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Cambridge International School

# Language Policy





## **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.





## IB LEARNER'S PROFILE

### **INQUIRERS**

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

### **KNOWLEDGEABLE**

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

### **THINKERS**

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

### **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.

### **PRINCIPLED**

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

### **OPEN-MINDED**

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

### **CARING**

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

### **RISK-TAKERS**

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

### **BALANCED**

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

### **REFLECTIVE**

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.



## Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge Assessment International Education prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

### Cambridge Learner Attributes

**Confident:** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others.

**Responsible:** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others.

**Reflective:** as learners, developing their ability to learn.

**Innovative:** and equipped for new and future challenges.

**Engaged:** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

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## MISSION STATEMENT OF FIRSTSTEPS SCHOOL

FirstSteps School believes in providing a stimulating value-based learning environment based on mutual understanding and respect to develop caring, responsible and lifelong learners. We promote international-mindedness in our school community to nurture global citizens fulfilling our mission **INDIA FOR WORLD.**

- I** Inculcate universal brotherhood and values,
- N** Nurture innocence, uniqueness and creativity,
- D** Develop concern for environment in particular and the Planet Earth in general
- I** Imbibe entrepreneurial skills & international mindedness.
- A** Acquire habit of inquiry.
  
- F** Foster international education system,
- O** Open mind for the development of intellect, self-esteem, self- confidence and critical learning,
- R** Respect one-self and others,
  
- W** Welcome the change and develop it with a positive attitude and vision.
- O** Organise self-discipline
- R** Right environment to develop inquisitiveness for learning and to disseminate learning beyond the classroom.
- L** Learners for life time and leaders of tomorrow.
- D** Develop the virtue of understanding others' perspective.

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## **A. BELIEFS**

FirstSteps School believes that language fulfills three fundamental and compelling human urges- to connect with others, to understand our world and ourselves in it. Language is fundamental to thinking, communicating and learning.

We aim to nurture an appreciation of the richness and diversity of language. Language does much more than promote cognitive growth; it is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability. The acquisition of more than one language and maintenance of the home language enrich personal growth and help facilitate international-mindedness. The school believes that building a caring language community with participation from parents, students, teachers and the wider society will go a long way in developing confident language learners.

While framing and reviewing the language policy, we understood that:

- Our students will come from different language backgrounds and will progress at a different pace.
- Language development is an ongoing process.
- It is the responsibility of all facilitators, parents and students.
- Support for students from different nationalities and home language is required.
- Language should be taught through context and should relate new information to the existing knowledge.
- All our facilitators are language teachers.

## **B. PHILOSOPHY**

The language policy validates equal status for all languages. It endorses an awareness of the host country's culture and language by teaching Hindi (the Official Language of the host country)/English at all acquisition levels throughout the school. The home language programme in each section of our school reinforces literacy and cultural identity and reflects the multilingual society we live in. The modern foreign languages programme develops understanding and respect for other cultures and develops an international-minded disposition.

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## C. LANGUAGE LEARNING AN OVERVIEW

### **Language of Instruction:**

English is the medium of instruction at FirstSteps School and is taught as the primary language. It has priority in the language programme of the school. While English is the language of instruction, the language policy allows for students to inquire in the home language and aspire to multilingualism. The school recognizes that multilingualism is an essential aspect of the typical classroom. Teachers are encouraged to use this in the best way possible without undermining the importance of the development of English as a *lingua franca*\*.

Language is the most significant connecting element across the school curriculum, both within and outside its transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. Language learning is spread across subject areas and through the programme of inquiry. All facilitators at FirstSteps School view themselves as language teachers. English is the primary language taught at all year levels and also the language through which the students access the curriculum in school.

The students identified for additional support at every level are assisted to build their language proficiency as per the Grade level and are provided assistance for all learning strands- listening and speaking, viewing and presenting, reading and writing. The school has a provision of additional English language skill classes from Grade III onwards.

The school views all teachers in the school throughout all programmes as language teachers. It is acknowledged that some teachers are more proficient in their home language 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.

### **Importance of home language**

The language policy recognizes the transfer of cognitive skills from the home language to English and vice versa and the acquisition of additional languages. This process encourages the acquisition of higher-order thinking skills and the development of multiple perspectives. The policy also recognizes the importance of all teachers differentiating instruction for students at different levels of language acquisition.

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## Additional language

In order to promote multilingualism and diversify the experiences of the students, the school promotes additional language learning opportunities. The school offers Hindi as a second language from Pre-Kindergarten onwards. French and Punjabi are offered as optional languages from Grade III onwards. This offers the students an opportunity to be multilingual.

