



# Offering of Official Mother Tongue Languages

Bilingualism is a cornerstone of Singapore's education system.

ALL students are required to offer English and a Mother Tongue Language (MTL).

Students of Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnicity will offer their respective MTLs. Eurasian students, students of mixed parentage and international students whose mother tongue is not one of the three official MTLs can choose to offer any of the three official MTLs.

Students are **strongly encouraged** to offer an official MTL as there is learning support in school and a differentiated MTL curriculum to cater to diverse learning needs.

# Applying for Official MTL as Non-MTL

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MOE's approval is required for students who intend to offer Chinese, Malay or Tamil as non-MTL. This applies to students who are:

- Not offering their default MTL based on their race e.g. Malay student applying to offer Chinese
- Not offering the default MTL based on the first component of their double-barrelled race e.g. Indian-Malay student applying to offer Malay
- Of mixed parentage
- Of non-Chinese/Malay/Indian race e.g. Eurasians, Filipinos, Burmese, Koreans etc.

Applications will be evaluated based on reasons submitted, evidence of prior foundation in the language and parental commitment to support the child in learning the language.

Students who have obtained approval at the primary level are not required to re-apply. They are required to continue offering the approved non-MTL at secondary and pre-university levels.



# Applying for Non-Tamil Indian Language as MTL-in-lieu

Indian students who are non-Tamil speakers may apply to offer a Non-Tamil Indian Language (NTIL: Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu).

It is **compulsory** for NTIL students **to register** as soon as possible upon approval at one of the approved NTIL community groups [CG: Bangla Language and Literary Society, Bangladesh Language and Cultural Foundation, Singapore Gujarati School Limited, DAV Hindi School, The Hindi Society (Singapore), Singapore Sikh Education Foundation, Urdu Development Society (Singapore)] and attend NTIL lessons with these CGs.

It is also **compulsory to sit for examinations** set by the Board for the Teaching and Testing of South Asian Languages. Do note that Higher NTIL and 'B' syllabus are **not available** for NTIL.



# Applying for Asian/ Foreign Language as MTL-in-lieu (not as Third Language)

## *Eligibility Criteria:*

The eligibility to offer an approved Asian Language (AsL: Arabic, Burmese and Thai) or Foreign Language (FL: French, German and Japanese) in lieu of an official MTL depends on several factors, including the student's parentage and nationality.

These students are typically those who join our school system mid-stream and have had formal learning in AsL/FL overseas, or students with a parent who is foreign-born and of non-Chinese/Malay/Indian ethnicity.

An application is required for eligible students and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.



# Applying for Asian/ Foreign Language as MTL-in-lieu (not as Third Language)

## *Implications of Offering Asian/Foreign Language (NO Higher AsL/ FL):*

Applications for a change of language from AsL/FL to Chinese/ Malay/ Tamil/ NTIL will not be accepted from the secondary level.

Parents would have been informed of the implications of offering AsL/FL as MTL-in-lieu before the submission of application in primary school. The implications are as follows:

- Students are required to learn the AsL/FL privately at the primary, secondary and pre-university levels, as instruction is not provided by MOE.
- Students are required to provide documentation (e.g. marked assignment, result slip, payment receipt) to the school to show that they are learning AsL/FL regularly.
- Students are required to take the AsL/FL papers at the GCE O Level and the Arabic or FL papers at the GCE A Level (H1) examinations.
- Students are required to fulfil the MTL requirement by attaining the minimum AsL/FL grade for admission into a junior college or centralised institute (D7 or above for GCE O Level), or a local publicly-funded undergraduate programme (S grade or above for GCE A Level H1).



# No AsL/FL Re-application Required for Secondary 1 Students

Starting from 2019, secondary schools are no longer required to submit a re-application for Secondary 1 students who have obtained approval at the primary level to offer AsL/FL. This is in line with the current practice for students offering NTIL.

The only exception is for Secondary 1 FL students who would like to be on the waiting list to be considered for admission to the MOE Language Centre (MOELC) Form 5 on BCAS.

Should vacancies arise at MOELC (vacancies are increasingly limited and priority will be given to Singaporeans), students will be informed through their school to sit for a readiness test.

Admission to MOELC is subject to students passing the test. Students who have not been notified to sit for the readiness test or did not pass the test are required to continue with their private study arrangements.

# Applying for MTL Exemption

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## Eligibility Criteria:

Being bilingual is beneficial for our students and all students should study their MTL to as high a level as they are capable of.

Learning difficulty in MTL is not a valid reason to apply for MTL exemption.

MTL exemption should only be considered as a last resort for students under exceptional circumstances as highlighted below:

- **Mid-stream Entry:** The student enters our school system mid-stream after prolonged absence from our school system and with no or weak prior learning of any of our MTLs or languages that can be offered as MTL-in-lieu. Applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and several factors will be taken into consideration holistically, including:
  - a. Duration and location(s) of the student's stay overseas
  - b. Prior language learning
  - c. MTL curriculum and assessment demands
- **Special Educational Needs:** The student has certified Special Educational Needs (SEN) and shows severe difficulty in coping with his overall learning.



# Applying for MTL Exemption

Students **granted MTL exemption from the primary level are not required** to submit a re-application.

Applications submitted based on mid-stream entry must be supported by the student's school results for the past two years prior to entering our school system (translated to English if applicable).

Applications submitted based on SEN must be supported by a medical/psychological report. The report must be dated within the past 3 years.

Depending on the complexity of the case, it can **take up to about three months to process** an MTL exemption application submitted on the basis of having SEN.





# Fulfilling MTL Requirement

To fulfil the MTL requirement to be eligible for admission into a Junior College or Millennia Institute, students are required to obtain a minimum grade of D7 for MTL, E8 for Higher MTL, or a Pass for MTL 'B' syllabus at the GCE O Level examination.

For admission into a local publicly-funded undergraduate programme, students are required to obtain a minimum grade of D7 for Higher MTL at GCE O Level examination, or S grade for H1 MTL/ H2 MTL Language and Literature, or a Pass for MTL 'B' syllabus at the GCE A Level examination.