



Hilal International Academy

Language Policy

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Hilal International Academy (HIA) - Mission Statement

To provide a progressive education that enables learners to attain full potential as responsible, productive, creative and compassionate global citizens.

Vision

To be a safe learning environment in which pupils are empowered to seek, acquire and demonstrate knowledge, skills and values that will serve them and their communities in the future.

Our Values

The school embrace the values to achieve its mission, vision and goals.

- Learner centeredness
- Maintaining Trust and Credibility
- A commitment to sharing and hearing all opinions respectfully.
- Embracing cultural diversity
- Maintaining Fairness
- Developing respect for others and self
- Students' holistic development and support
- Community engagement
- Collaboration
- Integrity

IB (International Baccalaureate) 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 Hilal 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 HIA 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 supporting our learners' mother tongue and reinforce cultural identity as we believe that it's crucial for their development and success. The HIA team is committed to implementing this policy as it represents a framework of language learning, teaching and assessing of HIA learners.

Purpose

The policy focuses on the school's language provision. HIA being a truly international school our learners have rich and complex multilingual backgrounds. This means a 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 learning is essential if we are to

maximize student progress and attainment. This policy is designed to ensure that the value of learner diversity is not lost, that there is equal access to the curriculum for all learners, that students participate fully and are able to reach their full potential.

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 understanding, creative and critical thinking. We believe that the need to communicate is natural. The development of language is fundamental to that need; 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.

Languages used in Hilal International Academy:

Instruction language: English

Communication language (with parents): English/Somali/Arabic

Printed and electronic communication language: English/Somali

Communication with visitors: English/Somali/Arabic

Communication with support staff/housekeeping: Somali /English/Arabic

Communication with administrative staff: English/Somali/Arabic

School language profiles

At HIA amongst the student body there are over 4 nationalities, with 3 spoken languages. The complex and diverse language profiles among students mean that they are learning in a language additional to that of their home and family, or of their prior educational experience. English is the

primary language of instruction and is recognized as the language of inclusion throughout the school, and within the school community. The school complies with Somali Federal Government Ministry of Education requirements of Somali language and, in addition, offers Arabic as second language (language acquisition) subjects and fosters the use of mother tongue through the Mother Tongue programme. During admission, data is collected which identifies the student's mother tongue, language used at home, language used for instruction at previous schools and any other languages known.

- All teachers need to be well-versed in English.
- There is a coherent and consistent approach towards the development of language throughout the school.
- Consistency is expected throughout the DP in procedure; expectations; differentiation and assessment.
- Language is taught through relevant and realistic contexts in all subjects.
- English Language Learner (ELL) students have total engagement where necessary as well as in-class support and maintenance.
- Diversity of the student/staff body is celebrated through recognition of the mother tongue.
- Parents are made aware of the expectations of the whole school language policy.
- The school community promotes the understanding that all languages are of value.
- Somali, the language of our host country, is promoted.

At HIA we believe that learning to speak more than one language is empowering and helps link people locally and globally. Supporting an understanding of other languages will enrich personal development. Language development is crucial for promoting cultural identity, empathy and

international mindedness. A learner's mother tongue is a key component of cognitive, social and emotional development and cultural identity.

Teaching and Learning Practices

All teachers in HIA are teachers of language 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.

At HIA, our teachers carry out the following:

- Provide a variety of meaningful and authentic language learning opportunities.
- Ensure balanced and varied language input to cater for different learning needs.
- Foster supportive, positive and reflective language learning environments, allowing learners to take risks.
- Develop competency, creativity and independence when learning and using languages across a broad range of contexts.
- Enable critical reflection on how language works and how texts are structured.
- Deliver language programmes through a variety of methods and strategies, linking closely with an emphasis on inquiry.
- Utilize HIA policy documents and IB documents to guide planning, teaching and assessing.
- Recognize speaking, listening, reading, writing as critical aspects of language development.
- Provide a range of appropriate, multicultural language resources over a full range of categories and text types.

