



Amity International School Amsterdam

## Language Policy

Date	Action	Action performed by
SEP-2017	Policy Created	Primary Staff
JAN-2019	Policy Reviewed	Primary Staff (enrichment session)
APR - 2019	Policy Reviewed	IB Consultant and PLT
NOV 2020	Policy Review	Primary Staff with parental input

## **Amity International School Amsterdam Vision:**

*‘Empowering each individual to thrive and make a positive difference.’*

## **Amity International School Amsterdam Mission:**

*Amity International School Amsterdam provides an engaging and challenging learning environment where students are empowered to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. Our students learn within a real-world, inquiry-based curriculum which fosters their individuality, creativity and unique interests. We encourage our students to be innovative and reflective thinkers who demonstrate resilience and determination. We promote ethical, responsible action for positive change and provide opportunities for teamwork and leadership. We nourish the development of open-minded, caring individuals who are active and respectful members of the global and local community.*

## **Purpose**

- To achieve a consistent school approach through language learning and teaching
- To meet the standards of the PYP Framework
- To identify the diverse language needs of the students at Amity International School Amsterdam and to put in place practices and procedures to address them
- To establish agreements on how to implement practices that reflect the school's values and mission
- To enable ongoing reflection of best practice in language teaching and learning
- To inform all members of the school community about language practices

## **Language Philosophy**

At Amity International School Amsterdam, we challenge students to become responsible and effective communicators and world citizens. Language learning is fundamental to this goal and is at the heart of our teaching and learning.

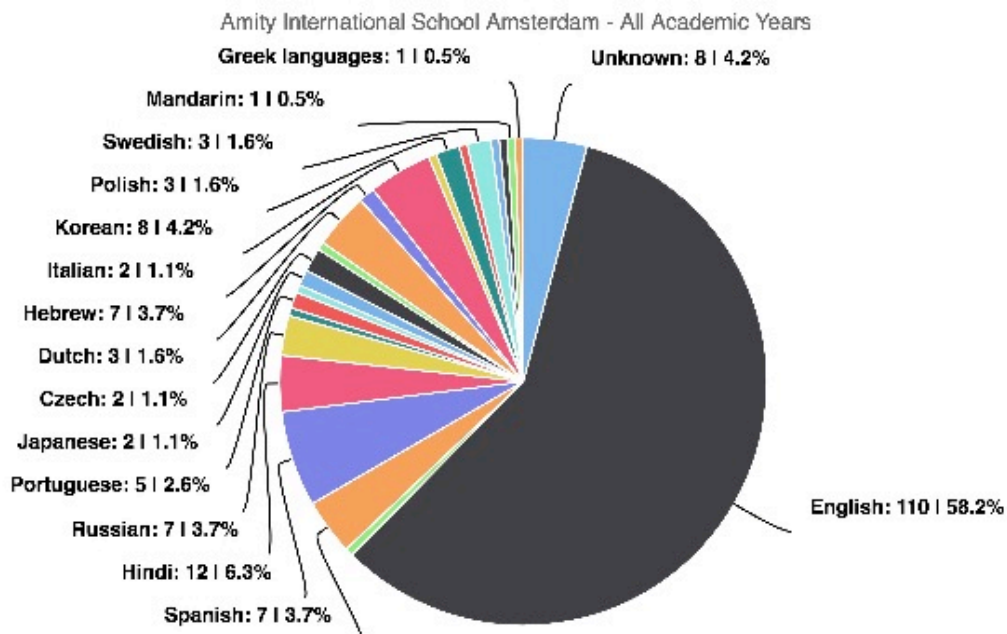
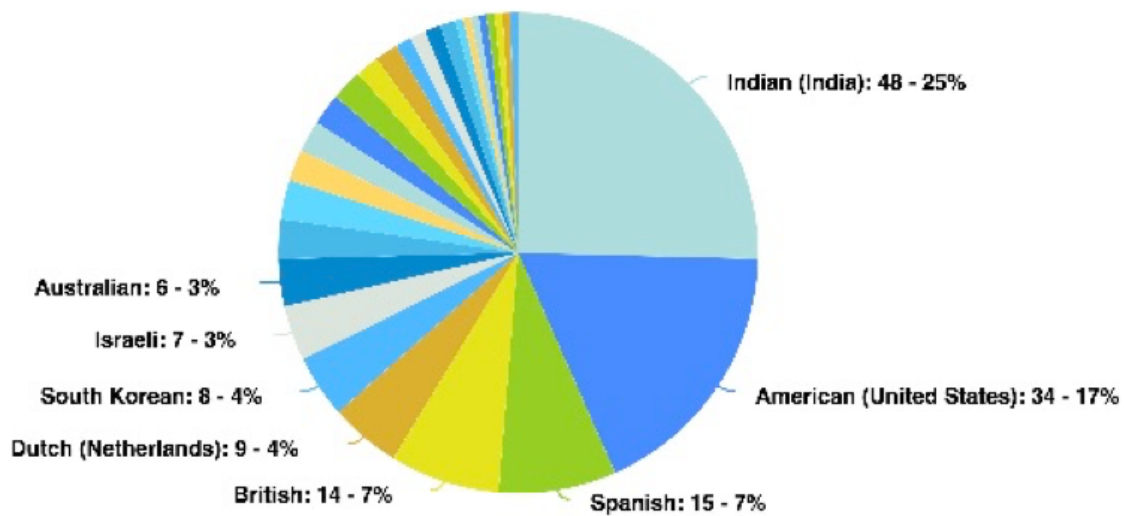
Language learning at Amity International School involves; learning language, learning through language and learning about language using an inquiry-based approach.

