

Language

This policy should be considered alongside and in conjunction with Halcyon's Curriculum & Assessment Policy and Admissions Policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

This policy is a working document developed by teachers and the school's administration. The policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of The International Baccalaureate. This document outlines the school's language and academic goals and defines the programme designed to help our students attain these goals. This policy will be revised as the programmes develop and expand.

This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at the school, through authentic contexts in a culturally-rich and diverse environment. This policy is a mission-driven statement to which the entire school community is asked to commit.

Objectives

The school aims to nurture an appreciation of the richness and diversity of language. Language does much more than promote cognitive growth; it is crucial for developing and maintaining personal cultural identity and the development of international-mindedness. The acquisition of more than one language and maintenance of the mother tongue enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international understanding. **As language, by its very nature, is integrated into all areas of the curriculum, every teacher within the school is considered a language teacher.**

Halcyon aims to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in at least two languages. The school strives to address the particular challenges of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue. The school also endeavours to integrate students' cultural and linguistic heritage throughout the curriculum.

II. LANGUAGE PROFILE AND ADMISSIONS POLICIES

A. The School Language Profile

English is the language of instruction at Halcyon. As in other international schools, many students will be deemed English Language Learners (ELL) and many different mother tongues will be represented in the community. All of Halcyon's administrative and teaching staff speak English and ideally are also competent communicators in at least one other language.

B. Admissions Policies

As part of the admissions process, applicants are required to provide information about their proficiency in English, their mother tongue, and any other languages. Acceptable evidence of English language ability might include a portfolio of school work, video recordings of an oral presentation in an academic setting, an extended piece of academic writing, and results from a standardised English language acquisition test. Any application for a student who indicates that English is not their mother tongue and whose fluency/proficiency is in question will be reviewed by the Director, and possibly an EAL specialist as part of the admissions process.

Furthermore, the student may be asked to complete an English language assessment test.

It is expected that in order to start the IB Middle Years or Diploma Programmes at Halcyon, students will already have an appropriate level of English.

III. LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW

A. English and English as an Additional Language (EAL)

At Halcyon, all students are required to study English in the IBMYP and IBDP.

ELL students may receive support in the mainstream to further develop their language skills.

B. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

All IBMYP and IBDP students must study an acquired language. The school offers Spanish and Mandarin. In some limited circumstances, French language provision is being offered at an additional cost.

Students are placed in the appropriate language class based on a placement test given at the start of the academic year. Halcyon cannot guarantee that all levels of language instruction can be supported. Teachers utilise online learning and differentiated instruction as much as possible to meet the needs of the various language acquisition levels in each class.

Halcyon requires students to study two languages. In Grade 10, some students may be allowed to opt-out of an acquired language in favour of a mother tongue language. The language profile of individuals and their progression will be considered when advising students on their language placement.

Other modern foreign languages may be arranged through external tutors at an additional cost.

Additional Mother Tongue Languages

The school believes that developing a student's mother tongue can accelerate the rate of English language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, increase self-esteem, and enhance intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

During the IBMYP, mother tongue language classes can fall into two main areas, Category I and Category II.

Category I

Mother tongue support can sometimes be made available for those students who wish to nurture their mother tongue development. This would normally be for up to two lessons per week, would be scheduled outside of the normal timetable, would not be assessed or reported and would be administered directly between the parents and the teacher.

The school will recommend suitably trained teachers through an outside agency.

In some instances, students may need to keep up with their own national curriculum. This may require special arrangements that the school, along with the outside agency, will try their best to organise.

Category II

It is recommended that the students wishing to attain a bilingual IB Diploma undertake mother tongue lessons during their IBMYP years as preparation for the IBDP and it is strongly recommended that such students take a minimum of two lessons per week in Grades 9 and 10. These lessons would be administered directly between the parents and the teacher. These lessons will be assessed according to IBMYP criteria and will be included in termly subject reports if suitably trained and experienced teachers from a pre-approved agency are used.

IB Diploma Programme

Students should take their best language, usually their mother tongue language, as their Language A course. This may take into account the extent of continuous academic engagement the student has had with his/her mother tongue and any identified areas that require learning support. If the student continues on to the IBDP, the school will follow the minimum hours recommended by the IB for courses in Groups 1 and 2 (150 in SL, 240 in HL).

*Approved by Board of Trustees, October 2012. Reviewed 9 August 2013.
Revised 18 June 2014. Revised 5 October 2015.
Approved by Board of Trustees 17 February 2016.*

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the curriculum review cycle, or more regularly in light of any significant changes in statutory requirements and legislation.

References

International Baccalaureate Organization (2011). Language and Learning in IB Programmes.

International Baccalaureate Organization (2008). Learning in a Language Other Than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes.

International Baccalaureate Organization (2011). Towards a Continuum of International Education.

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (2002): Second Language Acquisition and Mother Tongue.