



# LANGUAGE POLICY

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

LEARNING ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL is committed to developing the students as a whole, not only the intellect but also the personality by empowering them to become confident and competent lifelong learners. Our goal is to inspire our students to evolve into responsible, compassionate and dynamic citizens of the global society.

The study of Languages Language and Literature/English and Language Acquisition/second language, provides students with an opportunity to develop a practical understanding of this Mission Statement as well as our values. Learning a language (both mother tongue and a second language) enables students to realise their place in the global community, as well as promoting respect of others. The school's literacy vision is to ensure that everyone within our community is empowered to be a responsible, life - long learner, by providing all with the opportunity to acquire the necessary literacy skills to successfully learn and communicate.

The school promotes and inculcates the development and appreciation of the core values of the Learner Profile for the personal growth of the students into international minded residents of a global community.

### Integrity

We are open, always searching for truth and acting with honesty.

### Respect

We appreciate our own culture and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We understand that two people with different point of views can both be correct.

### Reflection

We thoughtfully consider our strengths and weaknesses, in order to support our learning and development.

### Knowledge

We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance. Developing our understanding, we become explorers across a range of disciplines.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

At Learning Alliance International, language is a vital instrument for learning, communication, and expression. Teaching and learning is driven by the idea that through language instruction, we are encouraging intercultural awareness, new perspectives, curiosity, and an appreciation of our world's diversity. Through the exploration of language, students become communicators in our multilingual world.

International Baccalaureate Organisation explains the study of Language as *“fundamental to learning, thinking and communicating; therefore it permeates the whole curriculum. Indeed, all teachers are language teachers, continually expanding the boundaries of what students are thinking about.”*

Keeping in view the increasing need of the students in today's rapidly changing world, to promote multilingualism and intercultural understanding, Learning Alliance International strives to create students who are able to speak two languages, as well as being able to master the six key skill areas of 'listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting, which develop as both independent and interdependent skills. Students develop these skills through the study of both language and literature.' **MYP (Language and Literature Guide)**.

It is developed as, *“the ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of international education that promotes multilingualism and intercultural understanding both of which are central to IB's mission”*. **(Language Acquisition Guide)**

In addition the policy supports the premise that 'the development of language is fundamental to that need to communicate' (PYP Language Scope and Sequence, page 1). Language Policy at Learning Alliance International has therefore been developed to provide a framework to promote the development of language skills across all year levels, which are developmentally appropriate and strive to attain cultural awareness through language mastery.

### **SCHOOL'S LANGUAGE POLICY AIM**

Language policy [...] is shaped by three main factors: language practices, the actual-related behaviour of individuals and institutions; language management, the official and unofficial rules regarding the choice and nature of language codes; and language ideologies [...] the understandings, beliefs and expectations that influence all choices made by language users. (Hornberger and McKay 2010: 28)

*“Apart from the IB requirements, a school language policy is also derived from the school's language philosophy and is a statement of purpose that outlines goals for language teaching and learning. It is constructed around pedagogical and learning beliefs and is therefore also a statement of action, describing practices for achieving and evaluating goals. It must take into consideration the particular language factors of the local context.”* **(Language and learning in IB programmes)**

### **PROFILE**

a) Diversity of Language - Language Needs of Learners

There is diversity in the languages spoken at home by students and their families. These languages are usually regional, and vary in dialects from around Pakistan. Of these languages, English is Language and Literature, being the official language and *Lingua Franca* of Pakistan. Urdu is taught formally in school from Reception to A- Levels, and is a state sanctioned requirement until O levels. In PYP and MYP, Urdu is offered along with French, as Language Acquisition. These subjects are taught in levels. Therefore, the school provides its students a unique opportunity to learn to communicate fluently in languages other than their Mother Tongue, which is Urdu, to promote linguistic development and fluency, both verbal and written.

Students expression is of primary importance, therefore, while English is administered as Language and Literature course, students struggling with English fluency due to developed habits of speaking Urdu at home, may be duly accommodated. Any child experiencing difficulty with English is trained to continue communicating in Urdu or a language of their choosing, while maintaining a consistent focus on English language training. So, the students maintain a medium of expressing their thoughts and develop a fluency in Target Language.