### LANGUAGES OFFERED

SUBJECT	ENGLISH	HINDI	PUNJABI	FRENCH
Kindergarten	√	√		
PYP	√	√	√ (Grade III onwards)	√ (Grade III onwards)
Cambridge Assessment International Education	English as First/ second Language (Grades VI to A-Level)	√ (Grades VI to X)	√ (Grade VI to VIII)	√ (Grades VI to VII)

### D. OBJECTIVES

- We aim to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in at least two languages.
- Developing language learning skills gives students the capacity to solve problems, think critically and act creatively.
- Language that empowers students to understand, interpret and respond to ideas, attitudes and feelings.
- Information literacy and technology also provide a gateway to life-long learning and a rich range of language learning opportunities.
- Engage learners in activities that would develop language proficiency and contextual vocabulary.
- Develop language skills to corroborate with the advancing technologies of the times.
- Provide professional development opportunities for all teachers to successfully undertake sole responsibility of a language teacher.
- Provide additional language support whenever required.

## **E. LANGUAGE PROFILE OF STUDENTS AT FIRSTSTEPS SCHOOL**

The school recognizes that a majority of our learners are additional language learners of English and we see the school playing a pivotal role in providing an enriching environment and support for language development so that all learners are empowered to participate fully in the academic programme of the school, social life as well as to develop as individuals.

The following points summarize the language profile of students currently studying at FirstSteps School:

- Majority of the students have Hindi (60-65%), Punjabi (30-35%) and other foreign languages (5 – 10%) as their home language/native language.
- A small percentage of students have other Indian languages as their mother tongue.
- Almost all students are second language learners of English.
- English is the preferred medium of instruction and is commonly acceptable to all as it serves the purpose of academic language requirements at higher levels of education in the future.
- We understand that the instructional language of a child serves as the foundation on which English proficiency is built. We encourage students to continue to increase literacy and proficiency in their instructional language. We have adopted the pathway of ACCURACY ---> FLUENCY ---> PROFICIENCY as a pedagogical tool across the school.
- English is an important and the most popular medium of communication in the world and it is the medium of communication and instruction at FirstSteps School.

### **Medium of Instruction**

English is the medium of instruction at FirstSteps School therefore formal English language instruction is provided to all students across all levels. The school student profiles vary in the English proficiency and therefore differentiation in strategies and pedagogy is adopted to allow for optimum benefits from the curriculum.

### **Official Language for Communication**

English is the preferred language for any inbound and outbound communications of school. At FirstSteps School we acknowledge that the school community is multilingual and members function in their everyday lives in more than one language. All school wide written communication with parents is done in English although individual parent and teacher may communicate (written and oral) in a common language of their choice.

The school support staff though understands basic English but majorly use

Hindi/Punjabi to communicate.

## **F. PEDAGOGY**

Teachers plan learning experiences in language within 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.

We believe that literature plays a very important role in language development. Literature helps to reconnect feeling and thinking. It expands our life spaces and takes us outside the boundaries of our life experiences to other places, time periods and ways of living. The school also sees culturally diverse literature as a powerful means to develop international mindedness and attributes of the learner profile. The library collection reflects this belief in its collection of picture books, folk tales, bilingual books etc.

The learner profile, together with the essential elements of the programme knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action informs planning, teaching and assessing language at FirstSteps School.

### **Approaches to teaching and learning in the PYP:**

FirstSteps School endeavors to make students proficient and fluent in all the strands of language learning 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 experiences 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.
- Inclusion of STAR time (Student Teachers All Read) to foster the habit of reading for pleasure further supporting holistic language development in the learners.
- The school has developed a language scope and sequence document for the primary years in alignment with the IBO language scope and sequence.

### **Approaches to teaching and learning in the Cambridge Lower Secondary and Cambridge IGCSE and A Level:**

At FirstSteps School we understand that all learning processes only take place through languages. At this level, we aim for students to acquire the ability to think critically, learn independently and develop knowledge in a balanced, creative and reflective manner in order to be able to attempt assessments successfully at various qualifying levels. At Cambridge Lower Secondary, IGCSE and A-Level we aim to develop languages through the Oral, Visual and Written aspects of language.

Language learning at Lower Secondary, IGCSE and A-Level builds on the foundations of the language at lower grades, although it is not essential to have a developed language at these levels, certain proficiency is still desired.

The pathway of ACCURACY ---> FLUENCY ---> PROFICIENCY as a pedagogical tool has been adopted to meet these requirements.

