



LANGUAGE POLICY



AIS Mission Statement

We believe that education has the power to help us to ‘make ourselves’ both the teacher and the taught. For in its true sense, it is the process of ‘leading out’- enabling every one of us to blossom to our full potential. This is a continuous life long process that can be achieved only when each one of us is propelled by our inner desires and longings-in today’s world.

We are firmly committed to the objective of developing “self learning” which in turn brings about the process of “life long learning”.

It is this SWAYAM that we seek.

IBO Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate Organization 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 IBO 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.

Language Policy

Philosophy

The main aim of the school language policy is to enable students to study in the language of instruction along with the regional and national language.

The school has English as the medium of instruction, Hindi as the host country language, and Gujarati as the state language that are part of the curriculum.

The students inducted in the school come with a background of English language. From Grade 1, they learn and familiarize themselves with Hindi and Gujarati and then study the language according to the ability and age level specifications. This is also mandatory as per the requirement of the state and national language policy.

The school's policy along with the inclusion of second language teaching and mother tongue language support that meets the needs of the student and reflects the principles of the programme. (As per the Programme, Standards and Practices of the PYP - organization section B1 20)

The overriding aim of the English language curriculum is to enable all students to develop an ability to use and understand English language. Since language is spoken and written, this means the fullest possible development of capabilities in speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are developed.

English contributes to the personal development of the individual child because of the cognitive functions of both spoken and written language in exploratory learning and in organising and making sense of experiences. English contributes to preparation into the adult world.

The language skills are integrated with the Unit of inquiry. There are fixed times in the schedule to learn the host country language and regional language, in this case Hindi and Gujarati.(English is the medium of Instruction and is termed as first language in AIS.)

Objective of the Language Policy Document

The language policy document endeavours to consolidate philosophy and beliefs at Ahmedabad International School regarding language and its implementation in language teaching. It also aims to outline systems and strategies in place to support the development of English as well as advance and uphold the use of mother tongue in the school community. The main objectives are to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of adult and working life and to celebrate the achievements of students and the school and communicate in the best possible manner.

As an authorized IB World School, this document seeks to ensure that IBO Standards and practices align with those of the school.

This document will support any planning and implementation of language teaching, curriculum planning and professional development.

Language Profile of students at Ahmedabad International school

The cultural and linguistic background of majority of the student population is similar, being residents of Ahmedabad. The economical background of the students, range from middle class to affluent families. The parent community is a mix of entrepreneurs, professionals from diverse industries.

The school believes that the contribution of parents, students, teachers and the wider society will go a long way in developing a caring language community and confident language learners.

The school discerns that multilingualism will enrich the personal development of a child and enhance intercultural understanding and international mindedness.

The following points summarize the language profile of students currently studying at Ahmedabad International School:

1. Majority of the students (92%) have Gujarati or Hindi as their mother tongue/ native language.
2. A small percentage of students (5%-8%) have other Indian languages as their mother tongue.
3. Most students are second language learners of English.
4. English is the medium of instruction and is commonly acceptable to all.

Language at Ahmedabad International School

English is the medium of instruction at Ahmedabad International School and is taught as the primary language. It has precedence in the school's language programme. It is also the preferred and acceptable language of communication in the school. English is used in school publications, on its website, on signage, in communication between school and parents, and between members of staff. At Ahmedabad International School, we are committed to providing an inclusive and impartial learning environment.

Development of Knowledge and skills in language

Language is a complex web of connections that transcends the artificial separations of disciplines. When the three aspects of learning language, learning about language and learning through language, introduced earlier in this document, operate together in a relevant context, they provide the most supportive learning environment for language learners. We need to develop students' use of language, appreciation of language, awareness of the nature of language, of the many influences on language, and of the variety in and between languages and dialects. Students should recognize the transdisciplinary nature of language—they use language within and across the subject areas and in a way that transcends them, both inside and outside the classroom. They should be encouraged to recognize that competency in language—and in more than one language—is a valuable life skill, a powerful tool both in societal communication and as a means of personal reflection. Furthermore, learning that language and literature are creative processes encourages the development of imagination and creativity through self-expression.

