

KIS Language Policy

“The mother language, in which the first words are uttered and individual thought expressed, is the foundation for the history and culture of each individual....

Languages are the best vehicles of mutual understanding and tolerance. Respect for all languages is a key factor for ensuring peaceful coexistence, with exclusion, of societies and all of their members.”

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO
Message for International Mother Language Day 2010

Philosophy

Students learn language through language. They learn about language in an environment where they explore concepts, solve problems, organize information, share discoveries, formulate hypotheses, and explain ideas.

- Language is a major means of communicating, fundamental to learning, and is developed across curriculum areas. All teachers are teachers of language. Essentially, education is language education. Poetry, literature, art, history, drama, music, science, technology and mathematics all encourage critical interactions between students and the material.
- The acquisition of language is a dynamic, life-long process that permeates all learning. It is a key factor in intellectual growth and promotes the development of personal and international understanding.
- Effective teaching practice arises from a constructivist approach to learning, allowing students to build on prior knowledge and construct personal meaning.
- Through meaningful interactions, we communicate with and understand others, the world and ourselves to develop intercultural awareness.
- The school community is a resource to foster language learning. An additional language enriches personal growth, enhances first language development, and promotes international-mindedness. The development of a mother tongue language is crucial for maintaining cultural identity.

Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction across the curriculum (except in lessons of languages other than English) and the common language of communication in the school (reports, correspondence, website etc). However, it is recognized that some students may want and need to use their other languages to clarify and consolidate meaning. While we actively encourage the use of English we do not prohibit the use of other languages.

Mother Tongue

The *mother tongue* language is often the language used in the home and the first language acquired. The *first language* is the one in which the individual is most proficient. KIS encourages the development of the mother tongue and first languages of students through an ethos of inclusion and celebration of linguistic diversity within the community. There is also recognition that a strong level of competency in students’ mother tongue can be an important ingredient in their success as learners of additional languages. Parents seeking mother tongue or first language support for their

children will be assisted in locating suitable teachers and given free use of school facilities outside the school day for this purpose.

Other Languages

KIS seeks to enable children to function as global citizens, which in part entails the ability to function capably and comfortably within and between cultures. Developing the capacity to speak more than one language is an integral part of this preparation and as a result:

- All students, starting in Grade One take mandatory Russian classes.
- Kazakhstani students must also study Kazakh as per current national regulations.
- French is currently mandatory for students from Grade Four, on a trial basis.
- In order to facilitate use of language in the classroom KIS hires a support teacher who speaks Russian and/or Kazakh up to Grade 3.
- In addition, the school encourages parents and teachers to offer classes in other languages as part of the KIS after-school activities program.

Admissions and Placement

Generally, KIS places students according to age. However, based on the following process the students may be placed otherwise.

If a child speaks little or no English, he or she is automatically placed in Intensive English and EAL classes for the first semester of enrollment.

Initial assessments will be conducted upon a student's first arrival at school, but may be conducted at any point if there is an indication that there might be a need for EAL services. An initial assessment is completed with all students applying for acceptance into KIS who can speak, read, and write in English. Initial assessments may include:

- a. English language assessment
 - Speaking and listening: interview with the prospective student
 - Reading comprehension: Running records (two levels below the grade level range)
 - Writing: samples of unedited written work of the student or pictures in lower grades.
- b. An analysis of the previous school report if available
- c. Mother tongue language proficiency if needed

A meeting of the administration, homeroom teacher, and EAL teacher may be held following the initial assessments to make the decision about student placement.

EAL (English as an Additional Language)

EAL refers to English instruction that is given to assist the student in gaining sufficient English language proficiency to cope within the English-speaking school environment. EAL students are provided extra support through a pull-out or push-in program. We offer EAL support starting from Grade 1.

Intensive English (IE)

IE students, those who speak little or no English upon admission are withdrawn from second language classes for additional English for the first semester of their enrollment. The purpose of IE is to teach students functional English – vocabulary and expressions used in the classroom to help them follow class routines and communicate basic needs. IE is only offered the first semester of attendance.

Decision making process for whether a student goes to EAL/IE

For a student to be identified as an EAL student, the following procedure and criteria will be followed:

Based on the initial assessment:

- a. If the child speaks little or no English: IE and EAL.
- b. If the child speaks some English and the level of understanding is far below the age level norm and they have had one year of previous English classes: EAL
- c. If the child's oral communication skills are satisfactory, but the reading scores (running record) are two levels below the lowest reading level in the assigned class: EAL.

Assessing Progress

The constant collaborative planning and teaching between the classroom teacher and the EAL teacher provides ample opportunity to constantly reflect on the progress of each EAL student in the class. All students in the class will have the same assessments and the same standards and benchmarks. All decisions may be reviewed by the homeroom teacher and the EAL teacher at any time to reassess level of student support.

Exiting the EAL program

When either the EAL support teacher or the classroom teacher feels, based on the day-to-day assessments and observations, that a student is capable of joining the class without support, then the student will graduate from the EAL program. This decision is based on

- the reading level of the student
- observations
- the opinions of all relevant teachers
- formal and informal assessments

The administration will approve the decision, and will meet with the teachers and/or parents if necessary. If the group decides that the student is ready to exit EAL support, the parents will be informed of the progress.

Assessment

All homeroom teachers address their students' individual language learning needs, and of course, with the range of language proficiencies at KIS, each teacher develops individualized programs and expectations.

