Ambassador International Academy

Language Policy

Ambassador International Academy (AIA) - Mission Statement

Inspire our children to be passionate global lifelong learners through an enriched holistic international curriculum that encourages them to **inquire** and **innovate** while proactively contributing in meaningful ways to the world.

Vision

Ambassador International Academy is dedicated to creating responsible universal citizens who would be bright leaders of the 21st century by laying a superior foundation though quality education.

Our Values

Accountable for children's learning and development

Maintain quality standards across the entire organization

Broaden the horizons of our children's experience and knowledge

Attend to the child's individual learner potential

Safe and collaborative learning community

Sensitive to the needs of students of determination

Adopt modern instructional strategies

Documentation to make learning visible

Outstanding teaching and commitment to research

Relevant real world education aligned to the child's life experience

IB Mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Aim

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) and Ambassador International Academy is committed to supporting multilingualism as a fundamental part of increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. All teachers in AIA are teachers of language and we firmly believe that language must be valued as it's an expression of learners' culture and it represents their identity. We are committed to support our learners' mother tongue and reinforce cultural identity as we believe that its crucial for their development and success. The AIA team is committed to implement this policy as it represents a framework of language learning, teaching and assessing of AIA learners.

Purpose

The policy focuses on the school's language provision. AIA being a truly international school our learners have rich and complex multilingual backgrounds. This means large number of our learners must access the majority of the programme in a language other than their mother tongue. A thorough understanding of how this situation impacts on learning is essential if we are to ensure that the value of the learner diversity is not lost, that there is equal access to the curriculum for all learners, ensure they participate fully in the programme and are able to reach their full potential and that the standards of conditions and practices in place foster a successful teaching and learning environment for everyone.

Language is involved in all learning and is an essential vehicle for inquiry and the construction of meaning. It provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking.

We therefore believe that the need to communicate is instinctive. The development of language is fundamental to that need to communicate; it supports and enhances our thinking and understanding. Language permeates the world in which we live; it is socially constructed and dependent on the number and nature of our social interactions and relationships.

The learning process simultaneously involves learning language—as learners listen to and use language with others in their everyday lives; learning about language—as learners grow in their understanding of how language works; and learning through language—as learners use language as a tool to listen, think, discuss and reflect on information, ideas and issues (Halliday 1980).

- Learning language

In the early stages when a child is first learning to communicate in a mother tongue, he or she is learning to use language symbolically in order to construct meaning and to interact. The child is also developing basic interpersonal communicative skills. The language of such communication is supported by contextual cues as well as by gestures and facial expressions. Learners who already have communicative skills in a mother tongue may become functional in social communication in another language within two years because of the transfer of understanding already in place. Learning language is ongoing and is further fostered through reading.

- Learning through language

At some point a child has enough language so that in addition to it being a communicative tool, it is also a flexible resource for further learning and cognitive growth. Language itself, rather than direct concrete experience, can be used to negotiate new meanings and construct knowledge about the world. Literacy becomes increasingly important in doing this as more abstract learning takes place through academic texts in school where children develop a cognitive academic language proficiency.

- Learning about language

Understanding the relationship of language and meaning and how language works in the construction of knowledge empowers the language user. A learner in Ambassador International Academy will develop a critical language awareness and will be able to make choices about language use according to his or her purpose and audience, as well as gain insight into the language choices of others.

At AIA we believe that use of mother tongue language should be respected, therefore students are encouraged/permitted to use their mother tongue in classes and outside. We encourage the parents to read, write and talk to the children in their mother tongue.

Languages used in Ambassador International Academy:
Instruction language: English
Communication language *(with parents):* English
Printed and electronic communication language: English
Communication with visitors: English
Communication with support staff/housekeeping: English
Communication with administrative staff: English

Student language profiles

The complex and diverse language profiles among students may mean that they are learning in a language additional to that of their home and family, or of their prior educational experience. School may be the first time that students encounter an additional language, or they may already be proficient in several languages. Some students are familiar with the language of their school while, for others, the values, beliefs and behaviours around language and literacy are new.

Teaching and Learning Practices

All teachers in AIA are language teachers and as such have a responsibility to address the language needs of their students in the language of instruction. When teachers plan learning experiences that enable students to develop language within meaningful and enjoyable contexts, students make connections, apply their learning, and transfer their conceptual understanding to new situations.

