



## Highlands School language policy

***Highlands School Egypt provides a caring international environment, fostering cultural diversity. Individual students achieve their full academic potential, inspired to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens of the global community.***

Language is the primary tool of communication and learning in an ever-changing world.

At HSE we aim to develop international citizens capable of performing within and among diverse cultures. The development of language and literacy is a mean to achieving this goal. Therefore, the purpose of this Language Policy is to:

- Affirm the development of language and literacy as a high priority at HSE;
- Ensure curriculum and content are made accessible to language learners;
- Ensure the effective delivery of language instruction across the curriculum;
- Provide a standard by which to measure the effective delivery of language and content instruction.

### **Belief Statements**

#### **At HSE we believe:**

- The purpose of language learning at HSE is to facilitate effective communication and the acquisition of academic content and cognitive thinking skills.

Therefore, all language instruction at HSE aims to develop both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. (Jim Cummins, Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters.

- The linguistic and cultural diversity of our students at HSE is both a resource and a strength as we seek to promote the development of language proficiency.

Therefore, we aim to affirm all of our students' cultural identities and promote mutual respect among students for their unique perspectives and linguistic backgrounds.



- While English is the primary language of instruction at HSE, it is our mission to develop students with multicultural perspectives and international-mindedness who have the skills to contribute to an increasingly globalized society.

Therefore, we promote the development of languages other than English.

- The development of literacy and cognitive thinking skills in a student's mother tongue strongly supports the development of language proficiency and thinking skills in additional languages.

Therefore, HSE supports the development of mother tongue at school where possible, and encourages parents to play a vital role in the continued development of their child(s) mother tongue.

- Language is best learned when students are immersed in language-rich environments across the content areas in order to facilitate the development of both socio-cultural and academic proficiency.

Therefore, teachers of language embed language instruction in relevant content and context. Likewise, teachers of content at HSE integrate elements of language into their content instruction. HSE will support teachers to this end and the ELL Department and other qualified personnel will provide resources and professional development to promote language-rich environments.

- Content should be accessible to all students at their individual levels of English proficiency.

Therefore, teachers use appropriate differentiation strategies to meet the needs of their English language learners. AISE will support teachers to this end, and the ELL Department and other qualified personnel will provide resources and ongoing professional development in differentiation strategies for English Language Learners.

- Assessment of content knowledge and higher level thinking for English Language Learners should be authentic and appropriate to each student's individual level of English proficiency.



Therefore, where necessary, teachers will provide alternate means of assessment based on each student's individual level of English proficiency.

### **As a caring and international environment, fostering cultural diversity**

While English is the language of instruction, the language policy allows for students to inquire in the mother tongue and aspires to multilingualism. The school is committed to providing as much diversity of language instruction as possible. The language policy validates the equal status of all languages. It endorses an awareness of the host country's culture and language by teaching Arabic at all acquisition levels throughout Key Stage 3 and offering it as an option for native speakers at IGCSE levels. The mother tongue programme in each section of the school reinforces literacy and cultural identity and reflects the multilingual society we live in. The modern foreign languages programme develops understanding and respect for other cultures.

### **Achieving full academic potential**

The language policy recognises the transfer of cognitive skills from the mother tongue to English and vice versa and the acquisition of additional languages. This process encourages the acquisition of higher order thinking skills and development of multiple perspectives. The policy also recognises the importance of all teachers differentiating instruction for students at different levels of language acquisition.

### **Becoming lifelong learners**

The language policy promotes lifelong learning. Developing language learning skills gives students the capacity to solve problems, think critically and act creatively. Language empowers students to understand, interpret and respond to ideas, attitudes and feelings. Information literacy and technology also provide a gateway to life-long learning and a rich range of language learning opportunities.

### **Glossary of Terms**

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills. The day-to-day functions in a given language; in comparison to Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. Language functions that are unique to specific scenarios, often scholarly in nature.

English Language Learner. Any student for whom English is not a mother tongue; requiring varying degrees of language support.



Mother Tongue. Typically, the first language a child speaks and understands, and that is spoken at home. This language also forms one's socio-cultural identity, how they identify themselves in the world around them.

## **Language Specific Guidelines**

### **1. English**

English is the primary language of instruction at HSE. We recognize that language instruction is the responsibility of all English-speaking faculty and staff in the school setting. Through our teaching, English becomes contextualized, purposeful, and relevant. Our focus on English helps our students to become better communicators within a diverse and changing world.

### **2. English Language Learners**

All students are required to practice English in the classroom and are encouraged to do so in recreational and organized activities during and after the school day. For students identified as needing English language support, referred to as English Language Learners (ELL), specialist teachers are hired to work with them in a program that provides support for their successful participation in mainstream classes.

### **Educational Approach**

The English Language Learners (ELL) program at HSE supports non-native English speakers as they acquire and refine the language skills necessary for academic success. We provide our students with supported inclusion in the content areas as well as content - based language instruction in sheltered ELL classes. ELL specialists and mainstream teachers work together to ensure that students develop the language and understand the content of the classroom, as well as participate in the classroom activities.

