



THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF JEDDAH

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BISJ LANGUAGE POLICY

Language Philosophy

The IB is committed through its access agenda to reach students from a variety of cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that will ensure the IB's values and aims in relation to access and multilingualism are reflected in the organization's activities. (IBO)

Diversity of Language Needs

In the British International School of Jeddah, there are students from over 60 countries. There are therefore many students whose first language is not English. While the language of instruction in the school is English, many students have Arabic as their first language. Many students, in addition speak French and there are several other languages spoken by a small number of students (e.g., Urdu, Afrikaans, French, Spanish, Indonesian, etc.).

It is evident that there is a varied range of proficiency in the languages which are studied in Upper School. There are students who are extremely proficient in the spoken language but have very basic reading and writing skills.

English is a second or additional language for the majority of students and as a result all staff complete mandatory 'English as an Additional Language' training when they join the school.

Languages of Teaching and Learning

The language of instruction at BISJ is English. Arabic is compulsory from YR to Year 13. From Year 7 to year 9 (KS3), it is also compulsory for all students study one language, in addition to Arabic, which can be either French or Spanish.

In the IGCSE students must choose to study one of these languages. At IB Diploma Programme level, students have to continue this chosen language of study in Group 2. In Group 1, English is offered. Students also have the option of studying their mother tongue language on a school-supported self-taught basis.

Languages of Communication

We encourage the use of English within the classroom and in the school community. With the large number of Arabic speakers, however, Arabic is spoken widely in the social setting. Other mother tongue languages are also used in social contexts. As a school, we recognize the importance of having a strong home language which assists in the cognitive development of the students in general.



THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF JEDDAH

Range and Types of Mother Tongues

Many students speak Arabic at home. There are, however, many dialects of the language and so in school, standard Arabic is the language of instruction for written and Arabic literature courses.

Other Language Needs and Legal Requirements

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education requires one period of Arabic to be taught throughout the school. At BISJ, all students in the Secondary Section are timetabled for between one and six periods of Arabic per week. The level depends on the experience and ability of the student. This is either Arabic as a foreign language, Arabic as a second or additional language, or Arabic language and literature for native speakers.

In the Primary School, students study Arabic from YR and have four/five periods a week taught by Arabic specialist teachers. Currently, there are no additional languages taught within the Primary curriculum.

Current Practices

In year 7-9, students have four periods of either French or Spanish. In addition, all students have four periods of Arabic. In years 10-11, IGCSE languages are taught. Some students choose to independently sit the IGCSE certificate in their mother tongue.

The languages offered in the IB DP are as follows.

- English
 - Literature HL/SL
 - Language and literature HL/SL
- Arabic, French, and Spanish
 - Language and literature HL/SL
 - Language B HL/SL
 - Language *ab initio* SL
- any other language
 - Language A Literature SL (school-supported self-taught)

Language instruction is conducted using a variety of methodologies. Each teacher has access to smart boards and so there are many opportunities for interactive instruction. In addition, there are a many opportunities for written, listening, oral and reading activities. The languages departments are very proactive when it comes to the practical application of language and there are many opportunities for students to develop their language skills both within school and on field trips within the community and abroad.



THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF JEDDAH

Choice and Planning of Language Courses

The MFL and Arabic Departments offer languages at all levels and we adhere to the IB guidelines when students make their language choices. Students may not enroll in *ab initio* as our central principle is that students should maintain their language study throughout KS4 and KS5 if they have formally studied the subject at IGCSE in the Secondary School. Currently, students are encouraged to take two courses from Group 1 when they are bilingual. This is not always possible, as many students, while fluent speakers, have never formally studied literature in the particular language.

Rules and Expectations about Language use

The school's mission states that "We provide excellent British-style education with an international perspective, within a safe environment, where individuals feel secure, respected, valued, happy and successful." It is, therefore, the aim of the school to encourage the use of English around the school in the hope that all students find a common language of communication. There are no rules, however, banning the use of mother tongue languages in social settings and we do place value on the students' home language development.

Beliefs about Language Teaching and Learning

In concordance with the IB, we "Recognize that since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication." Moreover, as stated in the IB Learner Profile, as communicators, "We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups."

As a school, we value the importance of language, especially in an international school context. We have over 60 student nationalities in school and, therefore, there is a plethora of languages spoken by the students at home.

Other Related Policies

Literacy Policy

As stated in the BISJ Literacy Policy, we believe that "Teachers in all subject areas are aware of the language demands of their disciplines, and include subject specific language teaching in their programs. As individual subjects make contributions to students' overall literacy development, all subjects will provide opportunities to develop effective oral communication and sustained reading and writing practice inside and outside of classes."

Admissions Policy

In our Admissions Policy we state that, "We also invite application for admission from those who will benefit from our educational provision but whose English may need developing. As part of the screening process, students will be assessed for language competence. Should a need for language support be identified then admission will be granted subject to agreement from parents that the child enters our language support programme and remains in the



THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF JEDDAH

programme until the school is satisfied that the child is able to cope in a mainstream class without that support. This support programme from year 1 onwards is offered at an additional fee.”

Assessment Policy

In our Assessment Policy, we “Recognise that students have different abilities and progress at different rates and results may be used to:

- differentiate work according to students need
- Provide opportunities for students to improve on their previous performance
- provide targets for them to progress in the future.”

Furthermore, “It is our belief that in assessing student learning we ensure that we cater for students of all academic and language abilities. Formative and summative assessments are widely used. In the teaching of languages students are assessed on their ability to communicate and use the language in practical situation.”

Conclusion

It is worth noting that language is our prime method of communication and that all teachers are teachers of language. In order to ensure that we support the importance of language learning, all staff are required to take ESL training course through Optimus within their first two years of starting school.

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