The programme develops learners' skills and understanding of English as a first or second language, it also forms the basis of learning the others disciplines in the curriculum. It provides you with a flexible framework which can be used to develop a curriculum that is tailored to particular needs. Cambridge Lower Secondary provides excellent preparation for Cambridge Upper Secondary.

At FirstSteps school at Lower secondary level English is learnt as First Language, the framework adheres strictly to the Cambridge International curriculum. At IGCSE, English is learnt as a first language as well as a second language with an inclusion for the speaking and listening assessments. The assessments are both conducted through internal and central examinations or Checkpoints. The basic approaches to learning at this level

- Develop the skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting in a variety of contexts.
- Develop critical, creative and personal approaches to studying and analysing literary and non-literary texts

- Engage with text from different historical periods and a variety of cultures
- Explore and analyse aspects of personal, host and other cultures through literary and non-literary texts
- Explore language through a variety of media and modes
- Develop a lifelong interest in reading
- Apply linguistic and literary concepts and skills in a variety of authentic contexts.
- Understand the Interdisciplinary importance of Language

## **G. Roles and responsibilities of school community members**

### **1. Teachers (Specialists, Librarians, Counselors, etc)**

- Design engaging, differentiated lessons to meet diverse language needs.
- Integrate language objectives alongside content objectives.
- Provide regular feedback and scaffolded support for learners.
- Foster an inclusive classroom where students feel safe to practice language.
- Use formative assessments to monitor progress and adjust instruction.
- Encourage a growth mindset around language learning.

### **2. Students**

- Actively participate in language learning activities.
- Practice using the target language both inside and outside the classroom.
- Collaborate with peers and seek feedback.
- Take responsibility for their own learning through reflection and goal setting.
- Show respect and support for classmates who are learning a new language.

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### **3. Parents**

- Encourage language use and learning at home, regardless of the language spoken at home.
- Support homework and reading habits in any language.
- Communicate with teachers about their child's needs and progress.
- Participate in school events that celebrate language and culture.
- Advocate for their child's language development.

### **4. School Leadership (Principals, Coordinators, Admins)**

- Promote a school-wide language policy that values multilingualism.
- Provide professional development for teachers on language strategies.
- Allocate resources for language programs and AELS support.
- Foster a culture of inclusion and respect for all languages and cultures.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of language programs.

### **H. Home language programme**

FirstSteps School recognizes that home language is an integral part of an individual's identity and it is important to affirm value and promote home language of the students. This belief encourages the attributes identified in the IB learner profile, as well as promotes responsible action and international-mindedness.

The home language programme plays an important role in developing and affirming the student's personality and identity. Therefore, the guideline for use of the home language 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 home language:

- The school library has a variety of books and periodicals in different languages.
- Students are encouraged to issue books from library on a regular basis
- FirstSteps School conducts all language day which is a celebration of the richness of the language. A variety of games, quizzes, skits etc are organised in the school for this.
- The year round inter school and inter house competitions like street play/debates/turn-table/skits held regularly in school in various languages. These competitions escalate the opportunities for each student to hone

language skills and develop confidence at use of language.

- The school also has presentations in the school assembly home language and various other additional languages . 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 home language programme and the school makes active use of it in such opportunities.
- Parent community is actively involved in nurturing the home language. This is organised in the form of guest speaker visits during the inquiry.

## **I. Additional Language Programme**

At FirstSteps, in addition to English and Hindi language, students from grade III onwards are given an option of a third language, French/Punjabi (in two language areas listening and speaking). While grading IV onwards students learn these additional languages in all four areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## **J. RESOURCES and SUPPORT Language learning and the library**

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and at all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning.

- information is available on the internet for exploration on every possible topic. We believe that use of IT enriches a subject area and enhances learning. It makes the curriculum more accessible helping students to
- access internet for research work and independent learning
- collaborative and interactive work
- submission of assignments

An information literate individual is able to determine the extent of information needed; access the needed information effectively and efficiently and evaluate information and sources critically.

The library is central to the language programme at FirstSteps School. The library provides a learning space and an environment to promote love for reading, books as well as a place for research. The role of the FirstSteps library is to promote and facilitate information literacy across all curriculum and to all members of the FirstSteps community. The library also provides resources for collaborative planning, researching and teacher professional development. Our school board is aware of our need to expand these resources and there are plans to continually add the same.

