



# Language Policy



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education



# Ahmedabad International School

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## **IB mission statement**

The International Baccalaureate 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 organization 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.

## **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.

## **AIS vision statement**

We believe in "SWAYAM". The initiation of the self to seek and celebrate knowledge, raise our own bars of excellence, become lifelong learners and attain the pinnacle of success.

To achieve this we provide a stress-free happy learning environment to become a rational and responsible citizens of tomorrow.

We groom the student to have a resilient mind, help discover the treasure within, scale new global heights and excel in life. Train them to dream and develop the immense potential, on the solid foundation of knowledge, skills and values of life, to adjust and adapt to learning that is dynamic and vibrant. We encourage students to reach the Gateway of the Global platform to make dreams come true.

## Following IB standards were kept in mind while drafting the policy

### Standard and Practices (2020)

#### Culture(03)

4. The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language

4.1 The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines.

4.2 The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning.

4.3 The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development.

4.4 The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context.

#### PHILOSOPHY

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

Students coming to AIS are multilinguistic. While entering grade 1, they can speak English, Hindi and Gujarati. When they are inducted in the school they learn and familiarize themselves by reading and writing these languages as well. The languages are developed according to the ability and age level specifications. Learning Gujarati and Hindi is also mandatory as per the requirement of the state and national language policy. As such the school offers admission to children from a different linguistic background too. Hence students who are not proficient in English are provided support in the language whenever it is needed. The school's philosophy aims at understanding and respecting the languages and cultures of other communities and offering students the study of a foreign language in the curriculum too at higher grades (starting from grade 7).

Language is the primary means of communication and is fundamental to lifelong learning. Language enables students to become inquirers as well as develop critical thinking and social skills. Language acquisition is a life-long process; therefore, all teachers are considered language teachers adapting materials and teaching styles taking into account the needs of all students. Language learning involves learning language, learning through language and learning about languages. AIS is committed to

multilingualism as a means of affirming cultural identity and developing international-mindedness.

At AIS, all the communication is in English as it is the language of instruction for the curriculum in school. The overriding aim of the English language curriculum is to enable all students to develop an ability to use and understand the English language. Since language is spoken and written, this means the fullest possible development of capabilities in speaking, listening, reading and writing skills during the formative years of the child.

It also recognises the importance of the national language of the country and thus promotes the acquisition of Hindi, compulsorily in Primary and optionally in Middle and Senior School. Gujarati as the state language is also a part of the curriculum. French is introduced in grade 7 and offered as an optional subject in place of Hindi.

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. Proficiency in the English language helps the students to become global citizen.

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

### **Language at Ahmedabad International School**

English is a communicating language at Ahmedabad International School and is taught as the primary or the first language. 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 through these common languages.

### **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

Most of the students at AIS are local except a few who are coming from different regions of India/countries. So the cultural and linguistic background of the majority of the student population is similar.. The economical background of the students ranges from middle class to affluent families. The parent community is a mix of entrepreneurs and 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 ( around 92% - 95%) have Gujarati or Hindi as their mother tongue/ native language and also speak in English fluently. .
2. A small percentage of students (8% - 5%) have regional languages (other than Gujarati) 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.

### Overall expectations in language:

Acknowledging that learning language is a developmental process, the Language Scope and Sequence 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.

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 PYP. It is written by the teachers collaboratively. 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.

Students pursuing the Diploma Programme from within the School are expected to have English as their best language as a result of sustained instruction in English over the primary years and the middle years. Thus, English is established as their preferred language, Language A, through which they access the curriculum.

## Grades - 1,2 and 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 outdoor area and book corners to develop these skills. The learning goals for Communication, Language and Literacy 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 to make up their own,
- speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control showing an awareness of the listener; interact with others,
- negotiating plans and activities,
- 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 such as main 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
- hold a pencil correctly and to use it effectively to form recognizable letters
- 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 and 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 and 7

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

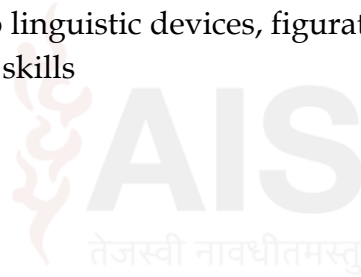
- speak with confidence in a wide range of contexts, adapting their speech as appropriate
- listen attentively; understand and respond appropriately to others
- identify key features of language used for a specific purpose e.g. to persuade or instruct
- to work as a member of a group qualifying or justifying 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

## Grade 8, 9 and 10

By the end of Grade 10, most children will be able to:

- develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when speaking and writing
- learn how to use a wide range of vocabulary, and the correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
- develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed
- read a wide range of texts, fluently and with good understanding, enjoying and appreciating a variety of language
- read critically, and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write accurately and effectively, using Standard English appropriately
- work with information and with ideas in language by developing skills of evaluation, analysis, use and inference
- listen to, understand, and use spoken language effectively
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology and linguistic conventions.