- We expect teachers to provide a balanced language program in line with the PYP and MYP Scope and Sequence. This will help learners understand the contexts provided.
- Identify prior learning through various strategies such as KWL charts, mind maps, concept cartoons etc. and modify their teaching strategies.
- Plan a variety of engaging lessons with clear objectives and outcomes (success criteria).
- Incorporate strategies to cater to the learning needs of all students including (SEND, G&T and EAL).
- Use multiple resources to enable all ability learners to access the planned learning experience and achieve the lesson outcome.
- In lessons use a variety of Assessment for Learning strategies to assess learning, identify gaps and accordingly support/challenge students.
- Give positive and constructive written and oral feedback identifying achievements and setting targets.
- Use Growth Mindset Comments to encourage students to face challenges and encourage them to progress at their own pace to achieve the outcome.
- Incorporate self and peer evaluation to further embed learning.
- Create opportunities for students to work in groups, pairs, individually according to their needs, nature of the activity and the learning objective.
- Publish student work.
- Encourage parental engagement.

Students use language as a mode of thinking, creativity, to reflect and self - express.

- Learn to speak read and write English progressing across a continuum of skills in each area.
- Confidently express themselves in English in a variety of situations.
- Develop and appreciation of a variety of literature and text.
- Reflect on their successes and challenges.
- Evaluate evidence and think critically.
- Connect different areas of learning to integrate prior and new knowledge.
- Work in collaboration with their peers to achieve a common goal.

Support for English as the Language of Instruction

In the classroom the language of instruction is English, though it is recognised that as an international school, other languages may be used for varying purposes during instructional activities. We aim to develop a level of language proficiency in English that enables students to perform to their best ability on all tasks related to the curriculum. In line with the general belief that diversity in language is a positive element in the school, no language will ever be banned from use. We allow students to think or talk through unfamiliar or complex concepts in their first language to assist their understanding. Though the use of a student's first language is accepted, there will be times when the teacher needs to stipulate that a particular activity be undertaken solely in English in order to achieve the outcomes of the lesson. Students are encouraged to communicate with their peers in a way that will not result in some students being excluded as a result of language. We use different teaching techniques to ensure that students for whom English is not their mother lounge understand all concepts during lessons. We expect our teachers to use questions to ensure understanding, enroll students in different workgroups to enable sharing information, give students positive feedback and accept their difficulties in understanding.

Support for the host country

As mandated by the Ministry of Education, all Arab passport holders will study Arabic A and all non Arab passport holders will study Arabic B until Grade 9. The host country language of Arabic shall be integrated within unit plans where applicable. Students will be encouraged to explore Arabic and UAE culture when discussing literary texts in lessons and when commenting on language features. Writing competitions such as the Emirates Literature Festival challenges students to draw upon the host country language and culture to produce a variety of poetry and short stories. Poetry written in Arabic is recited at these events.

Students will also be familiarised with Arabic around the school, where opportunities for vocabulary development are offered. National events such as UAE National Day and International Day, will be integrated within appropriate unit plans to celebrate the culture and diversity of the host country.

Differentiation and Personalisation

Teachers differentiate broadly to cater to the needs of high middle and lower ability students through outcome, task, resources or support. They further personalize strategies based on individual needs of students which is determined through the triangulation of teacher assessment/observation, internal summative formative assessment, and benchmark assessments (CAT4, PT, PASS). Based on the individual needs of students, IEPs (Individual Education Plans) are created with individualized goals and strategies to ensure all students make optimum progress from their individual starting points. A student with a CAT4 score of 125 plus in the 'verbal' battery is considered to be gifted in languages and students with 'verbal' score of 80 and below will require extra personlised support to access the languages.

Students may also have choices so they can follow their own interests or use a preferred learning style. The school also follows the IB recommendations on student placement. All students' language needs are determined through initial and ongoing assessments throughout the year. Teachers differentiate for the range of students' needs in different ways.

In the Secondary School, students are placed in Language Acquisition classes according to the IB's continuum of language learning phases. The school has a placement policy that allows student movement at the end of the academic year in relation to students' progression along this continuum. In English, students will be set in mixed ability groups to allow for widely differentiated lessons and activities.

Support for the SoD (Students of Determination)

Teachers create learning opportunities and provide support with communication and literacy through personlised strategies based on the needs of individual students.