#### b) Language of Communication

English is the primary language of instruction at Learning Alliance International. However, accommodations may be made for students with trouble expressing certain thoughts in English, in supplement to teaching and learning in English. This is achieved through scheduling Remedial Sessions for the students requiring assistance. A step by step log of progression of learning is maintained by the Curriculum Coordinator who works with the Language Teachers to map out the differentiated learning needs of the students and chalks out a plan to address them. This plan of action is supported by School's SEN policy. (Reference, SEN policy, page 2)

### **PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW**

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)

(Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education pg. 68)

### **PYP – Language of Communication**

#### Oral Language

“Oral language encompasses all aspects of listening and speaking—skills that are essential for ongoing language development, for learning and for relating to others. Listening (the receptive mode) and speaking (the expressive mode) work together in a transactional process between listeners and

speakers.” (PYP Scope and Sequence, page 16) Oral language skills are deemed to be the ‘building blocks’ for future language development of students and in the development of relationships with the community. Furthermore, the thinking process is further enhanced by the consolidation of listening and speaking skills.

### Visual Language

“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.” (PYP Scope and Sequence, page 18). It is important to note the connectedness of the visual and presentation aspect of language development, which in turn integrates the use of technology into this medium. It is acknowledged that in contemporary society visual language underpins a significant portion of the language development of individuals; for example through cartoons, graphic organisers, electronic mediums (e.g. I pads e-books), illustrations and websites.

### Written Language

The written text is fundamental for the development of the concept of reading for meaning; whereby experiences and knowledge of events surrounding the given text are highly valued.

In turn the expressive nature of this medium is appreciated as individuals learn to use this as means to communicate identity. It is important to note that ‘accuracy and skills grow out of the process of producing meaningful communication’ (PYP Scope and Sequence, page 19).

## **MYP- Language & Literature and Language Acquisition**

Speaking - Formative and summative speaking tasks should include formal and informal exchanges such as role-plays, discussions, debates, pair work, interviews and presentations (both with and without question and answer sessions in the target language).

Listening - Listening comprehension is a natural part of oral interaction. Formative work in pure listening comprehension (no oral interaction) is encouraged as a vital component in developing students’ language skills. Formative and summative listening tasks may include listening to radio reports, speeches, or any other recorded information, and responding in a variety of ways. Viewing may be included as part of the listening task where students watch and respond to a text such as televised news bulletins or weather reports in the target language.

Reading – Formative and summative tasks for reading should include a variety of texts, chosen by the teacher as appropriate for the students’ level, for example, textbook passages, magazine and newspaper articles, short stories and novels (including abridged/modified versions). Teachers should aim for a range of factual and literary texts. Viewing may also be included as part of reading tasks where students

are shown illustrations or photographic information that complement the text, or vice versa. Students are required to demonstrate specific reading comprehension skills in final assessment tasks, for example identifying information, dealing with unfamiliar language, drawing conclusions, identifying opinions, attitudes, writing styles. These skills should be practised in all year levels.

Writing – Formative and summative tasks for writing may include letter writing, advertisements, essays creative writing, presentations, etc. Students are required to demonstrate specific writing skills in final assessment tasks. These skills should be practised in all year levels. Students should be encouraged to practise writing both at length and in a concise manner.

Viewing and presenting – ‘interpreting or 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. Visual texts present information: learning to interpret this information and to understand and use different media are invaluable skills.’ (MYP Language and Literature Guide, p. 5)

## **LANGUAGE A AND LANGUAGE B IN DP**

According to Language and Learning in IB programmes, “....a [school’s] language policy should enable a student’s language profile to be developed by providing:

- Well-resourced special request and school-supported self-taught options in group 1 to maintain the mother-tongue development
- Opportunities for learning languages ab initio and languages B.

Learning Alliance International offers English and Urdu (which is the mother tongue) as language A. We believe that developing a child’s mother tongue can accelerate the rate of English language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, increase self-esteem, and enhance intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

### **A. ENGLISH**

In each level of the school, students study English language and literature. When students begin the IBMYP , they study English as their language and literature course to develop their skills in all four language areas (reading, writing, listening, speaking) enable them to access this curriculum. However, in IBDP they have a choice to study English Language and Literature and Urdu as Language A.

### **B. URDU**

Native Urdu speakers receive alternate language instruction in their mother tongue beginning in first grade in PYP. Students in the IBMYP study Urdu subject as Language Acquisition. In DP however, they have a choice to study Urdu as language A provided they have acquired the native language proficiency.

### **C. FRENCH**

French is taught from Grade 1 in PYP. In IBMYP, it is the designated subject along with Urdu , for Language Acquisition. In IBDP, French is offered as Language B . This course develops students’ language and literacy competence in French as well as intercultural competence. In the IBDP, students may study English language B at the higher or standard level.