- describe and reflect on experience, and express what is thought, felt and imagined
- organise and convey facts, ideas and opinions effectively
- understand and convey complex ideas
- communicate with clarity, focus and purpose
- communicate appropriately for the context
- engage appropriately in conversation.
- express what is thought, felt and imagined
- organise and convey facts, ideas and opinions effectively
- demonstrate a varied vocabulary appropriate to the context
- demonstrate an effective use of sentence structures
- demonstrate an understanding of audience, purpose and form
- demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- demonstrate understanding of written texts, and of the words and phrases within them
- summarise and use material for a specific context
- develop, analyse and evaluate facts, ideas and opinions
- demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve their effects and influence readers
- select appropriate information for specific purposes
- recognise and respond to linguistic devices, figurative language and imagery
- note taking and research skills





## **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 the 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 an additional language from the age of 5 (Grade 1) and Gujarati (the regional language of the state Gujarat) as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language from the age of 6(Grade 2).

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.

The school has developed a language scope and sequence document for the primary years. This document must be read in conjunction with the Language policy for the Higher grades of the school.

## **Language in the Diploma Programme**

Students entering in the Diploma Programme from AIS are expected to have English as their best language as a result of sustained instruction in English over the primary years and the high school. Thus, English is established as their preferred language, Language A, through which they access the curriculum.

### **Group 1:**

AIS has mandated English language and literature (HL and SL) as Group 1 choice. The choice between HL and SL for each student will be made on the basis of candidate's preference and school recommendation.

Hindi A is offered but there are no takers as Hindi is our host country language.

### **Group 2:**

Hindi being the host country language is strongly recommended to students as a group 2 course selection in Grades 11 and 12. The school recommends that all students who have had 4-5 years of experience in learning Hindi study HL / SL as per the student profile.

French ab initio/B SL is the other subject the school offers as a Group 2 subject choice.

The school has considered offering Spanish ab initio and Mandarin ab initio through Pamoja Education for students who may be interested in studying these languages.

## **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 students 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.

### **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:

- Are first generation learners of English
- Have zero support for English language learning at home
- Come from schools where the language of instruction is not English.
- 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 a 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 the student's home environment etc.

As of now, the (LSP) programme is only at the PYP level.

### **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. *नावधीतमस्तु*

The library 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 throughout 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 Gujarati, Hindi and books on culture are ordered from time to time as per the requirement. DVD’s CD’s and other resources are also ordered for the next academic year.

### Pathways of language at Ahmedabad International School

Grades and Programmes	Language of instruction and learning/ Language A	Language B/Language acquisition	State Language
Toddler’s Den (Pre K to K2)*	English	Hindi - Used as scaffolding language	Gujarati - Used as scaffolding language
PYP (Grade 1 to Grade 5)*	English	Hindi from Grade 1	Gujarati From Grade 2 onwards
Lower Cambridge (Grade 6 and 7)	English	Hindi/French * (French elective is introduced in Grade 7)	
IGCSE (Grade 8-10)	English	Hindi/ French	-

GSEB (Grade 11-12)	English	Hindi/Sanskrit	Gujarati
CIE (Grade 11-12)	English	Hindi/French	-
IBDP Grade 11 and Grade 12	English	Hindi / French B/ French ab initio	-

\* indicates tentative: The school is considering offering Spanish ab initio

### Process of development of the whole school Language Policy

The current policy has been written and revised in June 2018. The pre-work for this policy started in April 2018. A language policy steering committee was formed which included the academic leadership team (Head of School, PYP Coordinator, Language heads, DP Coordinator and Teacher librarian) and the grade level coordinators.

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 profiles of the student community by collecting data from the parent community.
4. Preparation of 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the policy.
5. Presentation of draft to the Academic leadership team.
6. Incorporating changes and finalizing the Language Policy.
7. Publishing the language policy to all stakeholders.

### Language Policy Revision

The language policy will be reviewed after a period of 5 years. The review committee will be led by a member of the academic leadership team and will include librarians, teachers, students and inputs from the 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

### Works Consulted

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