Language Policy
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SIS Vision

Our vision is to foster passionate, independent, highly-motivated learners who actively contribute to the world peace.

SIS Mission

Our mission is to provide a multicultural learning community which nurtures passion for academic, social, and personal success.

SIS Educational Philosophy

SIS aims at educating each of its students to be:

- inspired and independent life-long learners.
- academically, artistically, socially, and physically balanced.
- inquirers and problem-solvers.
- multilingual communicators.
- responsible and principled internationally-minded citizens.
- appreciative of our local community.

Introduction

This document describes our philosophy and practice on language learning and how these principles influence our planning and teaching of language.

- It provides the school with a framework that will promote consistency in approach between grade levels and subjects.
- It provides parents with information about our principles and practices and assists them in understanding our curriculum.
- It will assist teachers in the planning, presenting and evaluation stages of teaching.
- It will serve as a guide for teachers to reflect on their language practice and to guide professional development and appraisal.
Philosophy

Language plays an important role in all learning areas. All SIS teachers play an essential role in facilitating the acquisition of language. Language development is an ongoing process. Language is reinforced in multiple ways, including technically, practically, and as a medium of instruction. Language is the major connecting element across the curriculum. Although English is the main language of instruction, systems are in place to encourage the support and development of all other languages used by students.

Guiding Principles

- Language learning at SIS will reflect International Baccalaureate PYP Language Scope and Sequence learning outcomes.
- All teachers are teachers of language.
- All members of the school community are learners of language.
- Language development programs are developed using constructivist theories.
- Teachers assist students to scaffold their learning and to work within the students’ “Zone of Proximal Development.”
- Teachers take background knowledge and previous learning experiences into consideration when planning their lessons.
- Teachers provide comprehensible input and present language through meaningful tasks in authentic contexts.
- Teachers provide developmentally appropriate scaffolding strategies such as visual aids, graphic organizers, demonstrations, dramatizations, and small-structured groups.
- Teachers guide learners to extend their language by combining high expectations (complexity and abstraction of concepts, increased density of low frequency and technical vocabulary, sophisticated grammatical constructions) with learner-centered practices in a contextualized learning environment.
- Teachers promote a school environment that welcomes diversity of cultures and perspectives.
- Teachers collaborate with parents to achieve shared goals.

Language Profile

As of September 2017, the SIS student body consists of 68 students. The nationalities represented in the student body are as follows: American, Azerbaijani, Brazilian, British, Filipino, German, Israeli, South Korean, Japanese, Turkish, Peruvian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek. Additionally, many students are of
mixed heritage and hold multiple citizenships from the aforementioned list. The students’ linguistic backgrounds are as follows: Arabic, Azerbaijani, English, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Kyrgyz and Uzbek. SIS currently has 12 staff members. The nationalities represented among the staff are as follows: American, Azerbaijani, Japanese, British and Turkish. The linguistic backgrounds of the staff include: Azerbaijani, English, Japanese, and Turkish.

**Meeting the needs of SIS Community**

- English is the primary language of instruction.
- All students study the official host country language, Japanese either as their native language or as an additional language.
- All school documents are in English.
- A student’s language ability in both English and in their mother tongue is evaluated during the admission process. See Figure 2
- A student’s language ability in English is evaluated during the placement process.
- EAL programmes are flexible and responsive to the needs of individual students.
- SIS promotes the learning of additional languages.
- Language development occurs in authentic settings according to the language outcomes written in the PYP language scope and sequence document.

**Mother Tongue Language Development**

Mother tongue support is crucial for affirming identity and emotional stability of students. Parents are encouraged to use their mother tongue at home. In our library, we try to offer fiction and non-fiction books in various languages represented in our school community. We also welcome our parents to support the provision of mother tongue by providing facilities after school hours.

- Language resources are provided whenever possible for mother tongue languages represented at SIS.

**Planning for Language Learning**

- PYP Language outcomes guide instruction and assessment of student language development.
- Aspects of language development are incorporated into SIS weekly planning.
- Language learning is structured to assist students to experience success. This requires differentiated learning experiences.
- An interactive class structure is facilitated by teachers. Activities and tasks are designed to give a wide range of communication forms.
- A variety of books, references, resources, and materials are available for classroom use.
according to the language abilities of the students.

- The EAL teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to help learners who need extra guidance and support in English.
- Activities are designed at various levels to meet all students’ needs.
- Success criteria and language learning outcomes are designed according to the overall level of the class.
- Self and peer assessment is encouraged through the use of rubrics and one-on-one conferences.
- Students are involved in designing assessment criteria for their work.
- The type/amount of support given is differentiated according to the students’ language ability.
- Various grouping strategies are utilized to cater to different abilities and learning styles.
- Students are placed in EAL classes that will suit their language needs during some language classes.
- Students can move to full-time mainstream classes once their language abilities develop.
- Dynamic language grouping (based on students’ abilities) is used within the classroom in order to develop specific aspects of language and to meet the requirements and expectations of a given task.
- Additional support for EAL learners may be provided through in-class support.