Overall expectations in language

Acknowledging that learning language is a developmental process, the Language scope and sequence (2009) presents a set of developmental continuums that are designed as diagnostic tools to assist teachers in planning language learning experiences for students, and in monitoring students' development throughout the primary years.

This language document is intended to inform and support all language teachers. The four language continuums in the Language scope and sequence (2009) have been organized into five **developmental phases with each phase** building upon and complementing the previous one. These phases have not been named in order to avoid the value judgment implied in labelling a learner as “developing” or “proficient”, for example. The continuums make explicit the conceptual understandings that need to be developed at each phase. Evidence of these understandings is described in the behaviours or learning outcomes associated with each phase. For example, a 9 year old with well-developed mother-tongue ability may quickly show evidence of some—but not all—of the learning outcomes identified in the early phases when moving into a new language of instruction; a child beginning school at age 3 may spend several years consolidating understanding

to demonstrate consistently the learning outcomes identified in the initial phase. The scope and sequence also identifies the overall expectations considered appropriate in the PYP.

Scope and sequence of our language program is determined by the Language scope and sequence of PYP. It is written by the pedagogical team. As an entity, they have collaborated with homeroom teachers, specialist teachers, and experts in the field to create a policy that meets IBO and state / national standards. All teachers then abide by the written document. Inclusions are made whenever there are changes in the IBO policy and modified accordingly.

Kindergarten has a working document for its Language Program.

In Grades 1-7, the school uses the PYP Language Scope and Sequence documents

Learning Goals

Grades - 1, 2, 3

Children entering school will already have had a wide range of experiences in literacy and we value and build upon these individual experiences using role play, writing areas, the out -door area and book corners to develop these skills. The learning goal for developing written and verbal language skills underpins all work in this area. By the end of grade 3, most children will be able to:

- listen with enjoyment to stories, song, music and poems and also create their own,
- speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control showing an awareness of the listener; interact with others,
- negotiating plans and activities,
- hold a pencil correctly and to use it effectively to form recognizable letters
- use literacy skills readily in their play and independent learning; enjoy an increasing range of books,
- read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences,
- independently read on sight words
- show an understanding of the elements of stories describing the different character,
- sequence of events and how information can be found in non-fiction texts
- use phonic knowledge to read and write simple CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words and to make plausible attempts at more complex words
- attempt writing for different purposes and to begin to form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation
- most of which are formed correctly and when ready, begin to join their writing

Grade 4 & 5

By end of grade 5, children will be able to:

- speak clearly, fluently and confidently to different audiences
- listen to, understand and respond appropriately to others
- work as a member of a group taking into account different views, negotiating roles and participate in a range of drama activities
- read a variety of fiction and non-fiction, read with fluency, accuracy and expression
- use a variety of strategies in working out unfamiliar words when reading ,including: phonic clues, contextual clues, syntax and grammar and reading on for meaning;
- know and understand the alphabetical system and be able to use simple dictionaries
- communicate in narrative and non-narrative forms and to write for a purpose
- use appropriate and interesting vocabulary, use of basic punctuation like capital letters, full stops and question marks, use correct spelling for words
- develop and extend ideas in a sequence of sentences

- recognise phonemes and graphemes and use this knowledge when attempting words
- use consistently sized handwriting that ideally should be connected/cursive

Grade 6 & 7

By the end of the grade 7, most children will be able to:

- speak with confidence in a wide range of contexts, adapting their speech as appropriate
- listen attentively; understand and respond appropriately to others
- identify key features of language used for a specific purpose e.g. to persuade or instruct
- to work as a member of a group qualifying or justifying an opinion and to take up and sustain different roles, participate in a wide range of drama activities
- read a range of more challenging and demanding reading material fluently, accurately and independently
- interpret meaning beyond the literal to ask and answer questions about a text and express opinions, supporting a view by reference to the text
- use library skills to locate books and reference skills to find specific information
- use appropriate reading strategies when seeking information e.g. use of chapters, headings, skimming text
- write in a lively and thoughtful way in a range of forms
- sustain and develop ideas in an interesting way
- organise writing for purpose and to engage and sustain readers interest
- use effective vocabulary, selecting words with precision to create a desired effect
- use increasingly complex, grammatically correct sentences to extend meaning
- organise sentences into paragraphs using increasingly accurate spelling, appropriate punctuation, including commas, apostrophes and inverted commas
- use fluent, legible handwriting

Languages used in daily functioning

English is the preferred language of communication at Ahmedabad International School. It serves as the school's official language for purpose of operations, communication and management.