- Make links within our school and wider community to support each learner as they use and develop their mother tongue.

Learning/Teaching and Assessment Strategies

- Identify prior knowledge through various strategies such as (KWL); i.e., What I know, What I want to know and What I have learned through use of 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 SOD (Students of determination), Able, gifted and talented) AGT and ELL (English Language Learners).
- Use individualized resources to enable all learners to access the planned learning experience and achieve the lesson outcome.
- Use a variety of Assessment for Learning strategies to assess learning, identify gaps and accordingly support/challenge students in every lesson.
- Give positive and constructive written and oral feedback identifying achievements and setting targets using appropriate language.
- Promote a growth mindset 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 collaboratively, according to their needs, nature of the activity and the learning objective.
- Publish student work.
- Encourage parental engagement.

Students should be encouraged to:

- Use language as a mode of thinking, reflecting and self - expression.
- Learn to speak, read and write English progressing across a continuum of skills.
- Confidently express themselves in English in a variety of situations.
- Develop an appreciation of a variety of literature and texts.
- Evaluate evidence and think critically regarding their use of language.
- Connect different areas of language learning to integrate prior and new knowledge.

Provision for Languages at HIA

IB Diploma (DP)

Group 1:

English Language and Literature: English is the medium of instruction and is offered as Language A: language and literature in the DP.

Group 2:

Arabic

Arabic language is taught as a second language (language acquisition) to the learners. It is considered as additional language at HIA. Arabic is not offered as a Group 1 subject in DP.

English Language Learners (ELL)

HIA recognizes a variety of levels of English language competency. The school provides additional language support for students whose English language skills require further development to ensure success in the mainstream classroom. Teachers use a variety of strategies and resources to scaffold and extend language skills.

In the Diploma Programme the student needs to obtain a minimum of grade 4 in MYP English Language and literature in Internal or e-assessments to opt for English Language and literature HL and grade 4 to opt for English Language and Literature SL.

In the Diploma Programme, Students who are new to the English language are provided ELL support outside classroom and in classrooms. The ELL teacher maintains a register of students receiving support, including an entry date, exit date and information about progress made.

Parents are informed when their child exits the programme. Formal report comments communicate progress to the student and parents at each main reporting stage.

Homeroom/subject teachers record details of support received and students' progress.

Library

Currently we have a library at campus which serves as DP physical library in addition to the online library. At HIA, our online and physical libraries incorporate a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Currently they include reference and multimedia material, periodicals and dual language books in a variety of languages that are accessible to all students, staff and the school community. In our five-year strategic plan, we intend to continually build a library resource collection that is culturally and globally diverse.

The library is managed by a teacher who acts as a librarian and is available for independent study and research. It is also used by the teaching staff when they are researching with their students.

The library is available at any time for interested students. It is equipped with computers and databases for independent research.

Support for Students of Determination/Students with special educational needs

At HIA, we acknowledge a wide spectrum of abilities across our curriculum and tailor content to cater to each learner's needs. The school is dedicated to providing extra support for students whose skills require further enhancement to thrive in the classroom environment. In the DP, our language policy underscores our commitment to inclusivity by acknowledging the diverse linguistic and learning needs of our students with additional needs.

- Accommodations tailored to individual needs are provided for language learning and assessment. This ensures that students of determination can fully engage with language content, tasks, and examinations while receiving appropriate support. IB access arrangements, such as a reader or the use of specialized software, may be considered to facilitate language-related tasks and assessments.
- Teachers, and families collaborate to design and implement language learning plans that align with students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). This collaborative effort ensures that language instruction is purposeful and effective.
- Student progress in language learning is continuously monitored, and feedback is shared with students, and parents. As students move through the DP, their language skills are nurtured, supporting successful transitions to higher education and beyond. Appropriate IB access arrangements are implemented to ensure language proficiency does not deter academic growth and future pursuits.