The inclusion of STAR time (Student Teachers All Read) to foster the habit of reading for pleasure further supporting holistic language development in the learners in addition of the library facility has been introduced. Facilitators also conduct classes in the library where the librarian and homeroom facilitators collaborate to conduct story narration and enacting, puppet shows, read aloud, help conduct research and help students browse and pick up books. In addition to the school library, every class also has a class library equipped with suitable genres as well multilingual dictionaries. The students browse through the books as per their interest and time.

### **Learning Support**

#### **Additional English Language Support (AELS)**

When a student has been identified with additional learning needs including language difficulties or gifted and talented abilities, intervention and support are provided through the learning support programme. This support may be formalised through an in-class support plan or an individual education plan and may involve short- and long-term interventions.

The school has designed an AELS program for such students. The programme is a combination of classroom support and pull-out programme of intensive English for a stipulated time period. The process of short listing a student for AELS involves a series of steps like informal screening, observations, feedback given by the grades given by the previous teacher, assessment reports of previous year/ previous school, observation and feedback about the home environment of such students etc.

Students considered for this programme are generally:

- First-generation English learners
- Have no support for English language learning at home
- Come from schools where the language of instruction is not English.
- Are admitted in FirstSteps 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 therefore has entailed EAL programme and specialized individual programmes for the learners.

## **Assessment**

While language acquisition follows distinct stages, rate of acquisition of students varies greatly from individual to individual. Therefore, language teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), regularly differentiating through scaffolding or extension as required. Formative and summative assessments in the classroom provide information on language growth. Language teachers regularly standardise work of student to ensure a fair application of assessment criteria.

Rubrics, anecdotal records, self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher assessment are tools and strategies used in the school to assess language learning and provide evidence of development.

## **K. Professional Development**

All teachers are language teachers, on-going training focused on integrated language instruction is offered throughout the year. This is done either in-house or outsourced. The school is committed to providing embedded professional development for language learning across the curriculum. The school also ensures that staff receives ongoing IB/Cambridge professional development opportunities and monitors those strategies are successfully implemented.

## **L. Language Policy Review Process**

- This policy is a living document. It has been created using IB/CIE support materials, local school data and input from stakeholders in the school's learning community. It is an ongoing process that will be systematically reviewed, evaluated and modified as needed by the students, staff, coordinators, and administrative members.
- The language policy review committee will comprise of Chairperson, CEO, Head of the School, PYP-C, Head Junior Wing, Exam Officer/CIE Coordinator and grade facilitators. The committee will review the current document, revise as needed, and plan how to communicate current practice to staff and parent community.
- The language policy has been revised in June 2024 and will be reviewed after a period of three years i.e. June 2026.

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**The policy is framed, reviewed and implemented in compliance with the following IB standards and practices**

- The school *community fosters internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile. (0101-03)*
- *The school ensures that the school community is aware of the IB learner profile and is committed to international-mindedness and its importance in embodying the IB mission. (0101-03-0100)*
- *The school funds and allocates resources that sustain and further develop its IB programme(s). (0201-05)*
- *The school funds adequate resources to implement the programme(s) and meet programme requirements. (0201-05-0100)*
- *The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support.(0202-02)*
- *The school maintains a functioning and active library consisting of adequate combinations of people, places, collections and services that aid and extend learning and teaching. (0202-01-0600)*
- *The school secures access to an IB education for the broadest possible range of students. (0301-01)*
- *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 (0301-04)*
- *The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (0301-04-0100)*
- *The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)*
- *The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)*
- *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. (0301-04-0400)*
- *The school ensures that students learn a language in addition to the language of instruction (at least from the age of seven). Multilingual programmes, where students are learning in at least two languages, can but are not required to offer additional languages. (0301-04-0411)*
- *Teachers support language development with consideration for the language profiles of students. (0403-05-0400)*

The above practices have a direct relevance in developing and reviewing the policy, however focus will be laid on all other programmes standards and practices requirements through the programme implementation at the various stages

## M. Link with other policies

Language in a school system plays a vital role and has its implication on the overall functioning. The Language Policy links clearly with other policies of the school creating a language driven approach through continuous efforts of the teachers, administrators, staff, parents and students, in order to establish a positive school culture. The Admission Policy states about the language of instruction and the languages offered to study in the IB PYP and CAIE section. The Inclusion Policy discusses the differential approaches in language acquisition to support the learning process. The Assessment Policy mentions about the processes and systems in place to assess the language profile of learners.

### **Bibliography/Resources**

IBO Language scope and sequence document updated  
IBO Guidelines for developing school language policy, Language and Learning in IB Programme  
IBO Programme standards and practices  
Cambridge International – *Getting started with language awareness*