However, the school is aware of the multilingual community who function in their everyday lives in more than one language.

External and internal school communication with parents is done in English, although individual parent and teachers may communicate (written and oral) in a common language of their choice. (this is typically done as per parent's preference).

The internal communication within administration department and support staff (transport, food, housekeeping) typically is Gujarati (the local language of Ahmedabad) to ensure smooth functioning of the various support departments.

Language in the Primary years Programme

Language is the all pervasive element across the school's curriculum, both within and outside its transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. Language at Ahmedabad International School in the PYP is seen as permeating the whole curriculum. Language learning is spread across all disciplines and through the programme of inquiry and all PYP teachers at Ahmedabad International School are viewed and view themselves as language teachers.

English is the primary language taught at the Primary years and also the language through which the students connect to the PYP curriculum.

The school offers Hindi (one of the official languages of India) as a host country language from the age of 5 (Grade 1) and Gujarati (as the regional language of the state Gujarat) as a 2nd language from the age of 6(Grade 2).

The school uses the PYP Language Scope and Sequence documents for the primary years. The phases are stretched to Grade 7.

Teachers plan learning engagements in language with meaningful and enjoyable contexts and learners are able to make connections, apply their learning, and transfer their conceptual understanding to new situations. This progressive conceptual development, together with an enjoyment of the process, provides the foundation for lifelong learning.

The school also acknowledges that learning to comprehend language through listening, reading and viewing and to express through speaking; writing and presenting go hand in hand and hence, promotes integrated language development. The three strands of communication: oral, written and visual are interwoven and interrelated and not taught in isolation.

Ahmedabad International School believes that literature plays a very important role in language development. Literature helps to connect emotion and thought. It widens our life spaces and takes us beyond the boundaries of place and time. It also stretches our imagination and invites us to consider ‘what if’. Above all, it is a very powerful tool to transform children’s lives as children carry these literary experiences back into their own worlds and view their lives differently. At Ahmedabad International School, students are encouraged to read a minimum of 2 books a year in the PYP as per their age and readiness level.

We endorse learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections, to explore and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each individual student knows to help move them forward.

The school also sees culturally diverse literature as a powerful means to develop international mindedness and attributes of the learner profile in all learners. The library collection reflects this belief in its collection of picture books, folk tales, bilingual books etc.

The learner profile, together with the five essential elements of the programme:- knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action shape planning, teaching and assessing language at Ahmedabad International School.

Approaches to teaching and learning in the PYP:

Ahmedabad International School strives to make students proficient and fluent in usage of all forms of English language by the end of the PYP years, by:

- promoting integrated language development
- using language as a transdisciplinary element throughout the curriculum
- using a literature-based approach to learning language
- encouraging appropriate cooperative discussion in the classroom
- encouraging reading for meaning
- using differentiated reading engagements selected according to interest level, readiness, proficiency.
- using a variety of scaffold learning practices with the teacher providing strategies for the student to build on his or her own learning
- viewing writing as a process
- teaching students to read and research using multimedia resources
- using language for creative problem solving and information processing

- using a range of appropriate assessment methods such as portfolios, conferencing, writing sample analysis, response journals.

Mother tongue programme at Ahmedabad International School

Ahmedabad International School recognizes that mother tongue is an integral part of an individual's identity and it is important to affirm, value and promote students mother tongue. It also recognizes the need for developing and maintaining students mother tongue. This belief encourages the attributes identified in the IB learner profile, as well as promotes responsible action and international-mindedness.

The school has students of over 10 different mother tongues studying in the school. Hindi and Gujarati account for the mother tongue of more than 90% of our student population and the school teaches both these languages.

Most of the students in the school population have their mother tongue as Gujarati. This is taught in the class, in the time slot allotted. Hindi the national language is taught in all classes from grade 1 onwards. And Gujarati is taught in grade 2 onwards. There are many occasions in school when the mother tongue and national language is used extensively for celebrations and festivals.

