Turtle Bay International School
مدرسة تيرتل باي العالمية

SEK EDUCATION GROUP

LANGUAGE POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Language Policy of our institution serves as a foundational document delineating the conceptual underpinnings, pedagogical aims, beneficiary groups, and strategic approaches that govern all aspects of language learning within the school community. Its central purpose is to construct an integrated and methodologically robust linguistic framework that not only reflects the school's mission and vision but also embodies the pedagogical ethos of the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the articulated expectations of the IB continuum across the Primary Years, Middle Years, and Diploma Programmes.

In alignment with national educational directives, the Saudi Ministry of Education and Turtle Bay International School collaboratively articulate the curricular standards for Arabic Language and Literature. Furthermore, the development and progression of students' language acquisition are systematically overseen and rigorously evaluated, ensuring consistency, coherence, and adherence to internationally recognized benchmarks.

2. Mission and Vision

TBIS MISSION

We deliver inquiry-based, engaging education that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. By embracing heritage, global citizenship, sustainability, and inclusivity, and by integrating meaningful technology, we empower learners to thrive responsibly in a connected world.

TBIS VISION

To cultivate a community of international-minded, inclusive, and empowered learners who lead with creativity, responsibility, sustainability, and digital innovation in a global society.

3. Language Profile

The IB Learner Profile constitutes the pedagogical cornerstone of Turtle Bay International School, shaping our vision of an internationally minded learning community equipped to engage thoughtfully with globalization and the complex global issues of the 21st century. It embodies the characteristics we seek to cultivate in students as emerging global leaders—individuals who demonstrate intellectual curiosity, intercultural understanding, and a commitment to responsible action. Through the study and acquisition of languages, learners gain access to diverse cultural narratives and worldviews, thereby deepening their appreciation of global interconnectedness and fostering the attitudes necessary for true international mindedness.

Within our school community, it is expected that all members—students, educators, and families—aspire to enact the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. These qualities guide our collective engagement with language as a tool for learning, empathy, and global citizenship:

Inquirers:
We actively investigate linguistic structures and the varied uses of language. Through inquiry, we gather, analyse, and interpret information, making sense of our world and its global contexts.

Thinkers:
We articulate ideas with clarity, using critical and creative thinking to address linguistic challenges and explore global perspectives.

Communicators:

We demonstrate proficiency in oral, written, and visual communication across multiple languages. We listen attentively, speak with confidence, read with comprehension, and write with precision, adapting our style to diverse audiences and international contexts.

Risk-Takers:
We embrace linguistic challenges—reading, writing, and speaking in unfamiliar or demanding situations—recognizing that taking risks is essential for growth in an increasingly globalized world.

Knowledgeable:
We develop a broad and nuanced vocabulary, as well as an understanding of linguistic forms, structures, and literary traditions, enabling us to engage meaningfully with global texts and ideas.

Principled:
We recognize the ethical dimensions of language. Understanding its power to influence, persuade, and impact others, we use language responsibly and with integrity.

Caring:
We demonstrate empathy in our linguistic interactions and remain mindful of how language can support, uplift, or affect others across cultures.

Open-Minded:
We value linguistic diversity and respect the differences and similarities among languages, dialects, and communicative styles. We understand that language is a vehicle for expressing identity, perspectives, and opinions within a global society.

Balanced:
We cultivate balance in our communication by listening thoughtfully and expressing ourselves effectively in both spoken and written forms. We engage with a wide range of global texts and adapt our language register to suit purpose and audience.

Reflective:
We critically examine our own language-learning journey, assessing our progress and actively seeking ways to refine our linguistic competence to better participate in global dialogue.

4. Use of Language

At Turtle Bay International School, English serves as the primary language of instruction, creating a shared linguistic foundation through which students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds engage in collaborative inquiry and meaningful learning. As a school shaped by the dynamics of globalization, we view linguistic diversity as a powerful asset—one that nurtures international mindedness, intercultural understanding, and the development of students as future global leaders capable of addressing complex global issues.

In order for students to benefit fully from the strengths of the International Baccalaureate (IB) educational philosophy while also remaining deeply connected to the rich Arabic cultural and linguistic heritage, Turtle Bay International School upholds a dual commitment: to deliver a rigorous, internationally benchmarked academic programme while simultaneously sustaining a strong foundation in Arabic language and culture. This integrated approach ensures that students develop not only advanced linguistic competence but also a nuanced understanding of cultural identities, global perspectives, and the interconnectedness of our world.

