While English is the primary language of instruction, we support students of all linguistic backgrounds through differentiated teaching that ensures full access to the curriculum. Our classrooms are designed to reflect a range of language needs, providing targeted English as an Additional Language (EAL) support to guarantee equity and access for all learners. Given our local context, Chinese language and culture play a central role in our school life, and we ensure that students have meaningful opportunities to connect with this essential aspect of their identity.

- **Be Responsible**



We uphold high expectations for language development, recognizing that strong linguistic skills are the foundation of academic achievement and personal growth. English serves as our shared language of instruction and communication, and it is used consistently and purposefully across all subjects to maintain a cohesive learning environment. Teachers utilize assessment data to guide their planning and ensure that every student makes measurable progress in their language journey. Students are empowered to take ownership of their learning by using their home language as a scaffold for understanding complex concepts and developing specialized vocabulary. Our commitment to maintaining linguistic heritage is reinforced by the IBDP language programme, which provides access to home language options through ESF support and specialized online platforms. Finally, teachers actively reflect on and adapt their practice to remove language barriers, ensuring that every learner is supported in achieving their full potential.

- **Be Generous**



Language is a powerful tool used at our school to foster empathy, build positive relationships, and contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment. We believe that multilingualism and intercultural literacy are essential for helping students connect across differences and contribute meaningfully to global citizenship. Our teaching approach encourages students to listen to, value, and understand the diverse perspectives expressed through different languages and cultural frameworks. We promote language as a vehicle for dialogue and understanding, encouraging a generosity of spirit in how our community members relate to one another. Ultimately, through the development of their language skills, students are supported to express themselves with clarity, kindness, and confidence across all academic and social contexts.

## **Our Language Practices**

### **Language of Instruction**

English is the primary language of instruction and communication at Sha Tin College. There is a range of English proficiency across all classes.

### **Curriculum Pathways in English**

#### **Years 7–9 (IBMYP)**

- English/Chinese are taught as Language and Literature
- Chinese/French/English are taught as Language Acquisition
- English language skills are also developed across all subject areas as part of the interdisciplinary nature of the MYP.

## **Years 10–11 (I/GCSE)**

- Students study either English Language and Literature or English Language only, depending on their learning needs and pathways.
- Chinese is offered as First Language/Second Language/Foreign Language
- French is offered as a Second Language

## **Years 12–13 (IBDP/CP/Courses)**

- Students choose one of the following:
  - Group 1
    - English or Chinese Language and Literature SL/HL
    - English Literature SL/HL
    - Self-Taught Language SL
  - Group 2
    - French B SL/HL
    - Chinese B SL/HL
    - Spanish Abinitio SL
- All CP students must engage in language development as part of the programme's core.
  - Timetabled IBDP language courses.
  - Alternative language pathways developed outside of the formal curriculum.
  - Emphasis is placed on developing multilingual competence.

## **Supporting Multilingual Learners**

- Students are encouraged to use their home language to:
  - Scaffold understanding
  - Access complex concepts
  - Understand and expand their vocabulary
- The school provides learning materials in students' home language, when available and appropriate.
- A wide variety of online multilingual resources enhance accessibility and support independent learning.

## **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

### **Admissions and Identification**

- EAL refers to students whose home language is not English.
- All linguistic backgrounds are welcomed; however, admissions assess English proficiency to ensure students can access the English-medium curriculum.
- On entry, students needing English support are identified and provided with inclusive, differentiated support.

## **Years 7 - 9**

- A graduated response model is provided for students identified as needing further support in developing academic English in Years 7 to 9. In Year 7, lessons are targeted at supporting academic language needed in mainstream lessons. In Years 8 and 9, a sheltered I&S pathway focused on increased language and literacy skills is followed.
- In Years 8 and 9, we have English growth classes in each year group to support students who find English particularly challenging.

## **Year 10 - 11**

- Students are placed into one of two options:
  - Edexcel IGCSE English Language A (First Language)
  - AQA GCSE English Language and Literature
  - Edexcel IGCSE English Literature
- Pathway guidance is based on Year 9 teacher recommendations, assessment data, and professional judgement.
- For students recommended for the IGCSE English Language only pathway:
  - A meeting with Year 9 English teacher and student is followed up with a conversation during scheduled Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences.
  - The Head of Faculty follows up formally in writing.

## **Years 12 - 13: Academic Support Classes**

- A graduated response model is provided for students identified as needing further support in organisation, self-management and academic literacy skills that go beyond subject-specific knowledge.
  - Targeted academic coaching
  - Academic literacy
  - Executive functioning
  - Subject-specific support

## **Hong Kong/China: Local Context Connection**

In Hong Kong, Cantonese is a spoken dialect used primarily for oral communication.

Putonghua(Mandarin) is aligned with the standard Chinese reading and writing system and provides stronger support for students' overall learning and examination preparation. In Chinese A Language and Literature SL/HL, students are permitted to use Cantonese for oral examinations.

