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INTERNATIONAL SECTION
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KCCIS Language Policy 2023-24

A. Introduction and Purpose:

The purpose of the language policy is to:

- a) Communicate to all stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, administrators, etc) within the KCCIS IB Community our beliefs about language development
- b) Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by clearly defining language teaching and learning offered within the KCCIS IB Community
- c) Establish clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders

The policy draws its authority from a) **Guidelines for developing a school language policy (IBO, 2008)**; b) **Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy (IBO, 2012)**; c) **Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes (IBO, 2008)**; d) **Language and Learning in IB programmes (IBO, 2014)**; e) **Developing academic literacy in IB programmes (IBO, 2014)**. The language policy was created collaboratively with students, teachers, parents, and administrators by setting up the language policy steering committee.

B. Language Philosophy

1. Language is a major means of communicating, is fundamental to learning and is developed across curriculum areas therefore, all teachers, regardless of subject disciplines, are language teachers.
2. Language acquisition is a dynamic, lifelong process that permeates all learning, is a key factor in intellectual growth, and promotes the development of personal and international understanding and development.
3. All teachers, regardless of subject discipline, are teachers of language, and all parents make contributions to the language learning process.
4. Learning Languages, learning about language and learning through language is the most effective approach to teaching students. Language learning meets and is relevant to student needs within our environment.
4. Effective teaching practice arises from a constructivist approach to learning, allowing students to build on prior knowledge and construct personal meaning.

5. Through meaningful interactions, we communicate with and understand others, the world and ourselves to develop intercultural awareness.
6. The school community is a resource to foster language learning. Accepting a second language enriches personal growth, enhances first language development and promotes internationalism. The development of the mother tongue is crucial for maintaining cultural identity.

C. Overview of the KCCIS Languages (KS3 and GCSE / IGCSE)

KCCIS opened its secondary doors in September 2002 to offer students a seamless "through-train education" from 3 to 18. The school prides itself on its unique position in Hong Kong, where great emphasis is placed on enabling our students to become fluent speakers of both English and Mandarin. English is the language of instruction and the primary language of communication. It is our goal that all students are proficient in English.

At Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9), English classes consist of five 45-minute periods per week, and Mandarin classes consist of five 45-minute periods per week. This distinction is in line with the requirements expressed by our parent population. Instructing traditional Chinese characters is also a feature of parental requests maintained inside the Mandarin classroom and in the wider school. Students are placed in different classes (sets) according to their language proficiency. The sets are not static. This allows for mobility between sets. At present, each year group has one set (smaller class) that provides specialist English as a Second Language (ESL)/Mandarin as a Second Language (MSL) instruction, differentiated resources and a smaller student-teacher ratio.

At Key Stage 4 (GCSE/IGCSE), the English and Mandarin departments have six 45-minute periods per week. GCSE / IGCSE examinations may be considered part of a pupil's preparation for the IB Diploma. Students are placed in different classes according to their language proficiency. Each year group has one set that provides specialist ESL/MSL instruction, differentiated resources, and a smaller student-teacher ratio.

D. Language Profile (IB DP)

Most of our IB students have attended the school since primary and possibly inception levels (77%). The language profile of our IB DP student population breaks down in the following ways*:

- Around 4.6 % of our IB DP students are native English speakers with an English-only background (both parents) at home.

- Most of our students are bilingual, having acquired English and another language, predominantly Cantonese (51.2%) and Mandarin Chinese (32.6%) proficient since birth. Other students have French (2.3%), Japanese (2.3%), and Polish (2.3 %) as their mother tongues.
- Most of our students (83.7%) have attained near full written fluency in another language (e.g. Cantonese and Mandarin) other than English. Around 9.3 % of students have also expressed a limited level of written fluency in an additional language other than the aforementioned ones.e.g.eg: French, Japanese)
- Around 20% of the student population are bilingual with parents of limited English proficiency (a translator is needed during Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences/Meetings).
- Some of our students have studied a language other than English – such as Hindi (2%) – prior to their admission to our programme.