The students learn to write in Hindi in Grade 1 and in Gujarati in grade 2 As per the state requirement the students are two stages lower than the schools in Gujarat. This enables the students to easily study the language without any stress, also since the script requires the Devangiri handwriting the age for putting in an extra language is appropriate in grade 1, 2.

Though the school views all teachers are language teachers, it acknowledges that some teachers are more proficient in their mother tongue than in the language of instruction in the school. The school takes responsibility for ensuring that such teachers are appropriately trained to teach in the language of instruction.

Further, they are encouraged to use their mother tongue in interaction with students where there is a resource of relevant background knowledge encoded in their (the teacher's) mother tongue.

The mother tongue programme plays an important role in developing and affirming the student's personality and identity.

Adhering to the belief that when a language one uses in daily communication is denigrated, a part of him or her is also being denigrated, there are no discipline procedures that impact student or teacher on use of their mother tongues in classes. However, there is a danger of using the mother tongue as a crutch while expressing and in the process, suppressing the development of English language fluency. Therefore, the guideline for use of mother tongue in the classroom is that it should be used as a support language –inter-lingual translation should be used wherever the teacher feels the need and sees value in its use. An example of this could be: activating prior knowledge of students, recording anecdotes of students in Early years verbatim, exploring cultural beliefs and values etc.

The school organises many events wherein there is always an integration of the mother tongue and the host country language as one of the areas of performance and presentation.

Festivals and morning assemblies are conducted in the Host country language as well as the Regional and English language.

Whole school strategies for developing mother tongue:

The school library has bilingual books as well a variety of books and periodicals in Hindi, Gujarati and other regional languages of India. Students are encouraged to issue books from the library on a regular basis.

- Ahmedabad International School plans to conduct a Language festival which is a week-long celebration of the richness of language. A variety of games, quizzes, skits etc will be organised in the school in this week.
- The school assembly sees a variety of presentations on various regional languages of India. These presentations showcase the richness and culture of the language through music, dance etc. The linguistic diversity of the school community is a rich resource for the mother tongue programme and the school makes active use of it in such opportunities.
- The parent community is also actively advised to develop and maintain the mother tongue of their child and encouraged to view English as an additive and not a subtractive language.

Additional Language Support (Learning Support Programme) at Ahmedabad International School

As stated earlier, almost all students at Ahmedabad International School are second language learners of English. The school recognizes that learning a second language is a developmental process that occurs over time. From Early year onwards, a lot of focus is laid on understanding English through listening and speaking exercises. In this context, the school is in the process of developing a listening and speaking curriculum for primary years.

However, there are some students who meet at least one or more than one of the following conditions:

1. Are first generation learners of English
2. Have zero support for English language learning at home
3. Come from schools where the language of instruction is not English.
4. Are admitted in Ahmedabad International School at a higher grade and have poor foundation skills in English.

These students require additional support to enable them to access the school curriculum in a manner that allows them to reach their full potential.

The school has designed a Learning Support Programme (LSP) for such students. The programme is a combination of classroom support and pull out programme of intensive English for a stipulated time period. The process of short listing a student for LSP, involves a series of steps like informal screening, observations, feedback given by the previous grade teachers, assessment reports of previous year/ previous school, feedback about student's home environment etc.

Role of the library at Ahmedabad International School

The library is fundamental to the language programme at Ahmedabad International School. The library provides a learning space and an environment to promote love for reading, books as well as a place for research.

The Kindergarten Section of AIS has a library corner in each classroom.

The library at AIS for Grades 1-7, is resourced with fiction, non-fiction, picture books, chapter books, board books, pop-up-books, big books, multicultural books, world classics, autobiographies, multilingual books, reference books, encyclopaedias and media that are accessible to all students and staff. The school sees the library as a valuable resource to promote the international mindedness aspect of the IB programme.

The library is also seen as a place which makes a strong statement that all languages are celebrated and supported. The library has a collection of bilingual books, books in regional languages of India and the school continues to add to this collection.

The library also provides resources for collaborative planning, researching and teacher professional development. Our school board is aware of the need to expand these resources and there are plans to continually add to the same.