We respect all languages at our school and appreciate cultural differences and identities. We build on the language resources that students already have and embrace student individuality in an inclusive environment.

# Language Profile of the children at Amity International School Amsterdam

## Nationality Report

Amity International School Amsterdam - All Academic Years



## Admissions

Amity International School Amsterdam is an inclusive school in terms of language profile and enrolment is not based on language ability. Student's ability level in language will be assessed at the beginning of each school year, or at entry level (when the student joins the school). As Amity International School is an English language learning environment, it is recommended that students' trial at least one day in school before enrolment due to the potential challenges posed by a change in language learning environment. At Amity International School Amsterdam, we do have an EAL department who supports our students with English as an Additional Language. This support is available for students who have little or no English through to students who have basic or developing English. Support is decided upon assessment carried out by the EAL department.

## Practices

- The main language of instruction at Amity International School Amsterdam is English
- All staff are responsible for language learning (PYP Practices C3.8)
- We use language which is child friendly and age appropriate
- In line with PYP Framework, we use an inquiry based transdisciplinary approach (PYP Practices C3.2a)
- The written curriculum identifies the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed over time through the PYP scope and sequence
- Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles (PYP Practice C3.10)
- As a school, we communicate frequently and in a variety of formats with the school community (reports, Managebac, parents' information meetings, website PYP Practice C4.2)
- Students have access to a variety of resources (classroom, eBooks, library, reference materials, reading scheme PYP practice C3.11)
- EAL support is available at Amity International Amsterdam (PYP Practices C3.7)
- As a school, we provide support for the Home Languages and celebrate the different languages spoken at our school (PYP Practice A7a and A7b)
- Consistency in using British spelling
- Professional development is provided for all staff on language learning

## Languages that inform instruction:

### English/ Language of Instruction

- English is the language of instruction in every class except during additional language lessons.
- British English practices are accepted.

- Incorporates the 4 PYP strands (Oral, Visual, Reading and Writing)
- Phonics will start in early years according to children's readiness and the Letters and Sounds programme with the Jolly Phonics actions is followed.
- Reciprocal Reading is the chosen method of teaching reading. Reading sessions are differentiated depending on reading ability of each child and SEN and EAL needs are catered for. Oxford Reading Tree schemes of work are used to support this method.
- Writing sessions are linked to the Units of Inquiry and the PYP Scope and Sequence is used to inform the learning outcomes. At Amity Amsterdam, a range of strategies are used to support writing, such as Talk 4 Writing and Big Writing. EAL and SEN learners are accommodated in Writing sessions through differentiation or scaffolding of the activity for support.
- Once children have progressed through the Phases of the phonetic sounds, children will continue to follow the Letters and Sounds Spelling Programme, which involves using and applying the sounds previously learnt.

## **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

Amity International School Amsterdam recognizes that students whose Home Language is not English may require additional support. EAL students are students whose home language is not English and who require additional support to develop English proficiency level. As a school, we understand that students may enter the school with various levels of English proficiency.

When possible, during the admissions process, a variety of factors will be looked at in order to determine as to whether EAL support is required for specific students.

Factors looked at include:

- The student's language profile
- Previous educational experiences
- An informal assessment to determine current level of English (if appropriate)

Once a child is accepted to Amity Amsterdam, a more thorough assessment on their level of English is conducted to ensure level of support provided is effective and at the appropriate level of the student. Level of support is based on an initial assessment and ongoing progress is continually monitored by both the EAL teacher and class teacher.

At times, the class teacher may refer students for EAL sessions and support. In these situations, the same method is adopted whereby the individual student is assessed to determine the level of English in order to determine areas of development and to ensure support is placed accordingly.