**EAL Support**

Since the language of instruction is English, the objective of the support programme is to enable the inclusion of EAL (English as an Additional Language) students in the mainstream class. Although students are required to display an English proficiency level commensurate with their grade level prior to enrollment, SIS works with the EAL teacher in cooperation with the homeroom teachers to enable the EAL students’ transition into the mainstream class. This support is continued until the student has the skills and knowledge needed to access the regular curriculum.

**See Figure 1**

**Entry Criteria**

- A trial period of a half day in the classroom setting: Teachers look to see if students have the ability to understand and follow classroom instructions, and basic interpersonal communication skills.
- An informal student interview is conducted during the trial period by the classroom teacher.
- Homeroom teachers place students on an appropriate developmental level according to the PYP Language outcomes.
- After collecting the data and feedback from the homeroom teacher, the EAL specialist and the homeroom teacher decide what type of EAL Support is appropriate for the student.
1. If the student is within the Level 1 or 2 benchmark (K-Alberta Education), (s) he will participate in pull out EAL support.

2. The EAL specialist will have ongoing communication with the homeroom teacher so that they can discuss and facilitate the progress of EAL learners.

3. If the student is within Level 3 or above, (s) he will receive in-class EAL differentiation and support from the homeroom teacher as necessary. (Example pre-teaching technical vocabulary, providing graphic organizers to help organize their thoughts etc. We believe most strategies to help EAL learners are part of good teaching practices and benefit everyone, not just EAL learners.)

Exit Criteria

- If a student who is receiving pull-out EAL support starts to move towards the Level 3 benchmark (Alberta Education, Canada), (s) he will join the mainstream classroom setting full-time. There, the homeroom teacher will differentiate the learning environment according to the student’s language proficiency until (s) he can fully participate in the mainstream classroom without that support.

Benchmark

- ESL Benchmark, Alberta Education, Alberta, Canada

Resources

- PYP Language outcomes
- Students are allowed to pick books such as Reading A to Z Leveled Books, Scott Foresman Leveled Books for EAL learners that are engaging and interesting to them.
- Teaching materials that are relevant to the current unit of inquiry and provided by the homeroom teachers

Planning

- The EAL specialist uses the SIS weekly planner template for planning.
Language for Successful Communication

- Language development activities provide opportunities for critical thinking.
- Students reflect on their language ability according to the set criteria through self assessment.
- Teachers encourage the development of critical thinking skills such as debating, active listening and thoughtful writing.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of concepts through discussion and daily ongoing communication.
- The social language of SIS is English, which is inclusive and understood by all members of the school community.
- Written communication amongst the school community is in English, which is inclusive and understood by all members of school community.
- Teachers organize various events and special days to promote an understanding of different cultures and languages.
- Students are actively involved in selecting their own books according to their level during guided reading time.
- Students are encouraged to use online reading programs to develop reading skills at their own pace.
- Book fairs are organized for the school community to purchase books in English.
- Students are given opportunities to visit the library during class and recess times.
- Newspapers and magazines are available to develop students’ global awareness and international-mindedness.

Professional Development

SIS administration recognizes the significance of ongoing professional development in the area of language learning and EAL/JAL support.

- All teachers are language teachers and opportunities are available in the area of language learning and EAL/JAL support through workshops, seminars and forums within the school and in the wider community.
- Monitoring and providing feedback on effective language learning in the classroom is part of teacher appraisals.

Library and Multimedia Center

The SIS Library and Multimedia Center supports the learning environment and enriches the various languages represented in our school community.
The SIS Library and Multimedia Center is designed to meet the study and research needs of both individuals and groups.

A wide range of materials (language games, references, online resources, etc.) are available mainly in English.

The librarian will look for opportunities to increase the amount of resources in additional languages represented in our school community.

The librarian will provide support for teachers to find books, online teaching resources, and other materials.

The librarian and other teachers will strive to increase awareness and appreciation of a wide variety of languages around the world through creating mother tongue language displays.

Print materials including fiction and non-fiction books, Reading A to Z series, Big Cat Guided Reading Books, dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, and reference books are available.

Review

This SIS language policy is reviewed every two years by coordinators, administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

References

- Making The PYP Happen, 2009
- Learning In A Language Other Than Mother Tongue In IB Programmes, 2008
- Guidelines For Developing A Language Policy, 2008
- Towards A Continuum Of International Education
- Programme Standards And Practices, 2011
- IB PYP Language Scope and Sequence, 2009
Figure 1
## Language Survey conducted in Admission Process

### Student’s Manner of Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Other:</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Father’s name:_________________________________________________________________________
Father’s country of origin:________________________________________________________________
Mother’s name: ______________________________________________________________________
Mother’s country of origin: _______________________________________________________________
What name do you use for your child?  (E.g., Jenny or Chihiro) __________________________________
Where was your child born? ______________________________________________________________
Where else has your child lived?___________________________________________________________
How long has your child lived in Japan? ___________________________________________________
What languages do you speak?
Father: _____________________________________________________________________________
Mother: _____________________________________________________________________________
In what language(s) do you communicate with your child? (E.g., Turkish and Japanese; or Only English)
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Does your child speak English or Japanese with other family members or friends? With whom and how often?  E.g., She speaks Japanese with her grandmother once every two weeks.
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Approximately how many English words does your child know? (circle one):
less than 10 10-50 51-100 101-200 more than 200

Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your child’s communication abilities?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Figure 2