LANGUAGE POLICY
KG & Primary

Abu Dhabi City Campus

2017/2018
Purpose: The purpose of this document is to set out the underlying philosophy and approach to the teaching of languages at the Emirates National Schools – Abu Dhabi City Campus. In order to foster tolerance and inter-cultural understanding among young people, being able to communicate effectively in more than one language is key. With this in mind, Emirates National Schools has developed a policy in line with the fundamental principles of the International Baccalaureate program and the United Arab Emirates vision for its nationals and residents.

Language Philosophy

As a school campus working towards full implementation of the three IB Programs, we are mindful of the overarching significance of the IB Mission Statement in all we do. We use English and Arabic languages as a medium of inquiry, providing opportunities to challenge, nurture and develop both first and second language speakers. Learning language is integral to the development of personal, cognitive, social and cultural identity as well as to making meaning of the world around us. We recognize that students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language. Emirates National Schools recognizes that language is the key to all learning and is a major connecting element across all aspects of the curriculum, and thus, we view the on-going language development for all students as the responsibility of all: teachers, parents and students. We also believe that students bring their prior knowledge to any learning situation and engage with the curriculum through the activities and assessments experienced. Within the interrelated components of the curriculum, students make sense of these experiences and construct meaning.

We understand that because our students come to us with varying levels of readiness, they will all progress at different paces. Emirates National Schools values differentiated and varied instruction, which embraces multiple learning styles. Through language, our students acquire the ability to think and to learn, to develop social skills and values, and to acquire knowledge. Teaching through all academic content areas aims to integrate the key skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. As language is the key to all learning, all teachers at Emirates National Schools are language teachers and the language development of our students is to be the shared responsibility of teachers, parents and students. Emirates National Schools understands that the most conducive environment to language learning is a positive and encouraging one, wherein students have the opportunity to engage in authentic and meaningful learning experiences.

All teaching and learning is driven by the idea that through language, we are encouraging intercultural awareness and new perspectives, a culture of curiosity, as well as an appreciation of the richness of our world’s diversity. We strongly believe that through this exploration of language, students develop as deeper, independent thinkers; as responsible, understanding citizens of the world; and as proficient multilingual communicators.
Rationale:

All students should therefore:

• Communicate, think, feel and carry out practical activities through language across all areas of the curriculum
• Develop confidence and pleasure in their own use of language
• Develop progressive skills to ensure the understanding of the nature, structures and conventions of language
• Access books and literature appropriate to age and stage of development
• Empathize with and understand cultural and ethnic diversity
• Be aware of the importance of language
• Become equipped to face the challenges of a technological society

Aims:

• To ensure that all those involved in teaching in the school do so in context of a common policy.
• To express the shared understanding of the central role that language and literacy play in learning, educational progress and achievement.
• To ensure that students are encouraged at all ages to develop a love for and appreciation of all aspects of language and recognize the value of effective communication.
• To ensure that teachers will recognize the individual needs and abilities of the students.
• To seek to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of learning and teaching and of students’ attainment in language.

Language of Instruction

The Language of Instruction (LOI) in Emirates National Schools – Abu Dhabi City Campus is English. All subjects, with the exception of the UAE National Curriculum (Arabic, Islamic Studies, and UAE Studies) are taught through the medium of English. All students in grades KG1 – Grade 12 experience a rigorous English-medium language program through the American Common Core English Language Arts and curriculum standards. With extremely high expectations for student success in English and Modern Classic Arabic, the intent is that all students become fully bilingual in Arabic and English. The school system also delivers the Abu Dhabi Education Council Arabic Language Standards to every student. Emirates National Schools strives to make every student proficient in two languages. All students will have the knowledge of and the ability to use two languages, but not all of them to the same extent. Students vary in their ability to learn a second language; some will achieve functional proficiency in the target language while others will become truly bilingual. The acquisition of language must be seen as a continuum in which each individual student progresses at his/her own speed. Between 50% and 60% of our teachers speak more than one language although English and Arabic are the common languages used for all collaborations, planning meetings and communications within the school. As Emirates National Schools recognizes its national and cultural identity and needs of its community, and values all languages, it makes great efforts to ensure equal opportunity is provided for documents to be produced in English and Arabic, as well as workshop opportunities in both languages. The Heads of American and National Curriculum are dedicated towards providing support in both languages where possible.
Essential Agreements for the Teaching of Language: Beliefs and Practices

