



## **LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **Purpose**

A language policy is a statement of purpose setting out linguistic goals that permeate into the curriculum. This living document seeks to inform classroom practice, guide curriculum and involve families towards our goal of providing a quality international education.

### **Philosophy Statement**

We believe that language development is the foundation for all learning and is central to our students' intellectual, social and emotional development. Language affects our cultural identities and ways of viewing the world, and helps us communicate with others. It is the major connecting element across our curriculum; students not only learn language and learn about language, but also learn through language.

Language, in turn, is an imperative vehicle to foster and develop international-mindedness and inclusivity in our school community. It encourages students to develop intercultural sensitivity in all aspects of school life and intellectual growth through the curriculum, leading to authentic inquiry and love of learning to develop identity. Therefore, all teachers at ASF are language teachers.

Our language policy translates into student actions through the IB Learner Profile:

### **Language through the IB Learner Profile**

#### **Inquirers**

Language empowers students to conduct inquiry and research to demonstrate independence in learning, leading to a sustained love of learning. Students inquire about the natural differences and similarities between their languages to make connections and deepen their understanding of their world around them and to widen their global perspectives.

#### **Knowledgeable**

Language is the medium of connecting and integrating different disciplines to concepts, ideas and issues. Interdisciplinary teaching and learning enhances language development through authentic connections to local and global issues.

#### **Thinkers**

Language and thinking are deeply connected, and language offers scaffolding for complex thought. Language is both evidence of thought and a tool for thought. Therefore, to help students think critically and deeply in areas of inquiry, language instruction must be an integral part of the entire curriculum.

### Communicators

Language does not operate in isolation but in the context of human communication, such as social interactions. Students construct language through multiple opportunities to develop reading, visual, oral and written communication. Therefore, we provide meaningful, authentic situations for language acquisition and development.

### Principled

Students are aware that language is powerful, and that it can have a profound effect. Therefore, it must be used responsibly. Teachers must provide a positive and encouraging environment where students feel respected and free to take risks with language.

### Open-minded

Through language individual points of view and values are shared, similarities and differences are communicated. When used appropriately judgement is suspended, and cultivation of new perspectives are nurtured. Students understand that language can be used to foster new ways of approaching ideas, obstacles and connecting with others.

### Caring

Since language is a pinnacle component to the social structures within our school, it plays a definitive role in how communication is used to show empathy, compassion and respect.

### Risk-takers

The acquisition of language takes learners out of their comfort zones and requires them to confront new situations with courage and confidence.

### Balanced

Language is integrated into our daily lives to express learning, ideas and emotions. Students demonstrate competence and confidence with language to foster a balance among intellectual, physical, and emotional well-being.

### Reflective

Language is essential to effectively communicate thoughtful reflections about one's performance in order to recognize strengths and further develop areas of weakness.

### **Mother Tongue**

At ASF we value the identity and culture of our students and promote the awareness and respect towards everyone through valuing similarities and understanding differences. We encourage families to maintain and develop their mother tongue through speaking, reading and writing at home. Our goal is for students to show pride in their identity, culture and traditions; making these a part of their school experience. Our school libraries offer our families printed resources to support reading in their mother tongue.

## **Learning Through Language**

### **What we do**

ASF is a dual language institution. English is the primary language of instruction, and all students follow a SACS-accredited curriculum leading to an American high school diploma. Our mission statement mandates “an academically rigorous, international, university preparatory school,” and the expectation that all students become bilingual is embedded in that charge. Students construct language through multiple opportunities to develop reading, visual, oral and written communication.

### **How we do it:**

#### **Primary Years Programme**

All students study a second curriculum in Spanish, either one for native speakers accredited by Mexico’s Ministry of Education (SEP), or one offered for non-native speakers, supported by a robust Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) program. Students whose native language is not English and whose language skills are still developing receive pull-out and push in support from a ESL teacher. (The ECC has an English- immersion program that systematically teaches English as the language of instruction.)

#### **Middle Years Programme**

All students study a second curriculum in Spanish, either one for native speakers accredited by Mexican educational authorities, or one offered for non-native speakers, supported by a robust Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) program. Additional language instruction is offered to all staff through classes in the after school program.

