

# **KCCIS Language Policy 2019-2021**

## **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 of 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, 2011); e) Developing academic literacy in IB programmes (IBO, 2014). The language policy was created in collaboration 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. The acquisition of language is a dynamic, lifelong process that permeates all learning and is a key factor in intellectual growth and promotes the development of personal and international understanding.
3. All teachers, regardless of subject disciplines, are teachers of language, and all parents make contributions to the language learning process.
4. Learning Language, 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. The acceptance of a second language enriches personal growth, enhances first language development and promotes internationalism. The development of mother tongue is crucial for maintaining cultural identity.

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

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

At KS3 (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 requirements expressed by our parent population. The instruction of traditional Chinese characters is also a feature of parental requests that has been maintained both inside the Mandarin classroom context and in the wider school as a whole. 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 smaller student teacher ratio.

At KS4 (GCSE/IGCSE), both the English and Mandarin departments have six 45-minute periods per week. This balance has been made to reflect the importance of languages at IB Diploma level. GCSE / IGCSE examinations may be considered as part of a pupil's preparation for IB Diploma. Students are placed in different classes (sets) according to their language proficiency. At present, each year group has one set (smaller class) that provides specialist ESL/MSL instruction, differentiated resources and smaller student teacher ratio.

### **D. Language Profile (IB DP)**

The majority of our IB students has 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 8.5 % of our IB DP students are native English speakers with an English-only background (both parents) at home.
- The majority of our students are bilingual, having acquired both English and another language, predominantly Cantonese (59.5%) and Mandarin Chinese (42.5%) proficient since birth. Other students have French (2%), Japanese (2%), and Tagalog (4%) as their mother tongues.

- A large majority of our students (85%) have attained near to full written fluency in an additional language (e.g. Chinese, Tagalog and French) other than English. Around 40% of students have also expressed a limited level of written fluency in an additional language other than the aforementioned ones. (eg: French, Japanese, Korean )
- 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 French, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Japanese, Tagalog – such as Spanish (2%) and 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 2018. The language profile was updated on February 2018.*

### **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 have to remember that some people could be excluded from conversations and discussions because of the lack of 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 Support**

The school understands that there are many issues to be taken into account 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, or 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 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 a variety of 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 Year 11 GCSE / IGCSE programme attained a first language qualification (normally English or Chinese) and a second language qualification (normally English or Chinese) or two first language qualifications.

For students who do not have GCSE / IGCSE qualifications or their equivalents from other schools, they need to show equivalent level of competence in English, and one other language (if that language is to be studied at 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 to study 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 out ways to use the language with their families and in the communities. Teachers use a variety of 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 their ideas they are learning in a wide range of situations and contexts (in school and in life) and for different purposes. Students develop an awareness and appreciation of the culture of the country 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, 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 a range of language events (e.g. Battle of the Books). Our students are regularly entered for 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 to play in helping students achieve learning outcomes. Our language curricula are challenging, but accessible to students of different levels of ability. Our effective language instruction involves:

- providing learning activities which are relevant to students' 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 contextualizing 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 being role models of language learning and ready to share their learning experiences
- language teachers keeping abreast of developments in the field of 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 the way we view and experience the world. It provides the opportunity for enjoyment, creativity and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of languages, cultures and literature, and 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 premises 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. Students' learning opportunities at school will be influenced by a range of factors, such as classroom interaction patterns, access to resources, and the expectations, attitudes, and behaviour of family, teachers, and peers.

We provide all students with equal educational opportunities. We encourage positive attitudes towards learning, providing praises and constructive criticism where appropriate, aimed at improving learning outcomes.

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

### **J. 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 own progress and areas for improvement. Assessment also allows for student work to be celebrated and shared with parents, while evidence of best practice can be used to inform future learning output. It is recognized 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.

## **K. Ideas for future considerations in the language policy**

- The school librarian supplements the classroom teaching and learning with resources on differentiation, research skills, argument, learning styles, formatting styles and providing 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 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 the communication with parents who do not speak English (e.g. issue parent letter 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
- The IB Language Policy Steering Committee needs to meet more regularly to reflect and evaluate the language provision to our IB Diploma cohort.
- Successful implementation of language policy in the classrooms.

### **L. 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 2011*

*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 2 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 it is revised.

*Drafted by J. Daniel, D. Wilson, L. Chi and Mrs. Tai (a parent representative) in 2012*

*Revised by L. Chi and D. Wilson 2015*

*Revised by C. Tse, O. Bou, L. Chi, the librarian, Language Policy Committee August 2018*

*Revised by C. Tse, O. Bou, L. Chi, the librarian, Language Policy Committee August 2019*

*Open for further discussions September-October 2019*

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*This policy is subject to review by Mr. Fong / C. Tse / B. Bou / L. Chi / Language Policy Committee in September 2021*