All students are:
- Provided ample opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak across the curriculum.
- Taught literacy skills in context and across content areas.
- Taught strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, respond, appreciate, and construct texts.
- Taught through a variety of technological and information resources.
- Encouraged to express oneself orally and in writing using media as a tool.
- Encouraged to share and develop their work in a social context.
- Encouraged to see language as a tool for thinking, inquiring and learning.
- Encouraged to maintain and value their mother tongue and to value that of other students.
- Provided the opportunity to become proficient in more than one language.
- Exposed to a broad range of literature reflecting a variety of cultures and perspectives.
- Encouraged to develop a love of language and literature.
- Provided constructive and specific feedback from teachers and peers.
- Exposed to modelling of rich language experiences.
- Encouraged to reflect on their learning and to apply techniques appropriately.

The languages offered at Emirates National Schools operates within the curricular framework of the International Baccalaureate Program. Student’s study of language supports the IB fundamental concepts of holistic learning, intercultural awareness and communication. Through language, students are able to access knowledge and see it as an interrelated whole. We encourage students to make links within and across subjects through the transdisciplinary themes, global contexts, theory of knowledge, approaches to learning and through explicit reference to the Learner Profile attributes. We encourage students to consider issues from multiple perspectives, and learn about their own and others’ cultures and societies. As students mature and gain a greater awareness of themselves and the world in which they live, their language development is supported through an increasingly sophisticated engagement and appreciation of world literature.

Language teaching at Emirates National Schools builds upon the American Common Core Curriculum language progressions with rich language experiences in reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and presenting through a range of media and information technologies. The overarching focus is language as a means of exploration, expression and communication. Clarity and accuracy of language as well as confidence of self-expression are fostered. In all subject areas, communication facilitates understanding and student self-reflection.

The aim of Emirates National Schools is for each student to reach the highest level of literacy and proficiency in both Arabic and English. Entering students have extremely varied backgrounds. They range from coming directly from a bilingual Primary School program to entering Middle School with language levels within a range of two years below grade level linguistically. At all grade levels students either take Arabic as a first language or as a second language.
Host Country Language: Modern Classic Arabic

The school is committed to enabling students to achieve proficiency in Modern Classic Arabic. As with all languages taught at Emirates National Schools, Arabic language instruction is achieved through the balanced literacy approach and includes rich language experiences in reading, writing, listening, speaking viewing and present through a range of media and ICT. Arabic learning is facilitated through regular classes dedicated to language learning and language rich activities. All students in the Primary Years Program are enrolled in either Arabic as a first language or Arabic as a Second language. Arabic as a second language is provided for students whose mother tongue is not Arabic and the course is given the same amount of time and is delivered through best practice strategies. Throughout their schooling, the student body, which is predominantly mother tongue Arabic speaking, receives a high quality Arabic instruction program that aims to prepare them to ensure fluency in their mother-tongue. Additional coursework in Islamic Studies and UAE Studies are also delivered through Arabic speaking staff. A small percentage (3-5%) of the students enrolled in Emirates National Schools are second language learners and are enrolled in courses that cater to Arabic as second language learners as framed by the International Baccalaureate programs in order to meet the national graduation requirements.