**This data was collected by sending out a language survey to all the IB students in January 2023. The language profile was updated on March 2023.*

E. Rules and Expectations about language use around the school

Many languages can be heard in use around the school, but when students are studying in class, two languages are predominant, largely due to our assessment needs.

All mother tongues are encouraged to be spoken throughout the school, but students and staff must remember that some people could be excluded from conversations and discussions because they lack proficiency in a particular language. English is recognised as the language of inclusion and promoted as the lingua franca outside of the classroom.

F. Mother Tongue (first or best language) Support

The school understands that many issues must be considered when defining mother tongue, first language, second language, additional languages and so on. KCCIS defines mother tongue as a language which is spoken predominantly by a person, one which has been spoken from birth or an early age, or a language which defines sociolinguistic identity.

KCCIS recognises the importance of a student's mother tongue for the following reasons:

- a) Preserve a student's native language and culture to language diversity within our IB Diploma/Course programme and thus developing a sense of global awareness and international-mindedness in our KCCIS community

- b) Preserve a student's native language and culture to allow a deeper understanding of the first language and to broaden their understanding of other people and cultures in an international context.

In KCCIS, we offer English A: Language and Literature and Chinese A: Language and Literature (SL or HL classes) in Group 1. Additionally, we offer Language A: Literature (School-supported self-taught) for students whose first language is NOT English or Mandarin Chinese. Every Diploma student must take one subject from Group 1 and at least one subject from Group 2 (Alternative, 2 Group 1 subjects). Choice of language level (SL or HL) normally depends upon the student's preference, parent's preference, pre-IB DP language programme, language proficiency and literacy and the student's overall IB DP programme.

For students who have limited English proficiency, individual tutoring and curriculum differentiation (one of the ATLs) are provided in our classes. Students are encouraged to establish connections between the familiar first language and the language of instruction. Teachers use various strategies (e.g. group work, demonstrations) and visual aids (e.g. graphic organisers) to assist with language learning.

G. Second Language Acquisition Support

The school requires that students who have completed the Year 11 GCSE / IGCSE programme attain a first language qualification (normally English or Chinese) and a second (normally English or Chinese) or two first language qualifications. Students who do not have GCSE / IGCSE qualifications or their equivalents from other schools need to show an equivalent level of competence in English and one other language (if that language is to be studied as Language B in the Diploma).

In KCCIS, we offer English B and Chinese - Mandarin (SL or HL classes) in Group 2. On a case-by-case basis, we offer an option for students to study another language (e.g. Japanese B) or a completely new language as beginners (e.g. Japanese ab initio) in Group 2.

In terms of instruction, individual tutoring and curriculum differentiation (one of the ATLs) are provided in our classes. Students are encouraged to find ways to use the language with their families and communities. Teachers use various strategies (e.g. group work, demonstrations) and visual aids (e.g. graphic organisers) to assist with language learning. Students are encouraged to view language acquisition as another way of expressing the

ideas they are learning in different situations and contexts (in school and life) and for various purposes. Students develop an awareness and appreciation of the country's culture in which the language is spoken.

H. Support for learning the host country or regional language and culture

The school uses local community resources to enhance language learning (e.g. guest speakers, and community events). CAS opportunities within the local community allow students to practise Chinese (Cantonese).

I. Linguistic Cultural Opportunities

The school offers a wide range of opportunities to enable students to gain exposure to various languages and cultures through music, assemblies, and ECAs. The school organises various language events (e.g. Battle of the Books). Our students regularly entered several Hong Kong competitions and language festivals, including the Hong Kong English and Chinese Speech and Drama Festivals, the Hong Kong Children's Literary Story Writing Competition, and the SCMP Short Story Writing Competition. The students' results are celebrated. The school also welcomes visits from schools/universities worldwide, and each year our Discovery Week trips widen our students' contacts with other countries, languages and cultures.