The school is in the process of developing an information literacy and media literacy curriculum that will support the language curriculum of the school and help develop research skills in students.

At the PYP level, there is a library period every week. Teachers also conduct classes in the library with prior information. The librarian as well as homeroom teachers conduct book discussions, read aloud, help conduct research and help students browse and pick up books. In addition to using the school library, every class also has a class library.

At the Middle years and the Diploma programme level, teachers and students use the library for conducting classes, working individually or in groups, researching etc.

The library team also conducts various events through the year like author week, poetry month, celebrating an author's birthday etc. to promote reading as a school culture.

The librarian incorporates multilingual books for the students; however most of the books are in English. In addition to our school library, the staff has access to guided reading collections for classroom instruction. A series of books are available to cater to their year level specifications to expand the depth and breadth of language. Teachers collaboratively make decisions on what resources to purchase every year and submit the list to the librarian. This largely depends on the programme of inquiry.

The librarian has been able to put together the books for the Programme of Inquiry for all the year groups.

Books in English, Gujarati, Hindi and books on culture and other resources are also available in the library for the students use.

Pathways of language at Ahmedabad International School

Grades and Programmes	Language of instruction and learning/ Language A	Language B /Language acquisition	Regional Language
PYP (Grade Jr.Kg –Sr.Kg)	English	Mother tongue	
PYP (Grade 1 to Grade 7)	English	Hindi from Grade 1	Gujarati From Grade 2
IGCSE (Grade 8-10)	English	Hindi/ French	
CIE (Grade 11-12)	English	Hindi/French	
IBDP Grade 11 and Grade 12	English	Hindi / French ab initio	*Spanish/Mandarin

* indicates tentative

** The school is considering offering Spanish ab initio and Mandarin ab initio through (Pamoja Education) for students who may be interested in studying these languages in DP.

Process of development of the whole school Language Policy

The current policy has been written and revised in June 2017. The pre-work for this policy started in April 2017. A language policy steering committee was formed which included the academic leadership team (Head of School, Primary School Principal, PYP Coordinator, PYP Coordinator designate, Language heads, Secondary School Principal, DP Coordinator designate and Teacher librarian) and the grade level coordinators (also known as Assistant PYP coordinators in Ahmedabad International School).

At the Primary School, all teachers review the language scope and sequence to ensure that it is as relevant and comprehensive as possible. Teachers then plan collaboratively, during grade level meetings, grade meetings, meetings with the PYP coordinator and with Additional Language and learning support staff.

The following key steps have been undertaken in the development of this policy:

1. Brainstorming with the school community about their beliefs regarding language learning including collecting data via questionnaires and focused discussions.
2. Study of literature related to language and language learning.
3. Construction of language profile of student community by collecting data from parent community.
4. Preparation of 1st draft of the policy.
5. Presentation of draft to the Pedagogical leadership team.
6. Incorporating changes and finalizing the Language Policy.
7. Publishing the language policy to all stakeholders.
8. This Language policy must be read in conjunction with the Language policy for the higher grades of the school.

IB programmes offered by the school are for all students and are committed to the following IB Practices:

- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages (IB Standard A, Practice 7).
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue (IB Standard C3, Practice 7).
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C3, Practice 8).
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s). (IB Standard C4, Practice 1).
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C1, Practice 8).
- The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes (IB Standard B2, Practice 11).

Language Policy Revision

The language policy will be reviewed after a period of 5 years. (Next review: June 2022). The review committee will be led by a member of the academic leadership team and will include librarians, teachers, students and parents of the school.

The review committee will make sure that any revision to the policy is coherent with the beliefs and values of the IBO, the school's philosophy towards language and language teaching, changes in student and community demographics or other circumstances which justify the need for revision.

This document is a work in progress and we intend to further align it with the IB PYP Language scope and sequence document.

Bibliography

- Guidelines for developing a school language policy, *Language and learning in IB programmes, 2011*, ©International Baccalaureate Organization.
- Language Scope and sequence, International Baccalaureate Organization 2003
- Making the PYP Happen, Language scope and sequence, International Baccalaureate Organization 2009
- Guidelines for developing a school language policy, by IBO
- Internet Sources