EAL students are assisted through a range of different approaches, depending on the level of support required which may include:

- Individual guidance

- Differentiated learning outcomes within the mainstream class
- Separate language development lessons

For all students who receive EAL support, the EAL teacher will collaborate with the class teacher to ensure there is a close link between EAL sessions and the classroom PYP program of inquiry.

When it is felt that a student no longer requires EAL support, this is decided in consultation of the class teacher, EAL teacher and involvement of the parents. A number of factors are looked at, such as reading and writing levels, classroom observations, running records, EAL and classroom work and assessments. Students undertake a summative assessment to evaluate their language proficiency. If a student is deemed at a level to no longer require support, check in sessions will continue to happen throughout the school year to monitor progress of the language proficiency.

Students' progress will be communicated in line with Amity Assessment Policy. The EAL teacher will write formal written reports twice a year, which will be added to the class teacher's report. Parent – Teacher conferences will fall in line with the reporting schedule each year.

## Home Language

*"The language profiles of students in IB schools may be complex and diverse; however, the influence of mother-tongue development is significant for all learners. It is acknowledged that development of mother-tongue language is crucial for cognitive development, and in maintaining cultural identity. Success in mother-tongue development is a strong predictor of long-term academic achievement, including acquisition of other languages."* (PYP Language Scope and Sequence)

Looking at the language profile of the school, it can be seen that there is a large range of different languages spoken across our school. The school explicitly values each student's mother-tongue language capabilities and encourages students to continue developing their native languages at home. Parents are asked about the languages used at home during the enrolment process and this information is passed onto the class teachers and EAL teacher, where appropriate.

At Amity International School Amsterdam, we aim to ensure the Home Language is promoted and celebrated as it is a significant part of all of our students. Below are some of the ways in which we currently do to celebrate the Home Language:

- Our diverse community celebrates the languages spoken through international events throughout the school year, such as Home Language Day.
- Parent volunteers are working with our Library Department to develop our Home Language reading section within the library. The aim of this project, eventually, will be that students at Amity Amsterdam will be able to find a book written in their native language.

- Class Teachers use the students Home Languages within the classroom, such as using the Home Language to say good morning during registration; environmental print in the classroom and through our students teaching each other how to sing Happy Birthday in their native language.
- Parental volunteers are often in our school to read to our children in their Home Language to promote the language diversity across our school and to show value of the languages spoken by all.

## **Host Country Language**

As seen in our Language profile of the school, a very small percentage of our children speak the Host Country Language of Dutch. The Host Country Language of Dutch has great importance and due to this we facilitate regular weekly instruction in Dutch at grade level. Whenever appropriate, Dutch lessons will be linked to the PYP units of inquiry, in order to provide authentic connections and deep conceptual understanding. We continuously look for opportunities to enrich the language learning environment through the purchase of resources, inviting guest speakers to the school and visiting local heritage centres offsite. We endeavour to create a strong Dutch language culture through language immersion in the classroom and celebration of national events.

Although a very small percentage of our students have a Home Language of Dutch, we do cater and provide learning experiences to continue to develop the Dutch language. At Amity, the Native Dutch speakers receive weekly Dutch lessons taught at the appropriate level to ensure their proficiency of the Dutch language is supported.

## **Additional Language (French)**

At Amity International School Amsterdam, our students also receive regular lessons taught in an additional language at a beginner's level. At Amity International School Amsterdam, our students learn French as this is the main language our neighbouring countries speak.

## **Language Assessment**

As per the PYP Language Scope and Sequence, language is broken into the following categories:

- Oral language (listening and speaking)
- Visual language (viewing and presenting)
- Written language (reading)
- Written language (writing)

Language will be assessed formatively and summatively, based on the strands above and in accordance with the school's Assessment Policy. Here are some of the external tools we use at Amity Amsterdam:

- Phonics Screening Programme
- GL Reading and Spelling Assessments



The PYP's Language Scope and Sequence will give clear guidance on progressions and expectations at each phase. Ongoing assessments will determine the student's growth and development through the phases and the school will provide students with feedback to inform and improve their learning.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the philosophy, practices and Language Policy are communicated to all members of the school community
- The Language Policy is a working document, referred to in the planning process, which all staff take responsibility for
- The Principal and the PYP Coordinator are responsible for ensuring the Language Policy is implemented effectively and consistently
- The steering committee, comprised of the principal, the PYP Coordinator, teachers, specialist teachers and representatives of the school community are involved in the process of reviewing and developing the Language Policy
- The Language Policy will be reviewed at the end of the academic year, or as necessary in response to the development of the profile of the school community

## **References:**

IB PYP Language Scope and Sequence, International Baccalaureate Organisation, February 2009.