By embedding inclusion within the language policy across the DP, HIA ensures that students with additional needs receive comprehensive and equitable language instruction. This includes

considering and implementing IB access arrangements that further support their language acquisition, ensuring that all students can excel academically and linguistically.

Differentiation and Personalization/Individualization

Teachers are expected to cater for the needs of high, middle and lower ability students in the language of instruction through outcome, task, resources or support. They are expected to use further personalized strategies based on individual needs of students, which are determined through the triangulation of teacher observations, internal formative and summative assessments and benchmark assessments such as: (Cognitive Abilities Test Fourth Edition (CAT4), New Group Reading Test (NGRT)- A standardized, adaptive assessment given at end of semester to measure reading skills.

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 range of assessments are used to identify Able Gifted and Talent (AGT) students as well as those requiring extra personalized support through intervention or inclusion support.

In English, students will be set in mixed ability groups to allow for widely differentiated lessons and activities.

Teachers personalize teaching and learning strategies by:

- Using texts that children can read and understand.
- Using visual and written materials in different formats.
- Using ICT, other technological aids and recorded materials.

- Using teaching assistants to facilitate personalized learning where appropriate.
- Using specialists in the learning support department where appropriate.

Support for Able, Gifted and Talented (AGT) Students

Students who have been identified as Able, Gifted and Talented attempt differentiated, more challenging activities in class. Teachers use strategies that further encourage vocabulary development, reading and writing across the curriculum, and expose AGT students to more advanced forms of literature and informational texts. Teachers will choose texts to suit the ability levels in the classroom. Teachers work with peers in order to ensure continuity of the delivery.

Support for Mother Tongue

During classroom instructions, students are encouraged to communicate in the language of instruction. However, outside classroom, mother tongue is encouraged through activities such as (International Day, assemblies, cultural days, field trips, community services and student presentations).

Language Development in the Context of the IB Learner Profile

In line with IB Programmes, the language programme not only helps students to gain an instrumental means of communication, but it also 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:

- Inquirers:** They use language as their main medium of inquiry to make sense of the world around them.
- Thinkers:** They use language precisely and skillfully in the context of higher-level thinking to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly.
- Communicators:** They are confident users of oral and written language in a variety of situations.

- iv. **Risk-takers:** They attempt to read, write and speak in situations where they may not feel totally competent.
- v. **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.
- vi. **Principled:** They are aware that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect and that it must be used responsibly.
- vii. **Caring:** They show responsible and respectful behaviour towards the use of diverse languages, and they value literature for the insight it gives into the feelings of others.
- viii. **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.
- ix. **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.
- x. **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.

Relations to the IB Approaches to Learning

Through approaches to learning (ATL) in the 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.

- i. **Communication Skills.** Exchanging thoughts, messages, and information effectively through interaction reading, writing and using language to gather and communicate information.
- ii. **Social Skills: Collaboration Skills** Working effectively with others requires language.
- iii. **Research: Information literacy skills** Finding, interpreting, judging, and creating information.
- iv. **Research: Media literacy skills** Interacting with media to use and create ideas and information.
- v. **Thinking Skills: Critical-thinking skills** Analyzing and evaluating issues and ideas.
- vi. **Thinking Skills: Creative-thinking skills** Generating novel ideas and considering new perspectives.

In alignment with the DP framework, our school emphasizes inquiry-driven language learning across all subject areas. We acknowledge the critical role that language plays in fostering intellectual and personal growth, and we ensure that students develop essential language skills—reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing—through both subject-specific instruction and the IB Approaches to Learning. Mastery of these skills is integral to the holistic development of our students within the DP programme.

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 organizers and the use of leveled reading material.
- Students will be encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure, read aloud expressively, discuss, analyze, 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 **20 minutes** every day in school in DP.

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 utilize 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 in DP.
- 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/subject-related vocabulary.

- Academic writing sessions will be conducted during open classes to help students develop professional writing skills.

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.

The policy is shared with the school community on Hilal International Academy's website

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