English Language Learners (ELL)

The term ELL is used to refer to students in K-12 who are learning English in addition to other languages. Students of all linguistic backgrounds are considered for admission. Admissions for Grades 1-5 involve students completing MAP tests which assist in determining whether learners are sufficiently proficient in English so that they can successfully access the curriculum in an English medium learning environment. English proficiency is not a determining factor in the admission process.

Across all three International Baccalaureate programs, we are committed to offering a differentiated system of inclusive support to our ELL students. Appropriate scaffolding across all areas of the curriculum is required in order for ELL learners to succeed in achieving their potential. In order to track and monitor students’ progress in addition to informing curriculum design and support levels at Emirates National Schools, a benchmarking system provided by the NWEA called MAP is used. Through data teams, teachers are able to determine student levels and provide appropriate differentiation for students in order for students to meet grade level appropriate standards.

As our learners embark on their academic journey at Emirates National Schools, they will face the rigorous demands for cognitive academic language proficiency. Students develop metacognitive skills and are encouraged to self-assess and peer-assess regularly to help further their learning and deepen their understanding.

Reading extensively outside the classroom and developing a richer vocabulary in English is strongly encouraged. As students’ progress into higher year levels this becomes even more important as they will be expected to read a range of increasingly sophisticated texts in different content areas. In order that all students are provided equitable access to the curriculum, as well as have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of school life, ENS provides English language support for students whose first language is not English. Toward that end, the school will ensure that the language
objectives are accessible through timely interventions, accommodations, modifications, and/or differentiation.

At a minimum, subject teachers across all content areas will:

(a) Reinforce basic skills through the use of Common Core learning progressions for effective listening, speaking, reading and writing in English
(b) Provide necessary accommodations, particularly in terms of differentiated tasks and activities, to allow an EAL student to succeed at his/her level
(c) Provide necessary modifications of the skills, content and coursework to make them more accessible to EAL students
(d) Assisting students to become socially integrated.

Standard Forms of Language

Students should be exposed to the language and culture of different countries. No one form is considered standard. It is necessary for older students to appreciate the different forms of language for example British or American English. The type of language a teacher is likely to use depends on where that teacher is from. The teacher will however point out the differences in expression or spelling where appropriate. It is, however, not allowed to confuse the two in one piece of writing.

English as a First Language

At Emirates National Schools, we recognise that every student is an individual and strive to encourage each of them to reach their full potential. For the 3-5% of the student body whose mother tongue or first language is English, teachers will ensure that they are exposed to a level of language and literature that cater to their learning needs. It is imperative that student’s learning never remains stagnant; therefore, teachers will use assessment, planning, standards and differentiation of instruction and activities to maintain student’s progression.

Mother Tongue Maintenance and Development

We believe that competence and confidence in the mother tongue are crucial for academic success, for the maintenance of cultural identity and for emotional stability. In addition, we believe that mother tongue competence aids learning of the LOI and additional languages. We are committed to supporting families as far as possible in developing and maintaining the mother tongue of students throughout the school. Since 98% of the students in the school are UAE national whose mother tongue is Arabic, the school provides ample time and resources to ensure students’ mother tongue is respected and developed. The school has two librarians, one of whom are bilingual, and there is an ample budget and commitment to expanding good quality resources that support mother tongue development in and outside the classroom for all subjects taught in Arabic: Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE studies. For the 2 – 5% of the student population whose mother tongue is not Arabic, we are committed to finding ways in which we can support families as much as possible in developing their mother tongue of students throughout the school.
Meeting Diverse Learning Needs

A teacher might seek research-based intervention strategies if a student continues to struggle with various aspects of schoolwork even after adequate time has been given to settle in and understand his/her routine. Teachers may use the OCC website that provides a ‘Meeting Student Diverse Learning Needs’ document that outlines some examples of those needs and strategies to support those needs. Teachers should also use their professional judgment when deciding to make a direct referral, if research-based intervention strategies are unsuccessful. An observation of the student can be carried out by teachers, administration, and/or the Learning Support Team (LST). Depending on the outcome of this observation, a decision would be made as to whether the student needs any additional support. Teachers would then need to submit Student Causing Concern (SCC) form and observation reports to the LST. After reviewing the SCC forms, the LST will make necessary recommendations, which may include additional strategies, support, accommodations, or modifications. If the recommended strategies are unsuccessful, the LST may decide to write an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) with the teacher to further support student’s needs. The LST may make a referral to the administration if the student is still not achieving success on the ILP.