As an international school, our faculty represents a broad range of national backgrounds, each bringing distinctive dialects and varieties of English. This linguistic plurality fosters an environment in which all forms of English are respected, recognized, and valued, reinforcing our belief that language is dynamic and enriched by cultural diversity. Language teachers incorporate multiple languages within their instruction, and English-only teachers who possess proficiency in other languages are encouraged to use this knowledge to support students in English Language Acquisition (ELA). Such practices not only facilitate linguistic transfer but also affirm students' identities as multilingual learners.

Home languages are celebrated as an essential component of students' personal and cultural identities. For example, during student-led conferences, learners are encouraged to present to their families in their home language, reinforcing linguistic pride and strengthening home–school connections. While English remains the language of instruction, we intentionally create an environment in which students are immersed in English academically while simultaneously feeling affirmed in their linguistic heritage.

In alignment with our vision for developing globally minded learners, Turtle Bay International School strongly encourages the acquisition of three languages beginning in the Early Years. We believe that early multilingualism enhances cognitive flexibility, fosters intercultural competence, and equips students to navigate an increasingly interconnected global society.

Language Acquisition; Language and Literature

Admissions and Placement Philosophy

As part of its mission as an international institution committed to fostering *international mindedness* and equitable access to high-quality global education, Turtle Bay International School (TBIS) maintains a non-selective admissions policy. The school actively encourages the enrollment of all students seeking an international education. Reflecting this commitment, no entry-level English, Spanish, or Arabic language requirements are imposed through Grade 2.

To ensure that learners benefit from the virtues of the IB educational framework while also engaging meaningfully with the rich Arabic cultural and linguistic heritage of the region, TBIS upholds a dual commitment: to deliver an internationally benchmarked curriculum while providing robust linguistic pathways that support both academic excellence and the development of multilingual global citizens.

Language Acquisition and Instructional Support

Language Acquisition (LA) instruction is embedded across all three school languages—English, Spanish, and Arabic. A range of differentiated classroom activities supports students whose initial language proficiency in any of these languages is below grade-level expectations.

Admission decisions for students requiring English Language Acquisition (ELA) support are made on an individual, case-by-case basis, ensuring that each learner receives the most appropriate and personalized academic pathway. Where needed, the school may provide, if resources are available, extracurricular ELA support to reinforce classroom learning and promote accelerated language development.

Regardless of entry point, all learning experiences—including those embedded in the Units of Inquiry—intentionally reinforce the development of English, Spanish, and Arabic. Instruction is designed to meet students' individual language-learning trajectories.

Movement Between Language Pathways

Students enrolled in Language Acquisition (LA) or Language and Literature (L&L) courses may transition between pathways based on demonstrated growth and evolving linguistic needs. Decisions regarding placement changes are grounded in:

- Systematic teacher observations
- Formative and summative assessment data
- Evidence of language proficiency aligned with curriculum expectations

For students receiving Language Acquisition support, assessments are conducted at the end of each semester using relevant standards. Findings are communicated to parents, Homeroom Teachers, and the School Counselor, and any proposed placement changes are discussed collaboratively.

English Language Acquisition (ELA) Placement Guidelines

TBIS will, at an appropriate stage, utilize WIDA grade-level assessments to determine:

- Whether a student requires ELA support
- The level and intensity of support needed
- The student's progress over time

A WIDA screener is administered at the end of each term. Students who achieve Level 5 on the WIDA screener are deemed proficient and no longer require ELA support within the Primary Years Programme (PYP) or Middle Years Programme (MYP).

Spanish Language Placement and Transition

Transitioning a learner from **Spanish Language Acquisition** to **Spanish Language and Literature** represents a significant curricular shift requiring advanced linguistic and analytical skills.

Criteria for Transition

1. **Initial Assessment**
   A comprehensive assessment evaluates the learner's proficiency across reading, writing,

listening, and speaking.

2. **Language Proficiency Requirements**
   The learner must demonstrate sufficient mastery of Spanish to meet L&L expectations. **DELE-aligned assessments** may be used to confirm readiness.

3. **Curricular Adaptations**
   If proficiency is not yet sufficient, individualized support—additional materials, scaffolded activities, or modified tasks—may be provided to bridge the gap.