#### **Diploma Programme**

In the upper school, English is the primary language of instruction. Students are required to complete four credits of a language other than English while in Upper School. They can choose Spanish or French as their second language. All students have the opportunity study a second curriculum in Spanish, either for native speakers accredited by the the SEP or UNAM, or one offered for non-native speakers in the Spanish as a Second Language program. Additional language instruction is offered to all staff through classes in the after school program.

## **Supporting the policy: roles and responsibilities of stakeholders**

1. The **Executive Director, Director of Academic Affairs and Heads of School** will
  - a. provide the leadership to support the implementation of the language policy.
  - b. ensure that resources are made available to implement the language policy, including budget, recruiting, professional development and materials through the context of IB in all programmes.
  - c. provide opportunities for the discussion of curriculum, language instructional strategies, assessment and student progress (eg, planning time for grade level teams, Wednesday meeting instructional focus, professional development days, etc.).

2. The **IB coordinators and deans of students** will
  - a. provide exposure to the language policy and the necessary professional development to implement the language policy.
  - b. observe teachers and provide intentional feedback and coaching when needed to inform and improve language instruction based on the language policy and school curriculum.
  - c. support teachers in identifying and establishing clear language objectives tied to conceptual understandings and aligned to Common Core State Standards.
  
3. The **K-12 Language Arts Review (every four years)** will
  - a. consist of heads of department and coordinators from across the entire school.
  - b. facilitate communication and coordination among ASF faculty during a language arts review.
  - c. advise and assist school divisions in implementing the ASF Language Policy and language instruction.
  - d. assess leadership for the systematic review of curriculum mapping with specific focus on scope and sequence documents for cross-division articulation and alignment.
  - e. suggest appropriate professional development opportunities for language teaching
  - f. review and update language arts inventories and materials.
  - g. ensure that procedures and educational programs are developed and implemented in accordance with the language arts review.
  
4. The **teacher** will (all teachers at ASF are language teachers in their capacity)
  - a. present language through meaningful tasks in authentic contexts.
  - b. Use English as the language of instruction (in English class) and Spanish (in Spanish class), to provide students with deep immersion in the language.
  - c. teach and measure language acquisition through all areas of the curriculum
  - d. support English and Spanish language learners through a push in or pull out model (ELL and SLL teachers).
  - e. support professional development in the practices of language across the curriculum and offer language learning strategies to colleagues as a professional sharing model.
  - f. promote effective language teaching and assessment practices for all language learners.
  - g. use diagnostic, formative and summative assessments to measure fluency in reading, writing and oral fluency.
  - h. encourage students to embrace their cultural and linguistic heritage by providing opportunities for using additional languages, including mother tongue, in inclusive ways.
  - i. provide a wide range of opportunities to develop both social and academic language.
  - j. provide differentiated instruction in order to challenge students, including enrichment activities to allow them to reach their full language potential.
  - k. build a positive and encouraging environment where students feel respected and free to take risks with language.
  - l. create classroom environments that are discourse-rich and process-oriented, with plentiful opportunities for students to listen, read, speak and write through interactive activities.
  - m. integrate language instruction into all subject areas, and provide opportunities for students to read and write across the curriculum.
  - n. use a wide range of instructional strategies to teach language through a balanced literacy program which integrates oral, written and nonverbal skills.

5. **Admissions** will
  - a. screen applicants for English and Spanish fluency to ensure placement is appropriate using the Idea Proficiency Test (IPT) by Ballard & Tighe.
  - b. admit students performing at grade-level proficiency in English in grades 6-12.
  - c. ensure that students being admitted fit the language profile of a student at ASF
  
6. The **community** will
  - a. be invited to encourage and support their child's additional language acquisition.
  - b. ensure that students engage and embrace their mother tongue when off campus
  - c. be encouraged to abide by these guidelines when participating in classroom activities.

The Language Policy is supported by specific age-appropriate language development strategies in each division.

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ASF Language Policy Steering Committee

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### **Works consulted**

#### **IBO Documents, from Online Curriculum Centre:**

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“IB Asia Pacific Newsletter Quarter Three 2006: Focus on Victoria Shanghai Academy “ PYP Documents. IBO 2006.

#### **Sample Language Policies:**

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“Philosophy Guidelines,” in Criteria for Planning and Evaluating English Language Arts Curriculum Guides, NCTE.