J. Beliefs held about language teaching and Learning

Continuous classroom instruction has a fundamental and irreplaceable role in helping students achieve learning outcomes. Our language curricula are challenging but accessible to students of different ability levels. Our effective language instruction involves:

- Providing learning activities which are relevant to student's experiences and which meet the needs of all students
- helping students acquire an accurate understanding of formal language structures through listening, speaking, reading and writing
- immersing students in situational learning roles and contextualising language items to facilitate language learning and cultural understanding
- demonstrating how language works in real-life situations and promoting the development of communicative competence
- using a wide variety of reading materials and genres
- balancing effective learning with opportunities for risk-taking and reflection
- language teachers are role models of language learning and are ready to share their learning experiences

- language teachers are keeping abreast of developments in language pedagogy and effectively integrating traditional and modern teaching approaches.

Language learning enhances students' understanding of what it is to be human and how interpretations and thoughts shape how we view and experience the world. It provides the opportunity for enjoyment, creativity and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of languages, cultures and literature. It develops students' awareness of the role of languages in relation to other areas of knowledge.

The school will reinforce the values of individual and collective responsibility as commonly held in a democratic society. These values include honesty, reliability, respect and tolerance towards others, respect for the law, and fairness. Teaching principles are based on the premise that the individual student is at the centre of all teaching and learning and that the curricula for all students will be of the highest quality. Various factors, such as classroom interaction patterns, access to resources, and the expectations, attitudes, and behaviour of family, teachers, and peers, will influence students' learning opportunities at schools.

We provide all students with equal educational opportunities. We encourage positive attitudes towards learning, giving praise and constructive criticism where appropriate to improve learning outcomes.

We will ensure equity of opportunity, address special needs, respect the uniqueness of each student, and prepare students to compete successfully in a rapidly changing world.

K. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the educational experience at KCCIS as it both drives the style of curriculum delivery and evaluates learning outcomes. Assessment allows for evidence of growth to be produced and should be ongoing. Students should be familiar with assessment criteria and be able to describe their progress and areas for improvement. The assessment also allows for student work to be celebrated and shared with parents, while evidence of best practices can be used to inform future learning output. It is recognised across the school that language ability should not hinder student outcomes in contexts that are content-based or are assessing processes. In Language B, for example, a variety of oral and written examinations are used to assess students' skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

L. Ideas for future considerations in the language policy

- The school librarian supplements classroom teaching and learning with resources on differentiation, research skills, argument, learning styles, formatting styles and provides resources written in English, Chinese and other languages at different levels.
- The school librarian conducts workshops for teachers, students and parents in the research and writing processes.
- Review the process of identifying the language needs of each student
- Consider other models for supporting the needs of students learning in a language other than their mother tongue
- Widen the support for learning the host country or regional language and culture (i.e. Chinese)
- Invite experts qualified in the linguistics field to provide professional development opportunities (e.g. Teaching ESL students in the mainstream classrooms) for teachers
- Parents in general, support our language teaching, and are satisfied with their children's ability to speak our two main languages, namely Mandarin and English, and to read and to write them as well. However, the school needs to improve communication with parents who do not speak English (e.g. issue parent letters in Chinese in addition to English, seek out language translators using parental support during Parent-Teacher-Student conferences)
- Standardise the school's Spelling and bibliographic styles
- Successful implementation of language policy in the classrooms.

M. IB Publications

IBO. Guidelines for developing a school language policy, April 2008

IBO. Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language, 2012

IBO. Language and learning in IB programmes, September 2014

IBO. Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes, April 2008

IBO. Developing academic literacy in IB programmes, August 2014

M. Policy Review:

The Language Policy shall be regularly reviewed using the IBO's "Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy" (IBO, 2012) to assess whether it is working in a satisfactory manner. Reviews shall take place at least once every two years, but may occur more frequently as needed. Input shall be sought from all interested parties and amendments shall be made as necessary.

N. Communicating the Language Policy

The Language Policy shall be available to the school community. It shall be posted on the KCCIS website and updated as revised.

Prepared by C. Tse, O. Bou, L. Chi , Ms. Tong (librarian), Language Policy Committee August 2018

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This policy is subject to review by C. Tse, L. Chi, K. Sit, and Language Policy Committee in September 2024