- **Level 1/wave1 students/universal students** – teachers provide support through quality first teaching in the classroom environment to accommodate individual differences in ability, learning style and behaviour. On-going and timely assessments are conducted to inform any further provision needed.
- **Level 2/wave2/ targeted support** – in collaboration with the inclusion department targeted

support plan for each student is used by teachers. In-class support and/or curriculum modification/differentiation/accommodations may be provided to enable a student to engage with, and participate in, appropriately challenging learning experiences. Withdrawals sessions are provided if the support deemed necessary cannot be delivered within the classroom environment

- **Level 3/ wave 3/ specialist support** - Individualized programme to accelerate progress or enable students to achieve their potential.
  - These students may have specific and/or exceptional needs that require the support from outside professionals for specialist interventions.
  - IEP (Individualised Education Plan) is prepared which will provide detailed support for differentiation, modification and accommodation.
  - If required, in-class support will also be provided by the LSA

Teachers use the below mentioned strategies to personalize teaching and learning.
- Using texts that children can read and understand;
- Using visual and written materials in different formats;
- Using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- Using teaching assistants;
- Using specialists in the learning support department where appropriate.

Support for ELL students (English Language Learners)

The mother tongue or first language is the one that the individual is most proficient in and is often the language used at home. The development of the first language is encouraged through an ethos of acceptance and celebration of linguistic diversity within the community. There is also recognition that a strong level of competency in the first language can be an important ingredient in their success as learners of additional languages. However, it is important to recognise the need for English to be spoken in both formal and informal contexts to ensure development of language skills. English Language Learning (ELL) refers to English instruction that is given to assist the student in gaining sufficient English language proficiency to cope within the English-speaking environment.

This is accomplished through a combination of support within the classroom through personalization and small group pull out sessions during the day with a specialist teacher.

In the MYP, this requirement is catered to by the provision of English Language Acquisition.

Support for Gifted and Talented students

Students who have been identified as Gifted and Talented receive differentiated instruction in class. Teachers use strategies that further encourage vocabulary development, reading and writing across the curriculum, and the exposure to various forms of literature and informational texts. Teachers will choose texts to suit the ability levels in the classroom. Classroom teachers work with other specialists in order to ensure continuity of the delivery.

Student with a score of 125 plus in the verbal battery is considered as gifted in languages. A student with a score of 125 plus in the verbal battery, stanine 9 in PTE and performs consistently in the excelling band according to internal assessment in languages is considered as talented and teachers personalize their strategies in lessons to challenge these students further to maximise their progress.

Support for Mother tongue students

In the PYP students are encouraged/ permitted to use their mother tongue in classes and outside. We encourage the parents to read, write and talk to the children in their mother tongue.

In the MYP if a student wishes to study a language and literature or an additional language acquisition subject which is not offered by the school, they can study their mother tongue language outside of school time. A tutor for these classes must be paid for and provided by the student. The hiring of a tutor for these courses is not optional and is a requirement of the programme.

Support learning of an additional foreign language

Children from KG 2 learn French or Spanish (Foreign Language). Gr 1 and above learn Arabic *(National language)* and French or Spanish (Foreign Language).

	Arabic	French or Spanish
KG2		√
Grade 1	√	√
Grade 2	√	√

Grade 3	√	√
Grade 4	√	√
Grade 5	√	√
Grade 6	√	√ French only
Grade 7	√	√ French only

Language Development in the context of the IB Learner Profile

In line with the PYP and MYP, the language programme not only helps students to gain an instrumental means of communication, it helps them develop the cognitive, emotional and attitudinal skills which promote a well-balanced and holistic education. We strive for students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to be:

1. **Inquirers**: They use language as their prime medium of inquiry to make sense of the world around them.
2. **Thinkers**: They use language precisely and skillfully in the context of higher level thinking to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly.
3. **Communicators**: They are confident users of oral and written language in a variety of situations.
4. **Risk-takers**: They attempt to read, write and speak in situations where they may not feel totally competent.
5. **Knowledgeable**: They understand the internal structures of language and the various influences on its development. They have experience with a wide range of literature and acquire the vocabulary and understanding to discuss different literary styles.
6. **Principled**: They are aware that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect and that it must be used responsibly.
7. **Caring**: They show responsible, caring attitudes towards the use of language and they value literature for the insight it gives into the feelings of others.
8. **Open-minded**: They respect differences and similarities between languages and dialects. They are aware of the use of language as an expression of bias and strive to maintain an objective stance.