#### **D. AB INITIO**

In the IBDP, students may study French at the beginning level if they have had minimal exposure to the language previously. Learning Alliance International also admits English language learners at the ab initio level from Grade 1 to the beginning of Grade 8.

#### **LANGUAGE PATHWAYS AT LEARNING ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL**

The school supports an inclusive approach to the study of languages. Within the classroom Environment teachers provide a curriculum which allows for all students to reach their potential. Students have the opportunity to choose which Language/Language B (MYP) they wish to study and school will determine their eligibility for their levels of study in French and Urdu.

#### **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

The mastery of essential language skills – reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing – is a vital part of a student’s overall development. The importance of students becoming culturally and linguistically proficient in a second language (Language Acquisition) is recognized, and all students receive instruction in either Urdu and French, in their respective lessons. In realizing that not every student will reach the same level of language proficiency at the same time, a continuum of language Acquisition courses is offered that meet both, developing academic as well as social needs of all learners in order for them to achieve their utmost potential. Language Acquisition courses are assessed using the modified Language Acquisition Assessment Criteria. Students are required to take their Urdu Exam through Cambridge International Examinations in the beginning of MYP year 5 that is the October/ November session. It is the National requirement by the Ministry of Education, Pakistan, since IB does not assess students in Urdu Language. Equivalence certificate is mandatory to gain admissions in local colleges/ Universities especially the State Medical colleges. The CIE Urdu curriculum begins in MYP III and continues till the students appear in their CIE Urdu exams in the beginning of their MYP 5 that is CIE October/ November Session. French along with Urdu is also offered in the Language Acquisition subject group, and students in MYP 5 submit their French e-portfolios.

The school is implementing the following language learning 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, which includes, but is not limited to guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, graphic organizers, use of leveled reading material;
- students will be encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure and read aloud expressively;
- students will be exposed to a variety of genres, including literature, poetry, plays, short stories, newspapers/magazines, and informational text;
- teachers will promote and incorporate supplemental reading incentive and support programs vocabulary-building techniques such as word walls, word of the day, use of idioms, and

literary elements such as metaphors and similes will be utilized across the curriculum, whenever appropriate.

- Teachers will recognize student writing through the “Writer of the Month” by selecting an outstanding writer each month.
- 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;
- ensure consistency of the promotion of the writing process (planning, outlining, drafting, editing, proofreading, publishing), as age appropriate throughout the grade levels;
- students will be provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through a variety of genres, including but not limited to, journaling, essays;
- students will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use language specific to different subject areas;
- development of writing will be supported by providing constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults;
- teachers will provide instruction in and model the correct usage of written and oral language conventions, including spelling, grammar, rules of punctuation, and handwriting.
- Several literary elements (i.e., foreshadow, symbolism, synesthesia, etc.) will be reviewed in order to teach good writing skills that allow for more interesting reading—“tricks” used by authors to capture their audience.
- Intensive Reading classes are designed to increase the student’s specific reading needs – decoding skills, fluency and/or comprehension of text – in order to achieve higher levels of success.

## ORAL LANGUAGE

- teachers will model correct language usage in conversation, while being sensitive of students’ cultural background and mother tongue;
- students will be provided ample opportunities to develop and utilize oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations through oral presentations, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, books on tape, listening stations, etc.;
- teachers will plan activities that expose students to conventions of oral language and aid them in responding appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

In the PYP, students will be exposed to their choice of language (French/Urdu) every other day for a period of 40 minutes. Students receive instructions using an interactive approach to second language learning. Teaching integrates the skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing. In addition, emphasis on grammatical structures and vocabulary development, especially in the upper grades, help students to develop the tools needed to become effective communicators in our multilingual world.

International understanding, cultural awareness, and historical knowledge are enhanced through the study of the customs, traditions, songs, poems, and everyday life in different countries throughout the world.

Second language teachers support the school's reading, writing and oral language practices, the IB Learner Profile, and the PYP attitudes, as well as the programme of inquiry, whenever and wherever appropriate.

## **LANGUAGE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY**

The school understands that learning and communicating in contemporary Pakistan society is dependent on competence in English. Although the number of students who have come from a home where absolutely no English is used, is very less, the school has devised a plan to bring such students at par with the requirements of language, and adept them in usage and appreciation. It is also imperative that existing linguistic and learning competence of speakers of languages other than English be accepted and valued and a culture of respect and understanding is promoted "to realize that there are diverse ways of living, behaving and viewing the world." (Language Acquisition Guide). This will be supported through interactive discussions, role plays, debates and presentations incorporated in every unit of study to practise the language skills.

