

# İSTEK ACIBADEM PRESCHOOL İSTEK ACIBADEM PRIMARY SCHOOL

## LANGUAGE POLICY

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## İSTEK ACIBADEM PRESCHOOL VE İSTEK ACIBADEM PRIMARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

This document defines our perspective on language, the key principles of language learning, and how these principles influence our language teaching.

It is a framework that enhances consistency across year levels and subjects. It provides parents with information about our principles and practices and helps them understand our curriculum.

It supports teachers in planning, delivering, and assessing instruction. It is a guiding tool for professional development and reflection, enabling teachers to reflect on their own language practices.

The points in this policy describe what we value and what we aim to work toward.

### LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

At İSTEK Acıbadem Preschool and Primary School, the Turkish National Education Curriculum is implemented within the PYP framework. We believe language is a tool for inquiry. Language is an instrument for transdisciplinary learning; therefore, we implement plans aimed at providing a language environment that develops, produces, and supports effective communication and language development. Since language is central to learning, practically all our teachers are language teachers responsible for facilitating effective communication.

The practices stated in this policy have been jointly determined with all teachers and incorporate perspectives from teachers, parents, and students at the school.

### LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION – TURKISH

Turkish is the language of instruction at İSTEK Acıbadem Schools. The inquiry program provides learners with authentic contexts to develop and use language. Language is taught within relevant, realistic inquiry unit contexts whenever possible.

Language is used as a tool for expressing emotions, ideas, and experiences, as well as for developing and making sense of an understanding of the world. It is very important for the development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Language is used in different ways, for different audiences, and in different contexts, and it changes over time. There are certain rules to follow, but language also allows people to express themselves creatively. Every person expresses themselves uniquely.

The National Turkish Language Scope and Sequence specified by the Ministry of National Education and the rubrics in the Early Years Programme define the key expectations accepted as foundational in language teaching. Language development involves not only acquiring and applying a range of skills and attitudes but also understanding and using language. Language consists of four interrelated skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Language skills can be further developed by challenging the student's level of comprehension and effective communication patterns. There are

different learning styles and developmental stages in language acquisition. Individual students will progress through different stages at their own pace. Developing a sense of confidence as a communicator is important in everyone's language development.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE – ENGLISH

*“Exposure to languages other than their mother tongue enables students to gain knowledge about other cultures, develop appreciation for these cultures, and become aware of different perspectives. They understand and value their own cultures and personal stories, and are open to the viewpoints, values, and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to exploring and evaluating diverse opinions and are eager to grow through experience.”*

*(PYP Making It Happen – A Curriculum Framework for International Primary Education, 2007)*

According to the Turkish National Education Standards, the objectives of foreign language teaching are listed as follows:

- Developing students' listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills within the language scope
- Enabling students to communicate in that language
- Developing positive attitudes towards language learning
- Instilling the joy of learning new languages

At İSTEK Acıbadem Preschool and İSTEK Acıbadem Primary School, English lessons begin at age 3. In foreign language classes, English is taught alongside Turkish in a bilingual learning schedule in both preschool and primary school. Since the 2018-2019 academic year, a bilingual program called Crossroads has been implemented in 4-5, 5-6, 3-, 4-, 5-year-old, and 1st-grade groups, delivered through co-teaching by classroom and specialist teachers. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the program expanded to include grades 2, 3, and 4.

## CHOSEN SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE – GERMAN AND SPANISH

*Our students in grades 2, 3, and 4 attend two weekly lessons of their chosen second foreign language (German or Spanish). The primary goal of this course is to develop students' language skills and foster a love of learning new languages. Exposure to languages different from their mother tongue helps students develop understanding and appreciation of different cultures and raises awareness of diverse perspectives. (Making the PYP Happen – A Curriculum Framework for International Primary Education, 2007)*

In foreign language classes, besides learning a new language, students also gain knowledge about the countries where English, German, and Spanish are spoken and their cultures. Early exposure to these languages and cultures helps our students grow into open-minded individuals. They understand and appreciate their own culture and history, and are open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of other individuals and societies. They develop habits of exploring and evaluating different viewpoints and are eager to grow through these experiences.

