



## Lisbon Montessori School Language Policy

Lisbon Montessori School prides itself on being a multilingual community. 85 % of our students have diverse linguistic backgrounds. Our students get AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) interdisciplinary instruction in English, Portuguese is our second language. This makes us a partly bilingual school.

To address the significant differences between these two languages we need to have appropriate expectations for families who wish to enroll at Lisbon Montessori School.

At LMS English is used by all Lead Teachers, or AMI guides. They instruct all subjects in English, using the universal AMI curriculum. Casa Lead Teachers have a crucial responsibility for teaching English, often from an absolute beginner level. Elementary Lead Teachers continue instructing in all areas of English.

All Assistant Guides play a crucial role in conversational Portuguese language acquisition. The Portuguese language is introduced via songs, stories, games, vocabulary building activities and conversations. Casa Assistant Guides consistently speak in Portuguese. Lower and Upper Elementary Assistant Teachers may use Portuguese as well as English with students who are new to Portugal and to our school.

Elementary students receive afternoon classes twice per week from specialist Portuguese teachers. The students are divided into two groups based on language ability - native and non-native Portuguese lessons. Students, however, won't master the language by this alone. We encourage all families to create additional opportunities outside of school for their children to learn English, Portuguese, or both.

Considering the qualities of the absorbent mind, the casa program comes at the most significant time for learning Portuguese, or English. This includes children from international families that use neither English nor Portuguese. However when a child comes with no previous knowledge of either language, acquiring the two languages will take longer.

Due to these factors, we consider 4½ to be the cutoff age when the child may join us with no, or limited, knowledge of English. The child may still be admitted without knowledge of Portuguese, however learning basic conversational Portuguese is possible if the child joins our school at 3 or 4 years old, and continues studying at LMS until graduation at age 12.

We encourage bilingual households to divide the languages between them and speak only that language to their child . This enables maximum fluency in both languages. Trilingual families should find more creative ways to address this issue. If parents have additional questions about this policy, they are invited to speak to any member of the Lead faculty or the school Director.

### Lisbon Montessori School

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