## **SUPPORT**

Support offered to students includes (though is not limited to) –

- The creation of Curriculum Adjustment Plans/Individual Education Plans
- Individual support within the classroom environment by a Literacy Support Teacher
- Enrolment in English as an Additional Language formal classes
- Integration of technology to further develop language mastery skills
- Scaffolding of tasks

## **SUPPORT FOR MOTHER TONGUE DEVELOPMENT:**

The school understands the need to promote and develop the mother tongue programme.

- MYP first annual performance (Nautanki) was presented in Urdu.
- Poets from the local circuit are invited to interact with students to help develop their interest in Urdu language and literature
- Programme on Historical Urdu Poets/ Musicians e.g. Ameer Khusro
- Resource Room is stocked on regular basis with materials translated/published in Urdu
- Remedial classes for struggling students
- At the beginning of each academic year, teachers receive a list of students' mother-tongues other than English. Teachers are encouraged to use this information in developing lesson plans that emphasize differentiated instruction and that honor multicultural diversity.
- Families are encouraged to work with their children in their own mother-tongue.

## **CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR LITERACY**

Literacy is the ability to use language to operate successfully within one's society. Modern citizens face diverse demands on their language skills. Changes in the nature of work and social life and the development of new technologies have produced a proliferation of new and different forms of communication. Students need high levels of literacy to meet these challenges.

### Future literacy demands

Students also need to be prepared to meet future challenges. English language is not a set of neutral, unchanging and established rules or practices that apply at all times and in all situations. Literacy requirements change over time.

Students need an understanding and a command of language which enables them to adapt to new demands and new situations.

### Functional literacy

Functional literacy involves the ability to control and understand the conventions of English that are valued and rewarded by society. A concern for inclusivity and empowerment requires that all students develop the ability to use these conventions and have an understanding of their importance. These conventions include written conventions ranging from handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar through to the more complex conventions of form, genre and register; oral language conventions associated with different purposes, contexts and audiences; conventions associated with the presentation of information, ideas and entertainment in the mass media and new information technologies; and conventions associated with literary texts of all kinds.

### Critical literacy

Students also require highly-developed critical literacy skills. Critical literacy depends on an understanding that language is a dynamic social process which responds to and reflects changing social conditions, and that the use of English is inextricably involved with values, beliefs and ways of thinking about ourselves and the world we inhabit. It involves an appreciation of and sensitivity to socio-cultural diversity and an understanding that the meaning of any form of communication depends on context, purpose and audience.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES SPECIFIC TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGES**

The aims of any PYP/MYP subject and of the personal project state in a general way what the teacher expects to teach or do, and what the student may expect to experience or learn. In addition, they suggest the ways in which the student may be changed by the learning experience.

**Language and Literature curriculum ensures that:**

- each course includes the study of a range of literature
- each course includes the study of a balance of language and literature
- each course includes the study of a balance of genres
- each course includes a world literature component

**Language Acquisition curriculum ensures that:**

- teaching and learning is organized into six phases
- a reasonable differentiation and manageable combination proficiencies in one class have been considered.

The aims of Language and Literature (English) are to –

- Use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, self-expression and social interaction
- Develop the skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting in a variety of contexts.
- Develop critical, creative and personal approaches to studying and analysing literary and non-literary works. Engage in literature from a variety of cultures and representing different historical periods.
- Explore and analyse aspects of personal, host and other cultures through literary and non-literary works.
- Engage with information and communication technology in order to explore language.
- Develop a lifelong interest in reading widely.
- Apply Language and Literature skills and knowledge in a variety of real-life contexts.

The aims of Language Acquisition are to:

- Enable the student to use language(s) effectively as a means of practical communication, providing a sound base of communication skill necessary for future study, work and leisure
- Enable the student to understand the nature of language and the process of total language learning, which comprises the integration of linguistic, cultural and social components
- Enable the student to develop an appreciation of a variety of literary and non-literary texts
- Offer insight into the cultural characteristics of the communities where the language(s) is (are)

spoken

- Encourage an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of people from other cultures
- Promote involvement with different communities, where relevant
- Provide access to varied sources of information
- Foster curiosity, a lifelong interest and enjoyment in language learning.