## **Commitment to Local Context Engagement**

- STC is committed to fostering authentic and meaningful engagement with Hong Kong/China, its culture, and society.
- Students explore globally significant themes through the local context of Hong Kong/China.
- Real-life experiences and inquiries are encouraged to promote cultural understanding.

## **Chinese Language Resources and Support**

- Our library has dedicated Mandarin resources.
- The Chinese collection includes a wide range of texts to support learners from beginner to near-native proficiency.

### **Years 7- 9 (IBMYP)**

- **Chinese Language Acquisition (Phases-based)**
  - Students study Chinese for 180 minutes per week within the regular timetable.
  - Instruction is offered at Phases 1, 2, and 3 and is differentiated to meet diverse student needs.
  - Students are grouped by language proficiency and assessed against MYP Language Acquisition criteria.
  - Students are encouraged to continue with their chosen language into IGCSE and IBDP/CP.
- **Chinese Language and Literature**
  - Explores literary and non-literary texts to develop holistic language skills.
  - Focuses on listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting in various contexts.
  - Students study texts that promote critical, creative, and personal approaches to learning.
  - Emphasis on wide reading in Chinese, both in and out of the classroom.
  - Themes are selected to ensure relevance to students' experiences and promote cultural connection.

### **Years 10 - 11 (I/IGCSE)**

- STC offers three IGCSE pathways in Chinese to cater to varied proficiency levels:
  - IGCSE First Language Chinese – for native or near-native speakers.
  - IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language – for students with intermediate proficiency.
  - IGCSE Foreign Language Mandarin – for students newer to the language.
- Students are placed on a course that best matches their background and language proficiency, allowing for continued progress and engagement.

### **Years 12 - 13 (IBDP/CP/Courses)**

- **Chinese A: Language and Literature SL/HL**

This is for students who are academically proficient in the language.

- At STC this describes students who have completed IGCSE First Language Chinese.
- Encourages exploration of how meaning is created through language and how context shapes interpretation.
- Students analyse a variety of texts and develop awareness of literary techniques and cultural perspectives.

- **Chinese B SL/HL**

- For students with approx 3 to 5 years of prior study in Chinese.
- Focuses on developing language skills through written and spoken materials.
- Encourages students to develop international understanding and reflect on their role in local and global contexts.

## **French and Spanish Pathways**

In alignment with the IB's commitment to multilingualism and international-mindedness, Sha Tin College provides a robust Language Acquisition programme. By offering French and Spanish alongside English and Chinese, we ensure students develop the intercultural literacy necessary to engage with global perspectives.

### **Years 7 - 9 (IBMYP)**

- **French Language Acquisition**

- Students in Years 7 to 9 may choose to study French for 180 minutes per week as part of their regular timetable.
- Instruction is offered at Phases 1, 2, and 3 and is differentiated to meet diverse student needs.
- Students are grouped by language proficiency and assessed against MYP Language Acquisition criteria.
- Students are encouraged to continue with their chosen language into IGCSE and IBDP/CP.

### **Years 10 - 11 (I/GCSE)**

- **IGCSE French Language**

- Aimed at students with prior French education.
- Focuses on effective communication, cultural awareness, and positive attitudes towards other cultures.
- Develops transferable skills and intellectual engagement.
- Curriculum is organised around five broad topic areas, offering insight into French-speaking countries and communities.

### **Years 12 - 13 (IBDP/CP/Courses)**

- **French Language Acquisition B SL/HL**

- For students with at least two years of French study.
- Emphasises confidence, clarity, audience awareness, and accuracy.
- Students develop the ability to handle a wide variety of texts, express opinions, and write in varied styles.

- **Spanish Language Acquisition Ab Initio SL**
  - Designed for complete beginners.
  - Focuses on practical communication in everyday contexts.
  - Emphasises speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
  - Upon completion, students can engage in basic conversations, interpret authentic texts, and complete simple written tasks in Spanish.

## **Home Language Development**

### **Commitment to Home Language Support**

- STC recognises the importance of maintaining students' home languages and supports development through both formal and informal programmes.

### **ESF-Supported Language A Options (IBDP)**

#### **Taught and Self-Taught Language A: Studies in Language and Literature**

- In line with IB guidelines, students may study Language A through taught classes or self-taught programmes.
- Both pathways are coordinated by the ESF First Language Coordinator, who provides training and support to tutors across the foundation.
- These courses support a broad range of languages based on community demand, reflecting the diversity of the ESF school population.

#### **Library and Resources Centre (LRC)**

- The LRC at Sha Tin College offers a wide range of print and online resources to support both learning and recreation.
- Materials are available in multiple languages, including English, Mandarin, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Japanese.
- Some academic databases include translation tools for accessing content across languages.

#### **Language Guidelines**

- The Language guidelines are published on the STC website.
- New staff are introduced to the guidelines during their orientation.
- The Language guidelines are reviewed regularly as part of the curriculum review cycle.
- Reviews are conducted by a representative group, with oversight from the Senior Leadership Team, who monitor how the policy is implemented across the school.
- The review process aligns with IB thinking, treating language policy as both a problem-solving and collaborative practice.