- Teachers conduct ongoing assessment of students' academic and language accomplishments and needs.

- Teachers take reading running records 4 times a year and they are kept in the students' cumulative (pass-up) folders.
- Teachers collect representative samples of students' work in their portfolios to document linguistic and academic growth in language.
- Teachers communicate clearly with parents regarding students' accomplishments and needs.
- Teachers will provide opportunity for self and peer assessments which encourage students to take ownership and responsibility for their learning.

Language Teaching and Learning Methodologies at KIS

The teaching and learning methodology at KIS focuses on being engaging, integrated, supportive and active. Teachers use a wide variety of methods of instruction in order to make learning experiences relevant and meaningful for the students, and to encourage a love of language and learning.

Students will:

- learn to work independently and in cooperative groups
- regularly reflect on their learning as an integral part of their life-long educational journey
- use writing as a way of thinking and reflecting
- develop a portfolio each year, reflecting their work in all languages
- set personal learning goals, use effective learning strategies and self assess their work
- select and read books independently for enjoyment

Teachers will:

- provide a broad range of activities and tasks that provide a balanced programme, incorporating all four areas of language: speaking and listening, reading, writing and viewing and presenting, in a language rich environment
- strive to create supportive, emotionally-safe environments in which students can take risks and express themselves in a variety of ways
- use “teachable moments”
- be responsive to student needs and interests in the classroom
- make meaningful interdisciplinary connections to other subjects and the world around us, as we explore language and literature in our classrooms
- focus on students constructing their own meanings and supporting their interpretations with evidence from the texts they are studying
- make sure that students clearly understand the learning goals and how the teachers will evaluate their learning
- maintain an emphasis on developing student skills as opposed to prioritizing the coverage of content

School will:

- provide needed professional development in the field of language learning and teaching

- provide varied opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's language development (teaching in the afterschool programme, teacher conference, PTA, volunteering in the classroom, etc)
- provide and continue to maintain materials and resources
- provide resources to enable the offering of additional languages
- provide and continue to maintain library materials and resources which support the educational and recreational reading needs of our students
- provide ongoing home support in French, Kazakh, and Russian

Responsibilities of stakeholders

Effective implementation of the Language Policy requires the cooperation of all stakeholders in the school community.

The Role of Administrators

- Use English as the primary language of communication
- Share responsibility for oversight, implementation and revision of the Language Policy and curriculum efforts
- Support teachers in their delivery of instruction
- Provide a variety of professional development opportunities to better enable teachers to be effective instructors of students with a range of language proficiencies
- Promote an embedded professional development model enabling collaboration concerning curriculum, instructional techniques, assessment and student progress
- Observe teachers and provide constructive feedback, materials, planning time and staff development opportunities
- Promote communication with parents concerning students' language development and provide translators when needed

The Role of EAL Teachers

EAL Teachers have extensive knowledge of language and second language development, culture, grade-level subject matter, instructional resources and assessment tools. The following goals set out the range of activities that the EAL teachers undertake:

- Use English as the primary language of communication
- Work with administrators and faculty to enhance the language programme with language across the curriculum perspective
- Promote effective language teaching and assessment practices
- Communicate with parents regarding language issues and the school's language program

The responsibilities for language-immersion and language development do not rest exclusively with the EAL teachers but rather are shared with all teachers and parents.

The Role of Teachers

Since learning and language are inextricably bound, every teacher is therefore both a content teacher and a language teacher. The faculty will:

- Use English as the primary language of instruction and social interaction in and out of the classroom except in lessons of other languages.

- Acquire a professional knowledge base in second language acquisition processes, students' developmental language behaviors, and familiarity with students' language learning cognitive styles.
- Integrate language instruction with Units of Inquiry.
- Create classroom environments that offer plentiful opportunities for students to listen to, read, speak, and write through interactive activities.
- Support and encourage language self-assessment.
- Give ongoing feedback to students on their linguistic and cognitive development by using a variety of balanced assessment strategies.
- Hold high linguistic and academic expectations for all students.
- Build a strong home-school partnership using various means of communication.
- Model positive personal qualities (e.g. Learner Profile attributes and attitudes).
- Work collaboratively to develop culturally inclusive and age appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies.
- Integrate appropriate technology that enhances language development.
- Select resources that are linguistically accessible and culturally inclusive.

The Role of Parents

Parents can support their children to be successful with regard to language. Families are encouraged to:

- Have a positive attitude toward both English and other languages.
- Promote the advantages of learning other languages.
- Maintain mother tongue literacy skills at home or after school.
- Encourage and support their children's additional language acquisition.
- Supply multilingual materials in the home.
- Learn about how children acquire language in order to support the school's efforts.

The Role of Students

English is the primary language of instruction and social interaction at KIS. English is recognized as the language of inclusion on campus, therefore students are encouraged to use English to:

- Acquire information by listening to oral presentations, interpreting print and graphic material, and observing and recording practical experiences.
- Convey information by telling stories and explaining ideas.
- Demonstrate respect for others by using English in class as well as in social situations.
- Develop fluency in English for all forms of communication

The principle should be that all participants in a conversation should be able to understand it. For example: When two children are speaking in their mother tongue, and a student who is unable to understand this language joins the conversation, it is expected that the students will switch to a language that is commonly understood.

The Language Policy will be reviewed by a committee including representatives of the whole school staff every 2 years, and approved by all stakeholders.

Revised April 2018