4. **Additional Instructional Support**
   Students may receive supplementary language sessions, tutoring, or guidance from a specialist language-support teacher.

5. **Ongoing Assessment**
   Once placed in Language & Literature, students' progress is continuously monitored, and teaching strategies are adapted accordingly.

Arabic Language Placement and Support

Saudi nationals are required to study Saudi National Identity in accordance with Ministry of Education regulations.

Placement for non-Saudi students in Arabic is determined through a structured placement test assessing reading, writing, listening, and speaking, complemented by formative assessments. Based on results, students are placed into one of three instructional levels.

A screener is administered at the end of each term. Once a student demonstrates adequate proficiency, they may transition to Arabic Language and Literature. Students requiring additional support receive targeted activities and instructional materials to help them reach proficiency.

Mother Tongue Support

To the extent possible, the school provides support for native languages beyond Arabic, Spanish, and English, recognizing the essential role that mother tongue development plays in fostering cognitive growth, cultural identity, and international mindedness. To promote the acquisition and preservation of multiple languages, Turtle Bay offers an extensive range of multilingual resources and learning materials.

In the Diploma Programme, students whose native language is not English, Spanish, or Arabic may access self-taught language courses, enabling them to continue developing proficiency in their mother tongue in alignment with IB guidelines. At earlier grade levels, the school offers extracurricular

activities and enrichment opportunities based on identified learner needs. A Spanish mother tongue program is currently in place.

The library and Learning Hub provide multilingual support for learners across all grade levels, with dedicated sections for literature in students' home languages. Additionally, the school offers access to a broad suite of technological tools, including reading applications, digital libraries, online platforms, and publications in multiple languages, ensuring that linguistic diversity is meaningfully supported through both print and digital resources.

5. Language in the Continuum

Language in the PYP

Language serves as a foundational medium through which young learners construct meaning, formulate connections, and engage in cognitive growth. At Turtle Bay International School, all educators are considered language teachers, reflecting the belief that language development is inherently transdisciplinary and integral to every aspect of the school's Programme of Inquiry. Language instruction extends beyond the formal curriculum, employing constructivist and inquiry-based pedagogies that promote authentic, real-world learning experiences and encourage students to view language as a tool for understanding both themselves and the world around them.

Within the Primary Years Programme (PYP), language learning is guided by the IB Language Continuum, which is organized around three interrelated strands: oral language, written language, and visual language. Together, these strands support a balanced and holistic approach to language development, fostering a progression of skills across both receptive and expressive modalities.

Language instruction at TBIS encompasses a broad range of learning experiences, including phonics and grammar instruction, guided reading, discipline-specific vocabulary development, engagement with diverse literary and informational texts, authentic writing opportunities, explicit instruction on the writing process, and creative forms of linguistic expression. Instruction is designed to be responsive to the needs of all learners, with teachers continually observing and assessing students' language development to inform individualized and small-group support. Collaboration between families and teachers is ongoing, ensuring that student progress is shared, discussed, and celebrated.

Although English functions as the primary language of instruction, the school places strong emphasis on multilingualism as a pathway to international mindedness. Beginning in the Early Years, students receive around three instructional hours of Arabic and around two instructional hours of Spanish weekly. From Grade 1 onward, this increases to around five hours of Arabic and around two hours of Spanish weekly, supporting the development of linguistic proficiency in the host-country language as well as an additional world language.

The school actively cultivates partnerships with families to ensure that children maintain and extend their mother tongue competencies. The PYP Library includes thoughtfully curated materials in students' home languages, and learners are encouraged to speak, read, and explore their mother tongues both at school and at home. Families are likewise encouraged to nurture mother tongue development through regular communication, shared reading, and meaningful linguistic interactions, recognizing that a strong foundation in one's home language enhances both academic achievement and personal identity.

Language in the MYP

At Turtle Bay International School (TBIS), language is central to learning, identity, and international-mindedness in the Middle Years Programme (MYP). Language learning enables students to access knowledge, express understanding, and participate meaningfully in local and global communities. In line with IB philosophy, all teachers are considered language teachers and are responsible for supporting students' language development across the curriculum. Teaching and learning practices across subjects intentionally promote oral, written, visual, and digital communication skills to ensure students can engage confidently and effectively with learning.

