

# **EAL at ISB: Secondary**

## **Overview**

Our secondary school community at ISB is an inclusive learning environment in which we recognise that our students are all at different stages of their English learning journey. We welcome students from a diverse range of learning backgrounds, aiming to provide a safe and welcoming place for students' English language development to prosper, both socially and academically. English is a language of learning, of friendship and of unity: it is our common means of communication across the whole school community, as well as the wider world. The EAL support we provide therefore reflects these holistic beliefs. It is a means of integration into our classes, ensuring students feel increasingly comfortable and confident with communicating and learning in English. We hope to enable students to take ownership of their English development, providing them with a range of language acquisition means and support and guidance in navigating the choices available to them. For us, to be a multilingual learner is a strength and we aim to celebrate the determination and open-mindedness that lies within our diverse language community.

## **Aims**

In line with our vision, the aims of our Secondary EAL programme are:

- To support each student in reaching level B2 by the end of Grade 8 ensuring they are ready to continue studying an international programme.
- To ensure each EAL learner has strategies they deploy for supporting their own language development, with a focus on content-specific vocabulary they need for their school subjects.
- To support all students in feeling confident socially in English.
- To ensure students all feel proud of their abilities to communicate in a range of languages, including English.

## **Admission and progress**

As part of the admission process into our Secondary school programme, we will learn more about each student's level of English. If a child is a continuing student from our primary school, we will consult with the English and homeroom teachers of Grade 5. If a child is new to ISB, as part of the admission procedure, we will conduct a friendly conversation in English and ask for a short piece of writing in English. This will allow us to see if the student already has a suitable level of English to be successful in our international community, or if we believe they would benefit from some English language support. At this point of the admissions process, we may specify that acceptance to the secondary programme is conditional upon the student attending our English boosters or working with an English tutor privately in addition to attending our school.

We will continue to monitor the English level of all students throughout their time in Lower Secondary (Grades 6-8). The Secondary EAL Co-ordinator will frequently communicate with all subject teachers to identify if there are any students whose English may benefit from some additional support. It is completely natural that as the school curriculum deepens in complexity, we may identify that a student who did not previously require support in English shows signs that they would benefit from some additional vocabulary input/review. We will also monitor the progression of their fluency, and if we believe any student is not on track to be operating at B2

level by the end of Grade 8, we will work with them and their family to create a support plan to address their individual needs.

Mid-way through Grade 8, our Upper Secondary admission process commences in line with the Hungarian school system. At this stage, each student's English will be re-assessed, and we will work with families to help decide what the most suitable next step of the child's education will be and how the English language will be part of this. We expect an English level of around B2 for entry to the Upper Secondary programme in order for students to successfully complete the international academic programmes including IGCSEs, IB, and Cognia.

## **Support Available**

In our Secondary school, we acknowledge that all children progress at different rates and have varying exposure to and experience with English both in their previous and their current learning environments. The EAL support we provide is therefore bespoke and unique to each student's own needs. Our EAL students follow the full timetable of their classmates and are not withdrawn from any lessons to ensure they get the same opportunities to learn from their subject teachers as their peers. If we identify that a child would benefit from additional help with their English, some of the recommendations we may make include:

### **Booster attendance**

From 2.45pm-3.30pm every school day, subject-specific booster classes are held to provide students with more individualised support in subjects they may be finding challenging or would like to extend their thinking in. These boosters are an excellent opportunity for EAL students to review key subject-specific vocabulary at a pace that suits them with more individual help from the teacher in fully understanding how to use the words.

### **English tutor support**

A student who is needing more support with their English grammar or English skills, for example pronunciation when speaking, is likely to benefit from working with a private tutor with whom they can receive the individualised feedback they need on their language production. ISB has links with a number of recommended English tutors across Budapest who offer face to face or online lessons, and we are happy to work with families in finding the right tutor for their child.

### **Graded readers**

An excellent way to build English fluency alongside academic skills is for EAL students to read graded readers in their free time. These are books in which the English has been simplified and adjusted so students can enjoy the stories without too much complex vocabulary being a barrier to comprehension. The school has a number of these books available to borrow and we are happy to loan them out with the EAL Co-ordinator providing support to the child in how best to use them to support their English language development.

### **Buddies and international integration**

We recognise that joining a community where English is the shared language may be a stressful experience for some students, and they may need support in building friendships using this language. If we identify that a student is nervous to communicate socially in English, we will identify a 'buddy' for them to work with. This may be a student who is older than them who shares their first language and can give them advice on how to integrate into an international community and develop their English based on their own experiences. This gives the EAL student a chance to

build a friendship with someone they can trust and have a role model for their own language development. We can also set up English language buddies so a student has the chance to communicate socially in English with a bit of support. Furthermore, we encourage all students to make English part of their everyday life, not just a language for school, therefore we have information on wider social opportunities across Budapest in English to help parents find a suitable hobby for their child which they can do in English, as well as having the opportunity to make more English-speaking friends.

### **Online learning**

There are a number of websites or online programmes which provide practice of everyday English. If we believe a child would benefit from a focus on language accuracy, we will recommend signing up for a website so they can undertake regular, focused practice of grammar and vocabulary.

### **British Council classes**

ISB has a strong working partnership with the British Council who are one of the leading providers of English classes worldwide. The classes are interactive and communication-based, making them perfect for students who would benefit from improving their English in a low-stakes, friendly, multicultural environment. All ISB students benefit from a 10% discount on the class fees, and the lessons take place on our school premises at the weekend.

### **Subject teacher support**

All teachers in the Secondary programme at ISB have received training on how to best support multilingual learners in their own subjects. EAL students can feel confident in approaching each teacher for advice in how to develop their English use in relation to the specific requirements of the subject, and ask for advice in any specific areas they would benefit from making progress in.

### **Conclusion**

These are just some examples of the support we can provide. Above all, EAL students at ISB benefit from our small classes and our friendly, environment. Not only is our student body diverse, so are our teachers, and we are staffed by many teachers who have mastered English as a second language themselves, creating a language learning community of empathy, patience and respect.