

# Language Policy

## Rationale

Park House English School (PHES) strives to develop global citizens and international understanding by providing curricular and extracurricular programs and activities that encourage participation in multicultural experiences to make the most of the advantages offered by our multicultural school community. PHES consistently has a diverse student enrolment representing over 70 countries. We consider the linguistic and cultural diversity of the school's population to be both a strength and a rich resource in the promotion of language learning amongst students.

## Aims

PHES seeks to enable children to function as international citizens which, in part, entails the ability to function capably and comfortably within and between cultures. Developing the capacity to speak more than one language is an integral part of this preparation and, as a result, the provision of additional language instruction has been made a mandatory requirement up to IGCSE level.

## Procedures

1. English is the primary medium of instruction.
2. English is acquired in addition to students' home languages.
3. Students are proactively encouraged to use English in social interactions although it is recognized that natural cultural affiliations will result in first language use in out-of-class settings.
4. English develops as a process over time through purposeful use in listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks across all curricula areas, extra curricula areas, and social situations. To this end, research recognizes that the acquisition of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills BICS (social and conversational language) usually takes approximately two years to develop. However, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency CALPS (the context-reduced language of the academic classroom) may take between five to seven years to develop.
5. The acquisition of English provides students the opportunity to grow beyond a single cultural community.
6. Literacy in the first language is recognized as an important part in the development of all students' self-esteem and cultural identity and is a key component of successful learning in English.

The language policy is comprehensive and school-wide and includes the twin goals of mastering a high-quality academic curriculum and acquiring English-language proficiency for all students. The policy is fostered chiefly through professional development and an understanding of relevant additional language acquisition research in the context of utilising an additional language to access an all-English curriculum. The further development of the practices and procedures relating to the language policy is an ongoing school priority as information is gathered and practices are implemented. Finally, the language policy helps PHES staff with the delivery of exemplary teaching, learning and assessment. Our integrated curriculum focuses on what we want students to know, what we want students to be able to do, and how we will collect evidence of what students now are able

to do.

Students at PHES experience an enriched, language-immersion education in which English is the primary language of instruction and social interaction. An appropriate level of English-language proficiency in both basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency is the linguistic goal of the curriculum. It is recognized that fluency in English is at least partly dependent upon the amount of time and the variety of situations in which English is used. Therefore, the expectation is that all students, staff, and administration will use English as the primary language of communication, including for the purpose of social interaction, on campus with the recognition that in certain social interactions, students may typically revert to, and make meaning through, their first language. Administrators and staff attend to this goal on two levels: school-wide level and in individual classrooms.

The first level considers the school's culture, policies and practice and includes:

1. School-wide policies.
2. On-campus English language expectations for students, teaching staff, non-academic staff and administration.
3. Home and school partnerships.
4. Curriculum and student assessment.
5. Staff knowledge base and professional development.

The second level involves the following practices in the classroom:

1. Creating a challenging and responsive learning environment for all students.
2. Connecting second language acquisition principles to daily classroom practices.
3. Designing and delivering instruction and assessment around articulated standards of achievement.
4. Reinforcing and supporting the use of English in and out of the classroom as appropriate.
5. Identify the language-related needs of all our students and develop teaching practices which address their needs in a holistic and explicit manner.
6. Developing teachers' awareness of how to accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity and experiences of English as Additional Language (EAL) students.

PHES seeks to develop the elements that will encourage students to be positively engaged in learning an additional language to the mother tongue or first language. Building on the encouragement of a strong foundation in a student's first language, these include the following competencies:

1. *grammatical competence* (referring to knowledge of vocabulary, sound and grammar)
2. *sociolinguistic competence* (knowledge of how to use language appropriately in different contexts)
3. *discourse competence* (linking elements of language together to take part in certain kinds of discourse, for example, conversation or debate)
4. *strategic competence* (knowledge of appropriate strategies to use if communication breaks down and knowledge of how to learn language)
5. *cultural competence* (includes sensitivity toward attitudes, norms, behaviours and cultures in which the other language is spoken).

## Evaluation

1. We conduct ongoing assessment of students' academic and language accomplishments and needs.

2. We collect representative samples of students' work to document linguistic and academic growth in language.
3. We communicate clearly with parents regarding students' accomplishments and needs as they progress through year levels.
4. We assess each student's progression in reading, writing and oral language to make sure that developmental linguistic progress is being made.
5. We assess each student's academic progression using multiple forms of data collection (i.e. tests, student work, projects, portfolios, collaborative examination).

## Appendices

### *Arabic Language:*

As the National Language of Qatar, Arabic clearly plays a vital role within the country. Under guidance from the MoE those students with Arabic as a first language are mandated to be taught the language from Year 1

### *Modern Foreign Languages:*

In the Primary School, both French and Spanish are taught from Year 1 through to Year 6 for students who are not mandated to learn Arabic. Pupils are then able to make a choice of which language they would like to continue with from Year 7 through to Year 11. Any native speakers of each language must opt for the opposite language.

Language instruction educates students to become linguistically equipped and culturally aware. Through their modern foreign language learning, students gain knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the different cultures where French and Spanish are spoken. By realizing that there are multiple ways of viewing the world, students would be able to communicate in multilingual communities in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways.

Students are required through our curriculum to continue their studies of French or Spanish (if not mandated to learn Arabic as per Ministry requirements) to IGCSE level which is examined at the end of year 11.