The language component of the MYP at TBIS consists of two subject groups: Language & Literature and Language Acquisition. All MYP students study three languages as part of the programme. English is the primary language of instruction, and all students also study Arabic and Spanish. This multilingual approach supports cognitive development, cultural understanding, and global competence.

Placement in Language & Literature or Language Acquisition is determined by students' proficiency in the language. Students with native or near-native proficiency are placed in Language & Literature, while students learning the language as an additional language are placed in Language Acquisition. This ensures that students are appropriately challenged and supported in their language learning.

All MYP students study Arabic. Students who speak Arabic as a first language are enrolled in IB MYP Arabic Language & Literature, which also fulfills national curriculum requirements. Non-native Arabic speakers enroll in IB MYP Arabic Language Acquisition. Similarly, all students study Spanish. Native Spanish speakers are placed in IB MYP Spanish Language & Literature, while non-native Spanish speakers enroll in IB MYP Spanish Language Acquisition.

Language Acquisition courses follow the IB continuum of language acquisition phases. These phases are not linked to age or MYP year levels. Students may enter the continuum at any phase depending on their prior learning experiences and may progress through the phases at different rates. Placement at the start of the academic year is based on available evidence of proficiency and teacher judgment, with careful consideration given to maintaining a manageable range of abilities within each class.

TBIS applies a flexible placement policy that allows students to move between phases when evidence shows this to be in the student's best academic interest. Students who successfully meet the requirements of a phase progress to the next phase of the continuum. Decisions regarding movement between phases are based on students' development across all language skills.

Students studying Arabic Language Acquisition who reach Phase 3 may be considered for transition into Arabic Language & Literature. This decision is made collaboratively, based on demonstrated proficiency and readiness, and in consultation with the student and their family to ensure that the placement supports sustained academic success.

The school promotes multilingualism through inclusive classroom practices and access to learning resources in multiple languages. The school library provides books and materials in different languages to encourage reading, language development, and appreciation of linguistic diversity. Through these practices, TBIS fosters an environment that values language as a tool for learning, communication, and cultural understanding.

6. Non-native English-speaking Teachers

Non-native English speakers are required to have an appropriate level of the language, which is defined as a complete C1 or upper intermediate level, in order to teach subjects in English. Teachers and employees who want to or need to raise their level can take advantage of the professional language training the school offers. Those opportunities are offered by our university UCJC. The school seeks the best teachers for our students, regardless of their or

7.Policy Development and Revision

The development of this policy was overseen by the Pedagogical Leadership Team in November 2025. Its creation reflects a collaborative and research-informed process grounded in the principles of the International Baccalaureate (IB) and aligned with the school's mission and educational philosophy.

Responsibility for the policy's revision lies with the Pedagogical Leadership Team. This team leads the systematic review, ensuring that the policy remains relevant, consistent with IB expectations, and reflective of best practices in multilingual and international education.

During the drafting phase, the Pedagogical Leadership Team draws extensively on official IB documentation. When proposed revisions align with IB standards and the school's vision, faculty members are invited to provide feedback on the draft. Their input is then incorporated into subsequent iterations, ensuring that the policy benefits from collective professional insight and represents the needs of the broader learning community.

For the first two years following implementation, the policy will undergo annual review. Each review cycle will determine whether the policy should be maintained in its existing form or amended as necessary. Updated versions must be approved by the Pedagogical Leadership Team before being disseminated to the school community via Toddle and the school website.

Beyond this initial period, the policy will be reviewed on a rotational basis, occurring at least once every IB evaluation cycle, thereby ensuring its ongoing relevance, coherence, and compliance with evolving educational standards.

8.Bibliography

IB publications:

- Guidelines for developing a school language policy (April 2008)
- Language and Learning in the IB Programmes (September 2011)
- Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB Programmes (April 2008) o IB:
- Programme Standards and Practices
- MYP: From principles into Practice (August 2008)
- Second Language Acquisition and Mother-tongue Development (January2004)
- Towards a continuum of international education (September 2008).

- Subject Guides (MYP language A and B, DP Language A1, Language B, Language A: Literature, Language A: Language and Literature)

- Other publications:
- SEK International School Ciudalcampo. (2021). Language Policy.
- SEK International School Qatar. (2020). Language Policy.
- World International School of Torino. (2019). Language Policy.