9. **Well-balanced**: They are aware of the need for an educated person to be an effective communicator. They use literature for both learning and leisure.
10. **Reflective**: They reflect upon their own levels of language development in their mother tongue and other languages. They consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

Links to the IB Approaches to Learning

Through approaches to learning (ATL) in IB programmes, students develop skills that have relevance across the curriculum that help them "learn how to learn". ATL skills provide a solid foundation for learning independently and with others. The ATL skills are interconnected across subjects and students are expected to develop all strands. The following ATLs have been identified as vital components of language learning in both helping a student develop language skills and using them successfully in lessons and assessments.

1. **Communication Skills** Exchanging thoughts, messages, and information effectively through interaction reading, writing and using language to gather and communicate information
2. **Social Skills**: **Collaboration Skills** Working effectively with others
3. **Research: Information literacy skills** Finding, interpreting, judging, and creating information
4. **Research: Media literacy skills** Interacting with media to use and create ideas and information
5. **Thinking Skills: Critical-thinking skills** Analysing and evaluating issues and ideas
6. **Thinking Skills: Creative-thinking skills** Generating novel ideas and considering new perspectives

IB Primary Years Programme

In line with the IB PYP we develop students' use of language, appreciation of language, awareness of the nature of language, of the many influences on language, and of the variety in and between languages and dialects. Through regular teaching and learning we ensure that students understand the transdisciplinary nature of language—use language within and across the subject areas, both inside and outside the classroom. They are encouraged to recognize that competency in language—and in more than one language—is a valuable life skill, a powerful tool both in societal communication and as a means of personal reflection. Furthermore, learning that language and literature are creative processes encourages the development of imagination and creativity through self-expression. Students learn oral language, visual language, written language across and throughout the curriculum.

Oral language—listening and speaking

At AIA we provide meaningful and well-planned opportunities for learners to participate as listeners as well as speakers through debates, show and tell opportunities, elocution competitions, project presentation etc. Oral language involves recognizing and using certain types of language according to the audience and purposes (for example, the language used at home, the language of the classroom, the language of play, the language of inquiry,

conversations with peers, giving instructions, interpreting creative texts, the language of fantasy.

Visual language—viewing and presenting

These processes involve interpreting, using and constructing visuals and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences. They allow students to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs. We create opportunities for students to view and present their work or ideas through advertisements, posters, illustrations, graphic organizers, comics etc. Students get opportunities to explore the function and construction of images to facilitate the process of critically analysing a range of visual texts.

Written language—reading

In line with IB PYP and the National Agenda Parameters expectations reading is an integral part of the curriculum. At AIA reading is embedded in regular lessons, and through various opportunities. We endeavour to develop in our students lifelong reading habits, creating opportunities for learners to have extended periods of time to read for pleasure, interest, and information, experiencing an extensive range of quality fiction and non-fiction texts. As learners engage with interesting and appealing texts, appropriate to their experiences and developmental phase, they acquire the skills, strategies, and conceptual understanding necessary to become competent, motivated, independent readers. We have a well-stocked library with a variety of books of all genres and reading corners in all classrooms. Guided reading is an integral part of the curriculum.

Written language—writing

Writing is a way of expressing ourselves. It is a personal act that grows and develops with the individual. Students organize and communicate thoughts, ideas, and information in a visible and tangible way. Writing is primarily concerned with communicating meaning and intention. Children are encouraged to express themselves and reveal their own "voice", through writing. Writing is an integral part of the curriculum across PYP. In lessons and outside opportunities are created for students to actively share their thoughts and ideas through writing. Students follow the process of planning,

drafting, editing, proof reading, revising, and publishing their work. The focus is on meaning rather than accuracy. They are exposed to different genres to add depth. In PYP teachers develop the understanding of the rules of punctuation, grammar, spellings, and handwriting. They incorporate a variety of spelling strategies such as spelling conventions, high frequency words and unit related vocabulary.