The LST and teacher should meet with the Head of School, who will assist in the development of an individual education plan which may require parents to have their child tested at an approved outside agency. The school is unified in using the same steps and documentation to create plans that may be needed to support children's language development.

Whole School Guiding Principles about Language Learning at Emirates National Schools

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<th>Principles</th>
<th>PYP</th>
<th>MYP</th>
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<td>Language B: Arabic</td>
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<td>Language B: French</td>
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<td>Languages: Essential Agreements</td>
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<td>Languages: Medium of Inquiry</td>
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<td>Languages: Shared Responsibility</td>
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<td>Languages: Contextual and Linked</td>
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<td>Languages: Supported Beyond Class</td>
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<td>Languages: On-Going Descriptive Feedback</td>
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**Sources:** Language Policy, unit planning, FAME samples, language clubs, PLC, PD, vertical articulation essential agreements, subject specific vocabulary lists etc.
Language Levels and Progression at Emirates National Schools:
Abu Dhabi City Campus: 2014 – 2015
(MYP – DP continuum reviewed based on student body*)

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<th>D P 1 1 1 1 2</th>
<th>Group 2: Ab initio SL*</th>
<th>Group 2: Language Acquisition SL</th>
<th>Group 2: Language Acquisition HL*</th>
<th>Group1: Studies in Language and Literature SL*</th>
<th>Group1: Studies in Language and Literature HL</th>
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<td>M Y P 6 1 0</td>
<td>Language Acquisition Phase 1 – 2 French/Arabic *</td>
<td>Language Acquisition Phase 3 – 4 French/Arabic</td>
<td>Language Acquisition Phase 5 – 6 French/Arabic</td>
<td>Language and Literature Arabic*</td>
<td>Language and Literature English*</td>
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<td>P Y P 4 &amp; 5 - Transitional Reading → Fluent Reading stages (including Speaking, Viewing, and Listening)</td>
<td>Grade 2 &amp; 3 - Emergent Reading → Early Reading → Transitional Reading stages (including Speaking, Viewing, and Listening)</td>
<td>KG 1, KG 2, &amp; Grade 1 - Foundations of Language, Concepts of Print, and Awareness &amp; Exploration of Reading Stage (including Speaking, Viewing, and Listening)</td>
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Language and the Primary Years Program

English for Academic Purposes

All PYP teachers recognize that language – which includes spoken, written and visual language - is central to learning. We also recognize that a major task for all teachers at this level is the explicit teaching of English for academic purposes.

Study of the Language of Instruction

Abu Dhabi City Primary and KG School requires all students to study English Language Arts approximately eighty percent of the school day and Abu Dhabi Education Council requires all students to study Modern Classic Arabic, Islamic studies, and UAE studies for approximately twenty percent of the school day. Teachers determine the appropriate level of proficiency based upon ongoing formative and summative assessments.

Language for communication and learning

To facilitate learning for all students, but especially second language learners, teachers are encouraged to use the following methods:

- Allow students to have exposure to key concepts and vocabulary in both English and Arabic
- Use visual materials (graphic organizers) alongside oral instruction to deepen understanding
- Use actions (Total Physical Response-TPR) alongside oral instructions
- Reinforce oral instructions with written instructions
- Emphasize academic vocabulary specific to the subject
- Actively use visible thinking strategies
- Provide student-centered activities which allow students to explore ideas and concepts through dialog
- Structure tasks and scaffolding lessons/assignments to maximize student’s opportunity for success
- Allow students to give an oral response at times rather than a written; how far this can be allowed depends on the subject specific marking criteria
- Use language for reflection, either by journaling or orally
- ICT plays a key part in teaching and learning throughout the year. Children are given opportunities to publish their writing and make use of media to support their learning
- Role-play is used during lessons to develop various skills when appropriate