### Objectives

Upon the completion of studying a Language and Literature course, students should be able to (though not limited to):

- Use language as a 'vehicle for inquiry' (PYP Scope and Sequence, page 2)
- Use language in a persuasive format
- Synthesise ideas in order to construct meaning
- Understand and analyse the language, content, structure, meaning and significance of both familiar and previously unseen oral, written and visual texts
- Understand and apply Language & Literature terminology in context
- Analyse the effects of the author's choices on an audience
- Compose pieces that apply appropriate literary and/or non-literary features to serve the context and intention
- Compare and contrast works, and connect themes across and within genres
  
- Express an informed and independent response to literary and non-literary texts
- Create work that employs organizational structures and language-specific conventions throughout a variety of text types
- Organize ideas and arguments in a sustained, coherent and logical manner
- Employ appropriate critical apparatus
- Use language to narrate, describe, analyse, explain, argue, persuade, inform, entertain and express feelings formatting
- Use language accurately
- Use appropriate and varied register, vocabulary and idiom
- Use correct grammar and syntax
- Use appropriate and varied sentence structure
- Use correct spelling (alphabetic languages) or writing (character languages).

Upon completion of studying a Language and Literature/Language Acquisition course, students should be able to:

- Communicate information, ideas and opinions
- Demonstrate comprehension of specific factual information and attitudes, expressed in spoken and written contexts

- Identify main ideas and supporting details and draw conclusions from spoken and written texts
- Understand and appropriately use structures and vocabulary
- Request and provide information in both spoken and written contexts
- Engage actively in oral production using comprehensible pronunciation and intonation
- Take part in formal and informal exchanges related to the areas of interaction and to cultural and international issues.

### **ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGED STUDENTS**

All students who are referred, or who are suspected of being ‘academically challenged’, are subsequently assessed and the data collected provides a profile of the students and helps to diagnose their particular needs. From this information the relevant stakeholders work collaboratively with the Curriculum Coordinator to determine what strategies can be implemented to best address each student’s needs.

A databank of the names of students recognised as being ‘challenged’ (remedial) will be maintained. This includes anecdotal and test results, which will be used to support the planning of literacy learning for those students. Relevant information will be routinely disseminated to classroom teachers, the Curriculum Coordinator, the parents and any other person involved in the literacy learning of the student. Regular meetings and case conferences will be held with the Head of Programme, classroom teachers, parents and others in order to address the specific needs of identified students. (Reference SEN policy, page 2)

### **ASSESSMENT:**

While language acquisition follows distinct stages, students’ rate of acquisition varies greatly from individual to individual. Therefore, language teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), regularly differentiating through scaffolding or extension as required. Formative and summative assessments in the classroom provide information on language growth. Language teachers regularly standardise students’ work to ensure a fair application of assessment criteria. Standardised tests and external examinations in the Upper School also provide evidence of language acquisition levels. Students who are identified as requiring additional support in English to access the curriculum will be placed in the appropriate English language acquisition class and assessed regularly to monitor progress. Assessment in Learning Alliance International’s Language B programme should follow the principles and guidelines as established by the IBO. “Assessment ... should be an

integral part of teaching and learning. The use of assessment in a formative sense, to judge regularly the effectiveness of both teaching and learning processes, is essential in allowing teachers and students to identify strengths and weaknesses. The purpose and means of assessment should be

clearly explained to the students". (Source: P23, Language and Acquisition Curriculum Guide). Assessment tasks should reflect the objectives and assessment criteria of the programme. They should be carefully chosen to measure the level of achievement expected for the relevant age group.

## **PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**

### **A. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are an integral part of our community of learners and provide tremendous support for language learning at Learning Alliance International. The school uses multiple methods to communicate to parents the critical importance of maintaining academic proficiency in the mother tongue. Parents are involved as mother tongue teachers, donating resources for the library and providing resources for the mother tongue programmes. These programmes are incorporated in every unit of study; they involve, but are not limited to Group discussions, Role Plays, Debates, presentations and parents as Volunteers invited to come and speak on various student forums. Learning Alliance International offers induction support workshops for parents each year. Such workshops are targeted towards the parents whose children are involved in various stages of school year for example PYP orientation workshop.

### **B. PUBLISHED MATERIALS**

Students, parents and staff members at Learning Alliance International originate from different countries and educational systems. To maintain consistency in published materials, British English spelling will be used for our formal written documentation.

## **COMMUNICATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY TO LEARNING ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

The language policy will be introduced through multiple pathways including staff meetings, grade level meeting Director's News and Notes. The policy is also featured on the LEARNING ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL network. New staff will be familiarised with the document during orientation.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

The language policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school improvement plan.

**REFERENCES:**

<http://www.ibo.org/mission/languagepolicy/documents/IB-Language-Policy-EN.pdf>

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