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Language Policy

CJD International School

CJD Language Policy

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1. Introduction

At CJD International School, we aim to create a diverse and inclusive community of learners from all over the world. Our students speak many languages, and we recognise the importance of every student's home language.

We are aware in some cases, the mother tongue of our students is neither English nor Portuguese, and they may speak one or more languages at home. CJD will support students throughout the learning process regardless of their language proficiency level. While linguistic diversity is highly valued, English is the primary language of instruction at CJD International School.

This policy sets out how CJD will:

- Support all students in acquiring and maintaining the level of English necessary for their education.
- Value and incorporate students' home languages as a resource for learning.

2. Language of Instruction

English is the official language of instruction at CJD International Programme. This means:

- All classes are taught in English.
- Teachers, students, and staff are expected to speak only English during lessons.
- Students who share a home language must still speak English in class, except in the cases below.

Exceptions:

- In language classes (e.g., Portuguese or Spanish), the target language may be used as the main language of instruction.
- If a student doesn't understand something, they may briefly ask a classmate or teacher for help in their home language. This should be kept short and followed by an explanation or response in English.

3. Rationale for English as the Language of Instruction

- Developing strong English proficiency is essential for academic success in an international school setting.
- English is the official language of instruction and assessment for the Cambridge International curriculum followed at CJD.
- Research shows that structured English immersion supports more effective second-language acquisition.
- Using English as a shared academic language ensures inclusion, equal access to learning, and collaboration across a multilingual student body.
- While English is mandatory, CJD recognises the importance of students' home languages in their overall linguistic and cognitive development.
- Teachers will implement inclusive, language-friendly practices that promote additive bilingualism, valuing and building upon students' existing linguistic repertoires.

4. Home Languages in Learning

At CJD, we believe that a learner's home language is the linguistic foundation upon which other language acquisition is built. Home language is crucial for cognitive and cultural identity development. The school will encourage students to integrate their home language into learning when it enhances understanding. While English is the primary language of instruction, students' home languages can be used as a scaffold for learning in appropriate contexts:

- Students may use their home language during independent work to help organize ideas before expressing them in English.
- Teachers will encourage students to use bilingual dictionaries and reference materials when necessary.
- CJD supports home language literacy by providing library resources in students' home languages when available.
- Students are free to communicate in any language outside of classroom lessons.

CJD values linguistic diversity and encourages students to celebrate their home languages while fostering an inclusive, multilingual school environment. Ultimately, everyone's home language adds to the cultural and linguistic diversity of our school

5. Communication with Parents and Public

All official communications (letters, emails, newsletters, school reports, event invitations) will be provided in English.

Parent meetings will normally be conducted in English, but translation services may be provided where possible to ensure full parental engagement.

At CJD, we believe that learning additional languages supports personal growth and encourages global citizenship.

To promote multilingualism, all students from Primary 1 onwards take Portuguese lessons to build their skills in the language of the host country. Depending on the curriculum, students may also have the chance to study other languages such as Spanish or French.

While not all students will reach full academic proficiency in every language, we aim to support them in progressing as far as possible.

All teachers at CJD are seen as language teachers. We work together to create a consistent and supportive language-learning environment for all students. In Early Childhood, children are introduced to Portuguese through music, dance, and movement activities.

6. Support for Non-English-Speaking Students

Students identified as having language learning needs receive additional support to help them succeed academically. For students entering with limited English proficiency, CJD offers targeted English as an Additional Language (EAL) support to strengthen their academic English skills.

Students in Primary and Lower Secondary may join an Intensive English Course (IEC) while continuing to attend core subjects. In Upper Secondary and Advanced levels, IEC is available only to students who are likely to reach the required English level within six months.

Progress in the IEC is monitored through regular assessments. Students must achieve at least B1/B2 level for IGCSE and C1 level for A-Level (more details in the CJD Admissions Policy).

Additional language support may include:

- Scaffolded instruction
- Individualised interventions
- Teacher mentorship

The wider school and local community is also an important part of language learning. Students take part in field trips to places like museums, libraries, theatres, and cinemas to practice language in real-life contexts and learn about local culture. Guest speakers from different organizations are regularly invited to school, enriching students' exposure to diverse ideas and language use. Throughout the year, students also participate in cultural events—such as International Day or a Gastronomic Fair—celebrating the many cultures in our school and promoting international-mindedness and appreciation of diversity.

7. Library and Resource Support for Home Languages

CJD is committed to supporting students' linguistic and cultural identities by:

- Stocking the school library with books and educational materials in students' home languages.
- Encouraging bilingual reading sessions and peer language clubs.
- Providing bilingual learning tools to assist in language acquisition.

8. Linguistic proficiency assessment

To ensure appropriate language support and class placement, the following procedures are in place:

- All new students from non-English-speaking backgrounds will undertake a school-administered spoken and written placement test before commencing, in accordance with their level, to gauge their fluency level.
- The test must be completed in person or under invigilated online conditions.
- Online placements should be conducted on anti-copying-specific websites that monitor copy-pasting, AI and opening new windows (exam.net, safeexambrowser.org, respondus.com, testportal.net).
- Submissions should be submitted to an AI check.
- There should be a 4-week trial period where teachers can flag students who are clearly under placed (bored, overperforming), or over placed (struggling with basic instructions and comprehension) and request transferal.

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Colégio Júlio Dinis
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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