IB Middle Years Programme

English Language and Literature

The following guidelines have been identified:

- Literacy develops when language has meaning and purpose
- The five areas: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing and Viewing, are interrelated
- Communication is a cooperative process in which skills such as critical listening, questioning, persuasion and expressing ideas clearly are necessary
- Literacy skills must be developed across all subject areas
- Students should develop skills in formal and informal communication and in real-world situations
- The curriculum should be sensitive to the needs of all students. World literature (short stories, poems, novels, etc.) should form part of the school syllabus
- The increasing need for computer literacy and the use of technological tools
- End of Year assessments will assess a student's progress

Arabic

- Arab students take Arabic: Language and Literature in Grades 6 to 12
- Arab students also study a Language Acquisition subject in Grades 6-9
- All other students are required to take Arabic Language Acquisition as well as one other Language Acquisition subject up to the end of Grade 9. In Grade 10 they will select one Language Acquisition subject from a choice that includes Arabic B
- Students may choose to continue their Language Acquisition subject into Grades 11 and 12 as Language B, or choose an alternative Ab Initio subject

Language Acquisition (Arabic, French, English)

In addition to the compulsory Arabic B up to Grade 9, students will study a second language from the categories outlined above. The school currently offers French and intends to include Spanish in the 2021-22 academic year. Students who do not meet the language requirements for English Language

and Literature (Phase 5 or 6 proficiency) will study English Language Acquisition.

- The Language Acquisition programme does not cater to the needs of mother tongue speakers, and they therefore must choose an alternative language from the choices above.
- In Grades 6, 7 and 8, students will study French or Spanish
- In Grades 9 and 10 students will continue with the same language that they started.
- The Grade 9 and 10 French and Spanish courses prepare students for the ePortfolio (A-Assessment from 2022 onwards) in Grade 10 and ultimately, for having access to Language B in Grade 11. Those students who would like to start a new language will be able to start Spanish or French Ab Initio in Grade 11.
- If a student studies a language in Grade 9 and Grade 10, they will not be able to study an Ab Initio language in Grade 11. If the language was only studied in Grades 6-8, they will be permitted to study Ab Initio in Grade 11.

Practices for implementing reading, writing, oral and visual skills

In order to promote inquiry-based language learning within the context of the MYP, our school recognises the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language through each subject discipline as well as the IB Approaches to Learning. The mastery of the essential language skills - reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing - is a vital part of a student's overall development.

Reading practices

- Reading will take place in all subject areas, and students will read across the curriculum whenever appropriate.
- A variety of practices will be used when planning for instruction, including but not limited to, guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, graphic organisers and the use of leveled reading material.
- Students will be encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure, read aloud expressively and also discuss, analyse, compare and contrast the texts they read.
- Students will be exposed to a variety of genres, including multicultural literature, poetry, plays, short stories, newspapers, magazines and informational texts.
- Students will learn how to understand, interpret and respond to the ideas, attitudes and feelings expressed in various texts, to think critically about what they read and to be able to make predictions and inferences based on information that is both explicit and implicit in a text.

- Teachers will promote and incorporate supplementary reading incentives and support programmes.
- Vocabulary building techniques will be used across the curriculum whenever appropriate, e.g. word walls, word of the day, spelling programmes, use of idioms, metaphors, and similes.
- Students will participate in Drop Everything and Read for 10 minutes every day in school.

Oral language practices
- Teachers will model correct language use in conversation, while being sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds and mother tongues.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to develop and utilise oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations. This will be done through oral presentations, assemblies, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, books on tape, listening stations and performing arts.
- Teachers will plan activities that expose students to the conventions of oral language and aid them in responding appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

Writing practices
- Students' natural desire to communicate through writing will be fostered by giving real purpose to their writing, and by exposing them to varied, challenging and meaningful writing opportunities.
- There will be consistency in promoting the writing process (planning, drafting, editing, proofreading, revising, and publishing) throughout the grade levels.
- Students will be encouraged to focus on meaning first rather than accuracy and to enjoy the writing process.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through different genres.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use language specific to relevant subject areas.
- Constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults will support the development of writing.
- Teachers will model and provide instruction with the correct use of language conventions, including spelling, grammar, rules of punctuation and handwriting.
- Teachers will incorporate a variety of spelling strategies including spelling conventions and patterns, high frequency words and unit-related vocabulary.

Viewing and presenting practices

- Students will have the opportunity to create visual presentations, and to use multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Opportunities will be provided for students to view high quality performances in a variety of media.

Signed by Principal -

Dated: September 2020

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed July 2021.

The policy was created by Vice Principal Sharmistha Bhatia, MYP Coordinator Lindsay Thomas, PYP Coordinator Talia Lazarus, Leader of Provision for Students of Determination Suman Singh, and Parent Support Group representative Rula Amoori.

The policy is shared with the school community on Ambassador International Academy's website – www.aiadubai.com.

References and resources:

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