Language Policy

Philosophy
As a primary tool of communication, language is essential to learning and to preserving and reflecting culture, self and identity. In a world of diversity, language and literacy skills are integral to the development of people and their abilities to operate as effective members of a global village.

Because the development of mother tongue language is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and the ability to learn another language, we believe that education in mother tongue language, particularly in the early years of schooling, is vital for concept formation as well as literacy and numeracy attainment. However, our aim is to graduate bilingual students (Arabic and English) and, therefore, we offer English as a first language as of Kindergarten. In order to prepare our students for the IB DP, English is the language of instruction as of Grade 6.

As a school that promotes intercultural understanding, internationalism, and multilingualism, ASG/BSA fosters learning more than one language. Therefore, French is offered as part of the curriculum in the Primary and Middle Schools. Students choose whether to continue with French or start German at ASG or German/Chinese at BSA as of Grade 8, provided they have completed Phase 4. Different languages are offered at *ab initio* level in the IB DP.

At ASG/BSA, we believe that language is developed across all curricular areas and that all teachers are language teachers.

Practices and Procedures
The Language Policy is a whole-school document, which is divided for the sake of convenience into separate sections for KG and primary school, middle school and secondary school. The Language Policy has been developed jointly between the three sections of the school involving the heads of sections, coordinators, and teachers with considerable discussion of each component, and of the changing needs of learners at different stages of development.

By applying the IB Programs, ASG/BSA is keen on students acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to be:

- **Inquirers:** Students use language to acquire information and to interpret the world around them.
- **Thinkers:** Students express their thoughts with clarity, and interpret others’ messages.
- **Communicators:** Students use oral and written language competently in a variety of situations. They articulate and interpret meaning in messages about ideas, values and beliefs.
**Risk takers:** Students dare to read, write, speak and listen in situations where they are not totally confident.

**Knowledgeable:** Students continuously strengthen their command of language, and have the vocabulary to approach and discuss literary and non-literary texts.

**Principled:** Students respect the power of language, and use it appropriately.

**Caring:** Students show sensitivity in their use of language and are aware of how the use of language can affect others.

**Open-minded:** Students respect linguistic differences and variations in communication styles. They apply language to explore aspects of personal, local and other cultures.

**Balanced:** Students show balance in both receptive and productive communication, exploring a wide range of genres within oral, written and visual communication.

**Reflective:** Students reflect on their use of language, the importance of their mother tongue(s), and their own strengths and weaknesses.

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**Kindergarten and Primary School**

ASG/BSA’s Primary School is an Arabic-medium school. The majority of classes are taught in Arabic and, for the majority of the time, students use Arabic as the major tool for communication. In order to promote inquiry-based language learning within the context of the PYP, ASG/BSA recognizes the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language throughout the trans-disciplinary themes of inquiry. The aim is for students to develop and master essential language skills, which is vital for students’ overall development. Literature is integrated into our POI to foster the love and enjoyment of language and the appreciation of a variety of literary genres.

**Language of Instruction**

Arabic is the language of instruction in ASG/BSA for all subjects K-5. English is offered as a first language.

Support is provided directly to students whose language skills in their mother tongue, whether English or Arabic, need further development. This support program is offered in Grades 1-5 in the Primary School.

**Additional Language**

French is offered as a foreign language and is obligatory in Grades 1-7. The program is presented in an interactive method and focuses on articulation and pronunciation so students are able to produce the language.

**Middle School (Grades 6-10)**

To be successful in a complex global society, students need to develop language and communication skills. The language program lies at the heart of ASG/BSA’s vision for its students: to become
independent, critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible citizens. The program encourages students to love literature and to understand that language is fundamental to learning. Language is both an essential tool for learning and a medium for communicating meaning, intent, analysis and emotion. The language program involves and challenges students, preparing them for the next stage of their education; this demands mastery of the full range of language skills.

The language of instruction in the Middle School transitions from Arabic to English. In Grades 6-10, all subjects are taught in English except Religion, Arabic and PHE.

Arabic and English classes in the Middle School provide a rich language environment. Classes focus on the major language areas of reading, listening, speaking, writing, viewing and presenting, and all students are provided with ample opportunities to improve their abilities in each area.

Since students take English as a first language in the PYP, they continue with Language and Literature in the MYP.

Support is provided directly to students whose language skills in their mother tongue, whether English or Arabic, need further development. This support program is offered in grades 6-10 in the Middle School.

Third Language:
To promote multi-linguistics and international mindedness, students are offered a third language other than Arabic and English, which are both taught at first language levels.

French is offered as a foreign language for Grades 6 and 7. By the end of Grade 7, students are expected to achieve the outcomes of the level of DELF A1.

In Grade 8, students choose whether to continue with French or to opt for German (ASG) or German/Chinese (BSA). They continue with their choice until grade 10. Students who continue with French can do DELF A2 in Grade 8 and B1 in Grade 10.

Although both French, German or Chinese are taught within the regular school day and the teachers follow MYP principles, the three subjects are outside the MYP program.

Students’ pathway in languages in the MYP:

- All students learn Arabic, their mother tongue and/or language of the host country, from K – 12.
- The mother tongue of our students is Arabic and the language of instruction in the PYP is Arabic.
- Although the language of instruction in the MYP is English, students are still expected to study Arabic as Language and Literature.
- Whenever we have students whose mother tongue is not Arabic, we integrate them in Arabic classrooms and offer them the one on one support they need.
Students who are in Language and Literature in MYP and have demonstrated success in that subject at an extended period of time cannot choose Language B in the IBDP.

- Students are exposed to the regional language and culture through homeroom teaching periods, weekly assemblies, and school activities.
- Students are exposed to other cultures through the study of world literature in language classes.

**Secondary School (Grades 11-12)**

Mainstream: The language of instruction in the mainstream national program is Arabic following the Ministry of Education curriculum.

The working language in the IB DP/CP is English excluding Arabic, French or German IB courses. In Grades 11 and 12, the school offers 3 Arabic Language courses and 3 English language courses as follows:

- Arabic A Literature (Higher - Standard Levels)
- Arabic Language B (Higher - Standard Levels)
- Arabic *ab initio* (Arabic as a foreign language)
- English Language & Literature (Higher- Standard Levels)
- Literature and Performance (Standard Level)
- English B (Higher- Standard Levels)

A placement test based on Language Acquisition is administered to students in French and German at the end of Grade 10. Students achieving 3 and below can do *ab initio* level in that language in the IBDP. Students who complete French DELF A2 CANNOT do French *ab initio* in the DP.

**Libraries**

A wide range of literature is found in the school libraries to support and supplement classroom resources. The aim is to help students become independent and committed readers, through free interaction with a variety of texts, in order to develop literacy skills and the ability to engage critically with literature. The school library includes English and Arabic fiction, non-fiction and periodicals. It is also developing a more inclusive selection of French resources. Several online databases are also available for easier access to different resources and to aid in the development of language.

Librarians contact embassies of students from different nationalities in order to provide books for those students in their mother tongue.
References

International Baccalaureate Organization. 2015. *What is an IB education?* Wales, UK.