### **3. Arabic/Arabic as a Foreign Language**

Arabic and Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) are offered starting in Pre-K. Ministry of Education requirements, citizenship and student screening are factors in determining if a student will take Arabic or AFL classes. The Arabic program at AISE from grade one to twelve conforms to the Ministry of Education requirements. AFL classes are offered for students with no previous Arabic or little previous Arabic language background. In grades eleven/twelve, students may take Arabic in the International Baccalaureate program at the Ab initio, Language B and Language A level classes. Placement tests have been developed to help guide placement in



IB Arabic courses. The IB Arabic A program demands the use of classical and Modern Standard Arabic in oral and written communication, including extensive literary analysis.

To the extent possible, the Ministry of Education Arabic curriculum will be aligned with the HSE English and social studies curricula so that common topics and issues are reinforced in both languages. Likewise, Arabic, English and Social Studies teachers will collaborate to implement common approaches to teaching topics, themes and concepts that are included in both programs.

#### **4. Modern Foreign Languages**

Modern Foreign Languages are formally introduced when a child begins middle school, where they have the option to study French or German.

In high school, the study of French or German continues with both beginner and intermediate courses.

Students may enroll in French or German courses whether they are following an IB track or not.

### **Role of Stakeholders**

#### **Role of School Director**

- Use English as the primary language of communication with all staff.
- Ensure that policies and procedures regarding language acquisition are developed, implemented, and regularly reviewed.
- Provide funding, facilities, leadership, and resources for the successful implementation of the Language

#### **Policy.**

- Hold administrators accountable for effectively implementing the Language Policy.
- Attract and retain highly qualified and experienced administrators and teachers.
- Ensure the planning, delivery, and evaluation of effective professional development meets the unique requirements of the HSE faculty in relation to the Language Policy.
- Communicate with parents regarding the school's language program.



### **Role of Administrators**

- Use English as the primary language of communication with all staff.
- Provide academic leadership for the school.
- Share responsibility for oversight, implementation and revision of the Language Policy and curriculum efforts.
- Support teachers in their delivery of instruction.
- Provide a variety of professional development opportunities to better enable teachers to be effective instructors of students with a range of language proficiencies.
- Promote a professional development model that enables collaboration concerning curriculum, instructional techniques, assessments and student progress.
- Observe teachers and provide constructive feed-forward, materials, planning time, and staff development opportunities.
- Promote bilingual communication with parents concerning student language development and provide translators when needed.
- Promote a co-curricular program that encourages the use and development of English.
- Communicate with parents regarding the school's language program.

### **Role of ELL Specialists**

- Use English as the primary language of communication.
- Work with administrators and faculty to enhance the language program across the curriculum.
- Support professional development in the practices of language across the curriculum and provide training sessions for faculty and parents.
- Nurture the articulation of thematically integrated, language program curricula.
- Promote effective language teaching and assessment practices.
- Communicate with parents regarding language issues and the school's language program.



- Represent the school's language program to other schools and educational organizations through various means such as online guides or ELL program manual.

### **Role of Faculty**

- Use English as the primary language of instruction (except for Modern Languages and Arabic) and social interaction in and out of the classroom.
- Acquire a professional knowledge base in second language acquisition processes, students' developmental language behaviors, and familiarity with students' language learning cognitive styles.
- Integrate language instruction with content instruction.
- Make high-level academic content instructionally comprehensible using learning strategies.
- Create classroom environments that provide opportunities for students to listen, read, speak and write through interactive activities in the content areas.
- Support and encourage language self-assessment.
- Use a variety of balanced assessment strategies to give students ongoing feedback on their linguistic and cognitive development.
- Communicate with parents regarding language issues and the school's language program.
- Hold high linguistic and academic expectations for all students.
- Build a strong home-school partnership using various means of communication.
- Emulate respect and tolerance for the languages and cultures of all while encouraging development of target language.
- Work collaboratively to develop culturally inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies.
- Integrate appropriate technology that enhances language development.
- Select resources that are linguistically accessible and culturally inclusive.
- Teach language skills for social interaction.

### **Role of Office Staff**



- Use English as the primary language of communication.
- Facilitate communication with parents, visitors, and support staff.
- Facilitate communication with students who are beginning English speakers.

#### Role of Librarians/Tech Center Staff

- Provide a variety of materials in all mother tongues within the school, especially Arabic, French and German.
- Support the curriculum of all languages taught in the school through the acquisition of materials.

#### Role of Parents

- Have a positive attitude towards both English and the mother tongue.
- Promote the advantages of learning other languages.
- Maintain mother tongue literacy skills in the home.
- Encourage and support their children's additional language acquisition.
- Communicate with other parents to exchange ideas and reduce isolation.
- Support the expectation that students use English as the language of learning and social interaction on campus.
- Supply multilingual materials in the home.
- Be knowledgeable about language-immersion in order to support the schools' efforts.
- Be prepared to make the long-term commitments that success requires.
- Have realistic expectations of their children and AISE.

#### Role of Students

- Acquire information by listening to oral presentations, interpreting print and graphic material, and observing and recording practical experiences.
- Convey information by telling stories and explaining ideas.
- Think logically through inference, hypothesis, analysis, prediction and evaluation.
- Accomplish practical tasks either individually or by collaborating in small groups.





- Make decisions by identifying alternative, evaluating evident and determining appropriate actions.
- Demonstrate respect for others by using English in social situations as well as in class.
- Develop fluency in English for all forms of communication.
- Have a positive attitude toward English, the mother tongue, and any modern language being learned.