In line with the PYP, our aim is to develop students' knowledge, skills (learning approaches), and conceptual understanding so that, in the long term, they become individuals who are:

- **Inquirers:** They question language use and structure. They use language to acquire knowledge and make sense of the world around them.
- **Thinkers:** They can clearly express their thoughts and ideas.
- **Communicators:** They can express themselves verbally or in writing in many different situations. They listen attentively and speak confidently and clearly. They read and understand different types of texts. They write clearly and accurately in a style appropriate for the purpose.
- **Risk-takers:** They are willing to read, write, and speak even when they do not feel completely confident.
- **Knowledgeable:** They acquire and apply grammar and understanding to discuss language structures, text types, and literary styles.
- **Principled:** They are aware of the power of language and the responsibility that comes with using it.
- **Caring:** They understand that language use can affect others. Our students know that how they use language influences others, so they act sensitively in their language use. All language teachers encourage our students to use the “magic words” embraced by our school community.
- **Open-minded:** They respect differences and similarities among languages, accents, and communication preferences. By interacting with foreign language teachers from different nationalities, they learn diverse accents and cultures.
- **Balanced:** They can express themselves verbally and in writing. They can read and understand various text types and write for different purposes aimed at different audiences.
- **Reflective:** They reflect on their own language development and efforts to improve language proficiency.

## LANGUAGE TEACHING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

We believe students will become effective communicators by understanding the following concepts, developing the Learner Profile attributes, and acquiring related skills:

1. **Students participate in a variety of activities that actively engage listening, speaking, reading, and writing.**

We provide a range of teaching and assessment tasks where students actively create meaningful language rather than just producing limited language structures. Students choose their own reading materials for enjoyment and research. To support reading development, they can access books from the library and classroom book collections, as well as online reading platforms like Okuvaryum, BookR, Highlights Library, and Sunshine Online.

2. **The language curriculum is integrated throughout the school curriculum, and language activities are meaningful and relevant.**

Language elements such as text structure, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary are taught

as much as possible within the inquiry unit context and are related to that context.

**3. The learning environment is;**

**a. Positive, comfortable, supportive, and encourages oral communication.**

We aim to enhance students' confidence through:

- Positive and formative feedback
- Group and paired work activities
- Opportunities for presentations, role-play, etc.
- Opportunities for discussion and debate

**b. Includes varied resources; text-rich and print-rich.**

- We work towards a well-equipped school library containing books and reading materials in many different text styles.
  - We use technology and AI-supported applications in language learning.
  - We use a range of teaching resources including digital and interactive games.
- 4. Students participate in assessment and receive ongoing feedback.**
- To encourage self-assessment, we use portfolios, rubrics, reflective thinking, and classroom self- and peer-assessment documents.
  - We use a writing process designed as a tool for reflective thinking and idea development, including drafting, revising, and sharing.
- 5. Different language backgrounds are recognized and valued.**
- Our library contains books in various languages (Turkish, English, German, and Spanish). The library continues to be enriched and updated to support students whose first language differs.
  - We use international celebrations to raise awareness and provide information about different languages.
  - We use multilingual bulletin boards (greetings, numbers, short sentences in different languages).
- 6. Language skills are taught through an integrated approach.**
- Through English and Turkish activities offered in school clubs, students practice language skills in different contexts.
- 7. Developmental stages and differences in learning styles are considered.**
- 8. Teachers model effective communication strategies.**

We model different reading and writing strategies, demonstrate how to speak and listen in different situations, model correct use of language elements, and present and explore a wide variety of literary and non-literary text types.