Primary Years Program English as an Additional Language (EAL) Practices

Testing and Placement of EAL Students

For students in the Primary Years Program, performance in English Language Arts is regularly monitored through common formative classroom assessments as well as the NWEA Measurement of
Academic Achievement (MAP) testing, to ensure that instruction reflects appropriate rigor to develop student language skills, and to ensure that appropriate interventions are in place to support the learners. English as an Additional Language support in the Primary Years Program are provided through teacher differentiated instruction within the English Language Arts classroom and through timely academic interventions provided for students depending on the individual needs of the student by the classroom teacher.

**Mother Tongue**

**Arabic Mother Tongue (MT) Beliefs**

As a school we promote international mindedness on the part of everyone. We encourage access to different cultures, perspectives and languages.

As a school we subscribe to a model of bilingualism, in which:

- students acquire a second language without it having a negative effect on development of the mother tongue
- students’ self-esteem and/or personal identity do not suffer
- students may become highly proficient in both languages
- bilingual students tend to experience a higher rate of academic success than monolingual students

We believe that Mother Tongue Support:

- helps achieve bilingualism
- facilitates the learning of the LOI and additional languages
- helps increase intercultural awareness and understanding, for both the student and his/her peers
- enables students to remain in touch with their culture
- makes it possible for students to re-adjust to their home community and/or education system, should they return

We recommend that the aim of all mother-tongue instruction should be to achieve balanced bilingualism which, summarized, covers the following:

- conversational fluency
- well-developed listening skills
- reading comprehension & critical literacy
- writing skills & academic language

**Mother Tongue Practices**

The school will actively help and support any parent who is seeking mother tongue instruction for their child. The school will seek to ensure that the Library resources represent the languages and cultures of the whole school community. The school will provide a room for mother tongue instruction to individuals or groups of students. All mother tongue instruction not structured in the school through the mainstream courses will take place outside the normal school day.
The school’s IB Coordinator is responsible for:

- maintaining a list of teachers of languages other than English
- collecting and collating information on the mother tongue schools and classes which are available in our community
- bringing together individuals wishing to study a particular language to form a language study group
- working with the Librarian to improve resources in the languages of the school community
- working with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to secure web-based learning programs for students whose language is not taught through the school’s subject areas.
Language Policy Development, Implementation and Review Agreement:

This whole school language policy was reviewed by all stakeholders in December 2013 and again reviewed by the Heads of Curriculum, language coordinators and coordinators of all three IB programs in February 2017. The policy went into effect and was made public for the school year 2014 - 2015, as it was reviewed after the DP authorization visit in Spring 2014.

The Heads of Curriculum, administration, IB coordinators and subject coordinators will be responsible for communicating the language policy to all the school’s stakeholders through school improvement planning sessions held three times a year, the school’s website, information sessions for teachers, students and parents and through curriculum development and review meetings.

The quality of the implementation of language policy will be audited on a regular basis by the Quality Education Auditor, Head of National Curriculum and Head of American Curriculum, Administration and Language and IB coordinators to ensure ongoing and appropriate implementation through regular walkthroughs, performance task reviews to ensure alignment to the school adopted standards and IB programmatic frameworks and teacher evaluation reports.
Bibliography

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- *Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom*, published by the International Baccalaureate - May 2013
- *Middle Years program: Language and Literature Subject Guide*, pre-publication by the International Baccalaureate – December 2013
- *Middle Years program: Language Acquisition Subject Guide*, pre-publication by the International Baccalaureate – December 2013
- *Emirates National Schools World language Acquisition Standards*