English club options are activities integrated with art, literature, and contemporary topics. Students learn real-life language use and begin to see English as a communication tool that can open doors in many other subjects.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### ISTEK Private Acibadem Preschool Turkish Language Lessons

One of the main goals of preschool is to enable students to speak Turkish and express themselves.

Turkish language activities at preschool are conducted under teacher supervision. Through these activities, students listen to others' speech and participate in communication by providing appropriate responses.

Turkish language activities are scheduled weekly in preschool. These activities are designed to help students use their voices and Turkish appropriately, express themselves verbally, understand social life, and recognize their roles in social settings. Turkish language activities include a variety of exercises such as tongue twisters, poems, finger plays, stories, and dramas. Teachers support students in becoming aware of new vocabulary and using new words correctly in daily conversations. Activities to develop students' speaking skills, vocabulary, articulation, and pronunciation are conducted.

### ISTEK Private Acibadem Primary School Turkish Language Lessons

The Turkish language program, with learning outcomes and well-planned activities, aims to instill a love for learning Turkish, increase awareness of language learning, develop students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, enhance awareness of the richness of the language, and enable students to speak Turkish effectively, fluently, and correctly.

Through the Turkish Language Program, our school strives to develop students who:

- Understand what they read, see, and hear
- Express their feelings, thoughts, and dreams
- Think critically and creatively
- Are responsible and enterprising
- Live in harmony with their environment
- Continuously question and interpret events, situations, and data with prior knowledge
- Are sensitive to national values

To achieve these objectives and learning outcomes, the following weekly lesson hours are planned for Turkish classes:

- Grades 1 and 2 – 10 hours per week
- Grades 3 and 4 – 8 hours per week

### ISTEK Private Acibadem Preschool and Primary School English Language Lessons

Our goal at ISTEK Private Acibadem Preschool and Primary School is to develop and enrich students' English skills by using IB-PYP guidelines, Language Scope and Sequence Documents (Rubrics), Ministry of National Education regulations, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). We aim to prepare each student to reach a reading readiness level usable internationally and meeting at least the minimum CEFR standards.

At ISTEK Acibadem Primary School, the English program is delivered by experienced Turkish teachers specializing in language learning. Our program aims to teach language in a fun and natural context. In class, we encourage communication through a student-centered system including drama, music, dialogue, games, individual, and group work. Projects and portfolio work are methods through which we continuously monitor our students' language development. Additionally, we create environments for English to be used naturally as a part of daily life. We consider students' different learning styles and enhance classroom work technologically using tools such as smart boards and web-based applications. We offer our students rich learning environments through digital platforms we use.

Lessons are planned and taught student-centeredly with a constructivist approach that guides learning. We ensure every student actively participates in lessons. Because classrooms include students learning in diverse ways, lesson plans are designed to support each individual. Visuals, auditory materials, written texts, and kinesthetic activities are integrated to make learning enjoyable and accessible for every student.

Since the 2018-2019 academic year, our school has launched an innovative bilingual program called Crossroads for 1st-grade students. This program is implemented through a co-teaching model where classroom and subject teachers collaborate in teaching English. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the Crossroads program has been expanded to include other grade levels. Its primary aim is to increase students' interaction with English in natural learning settings, develop language skills, and encourage them to adopt English not only as a foreign language but also as a tool for communication and accessing information.

The program's time distribution is as follows:

- 1st graders receive 5 hours weekly in the Crossroads program plus 12 hours of general English classes, totaling 17 hours of intensive English education.
- 2nd graders similarly attend 5 hours of Crossroads and 12 hours of English class per week, totaling 17 hours.
- 3rd graders complete a 14-hour weekly English program supported by 2 hours of Crossroads and 12 hours of English class.
- 4th graders participate in a 13-hour weekly program with 1 hour of Crossroads and 12 hours of English class.

In addition, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-grade students choose either German or Spanish as a second foreign language and receive 2 hours of instruction weekly. This creates a multilingual learning environment and develops students' global communication skills and cultural awareness.