

Yusr International School

Language Policy 2021-2022

Last Reviewed: 10 April 2019

Vision

A chain of unique schools with an Islamic perspective providing various international educational programs with a holistic and comprehensive vision maintained through high quality standards in an interactive learning environment, whilst upholding morals, identity and respect for different cultures.

Mission

At Yusr International Schools, we are committed to delivering a comprehensive international education program that enables our students to be life-long learners through improving their knowledge, critical thinking, ethics and communication skills. We have established a healthy school environment that fosters values and consolidates Islamic culture and principles. Hence, we strive to inspire identity in our students whilst developing respect and global understanding.

Our target is to produce a generation of distinguished leaders and constructive members of society who help to create a caring and peaceful world. We embrace the fact that all students learn in different ways; therefore, we can, Insha'Allah, provide our students with a variety of teaching and learning approaches that meet their individual needs and allow them to excel academically. Since learning is a lifelong process that requires the involvement of all stakeholders, our students and their parents are partners in education.

Introduction

Yusr International Schools (YIS) were founded in 2007 in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. YIS were licensed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and was re-accredited by AdvancED for a period of 5 years in 2017. Currently, YIS have been a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. In addition to this, we are accredited Cambridge English and AP testing centre.

Purpose of School Language Policy

The language policy is a working document developed by the staff and administration of YIS. The policy is consistent with the required principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our schools' linguistic and academic goals and defines the program designed to help our students attain these goals.

This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at YIS which is spreading in the entire school curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment. The language policy aspires to fulfil each aspect of the mission statement.

Our policy is a statement of agreement—one to which the staff and the YIS community are asked to commit to so our school can achieve its mission.

Language Philosophy and Beliefs

- Language is at the heart of all types of learning in all subjects
- Language is an essential tool to teaching and learning throughout the school and a connecting element across the curriculum
- In addition to the language of instruction, it is a major belief that the mother tongue should be developed in order to maintain the cultural identity
- Language is the major connecting element across the curriculum.
- Language is used to construct meaning and deepen our understanding of the world.
- Language is a tool for lifelong learning
- All teachers are teachers of language
- Reading, writing, speaking and listening are all equally valued
- Every student needs to develop a strong foundation in the language of instruction of the school.
- The language of instruction at YIS is English
- Students entering YIS with limited English will receive appropriate additional support.

- In addition to this, students in an international school should learn the language of the host country and their mother tongue language, if applicable.
- All students at YIS are encouraged and, where possible, assisted to maintain their first language.
- All students at YIS will study at least three languages.
- All students at YIS will have the opportunity to study the language of the host country – Arabic.
- The teaching of language is the responsibility of all teachers.
- Technology plays a major role in both language learning and communication

Practices That Reflect Our Beliefs

- As a school, we work to provide a wider range of resources, including a selection from the library. Also, we provide students with tablets and internet to promote research and inquiry.
- The classroom environment is rich in print with labels, signs, explanations, and teacher and student writing.
- Reading is taught using anthologies including fiction and non-fiction books.
- Children are given plenty of experience accessing information from books, reference materials, and multi-media resources with the goal of developing independent learners.
- Children write for authentic purposes.
- Students are given the experience of using a variety of media, drama, oral presentations, academic fairs and multimedia presentations.
- Resources in different languages are available and students are encouraged to read for pleasure in their home language and in other languages during sustained silent reading time.
- Reading at home is promoted through the use of reading logs or other schemes. which contain an accountability component.
- Teachers read frequently from both fiction and non-fiction books.
- Children are engaged in subject discussions as well as social conversations as appropriate.
- Children communicate their understandings and learning both in writing and orally.
- Children are given the opportunity to express opinions and feelings and explicitly taught to use language responsibly and respectfully.
- A variety of approaches and teaching styles are employed to cater to individual needs.

Admission Policy

At YIS, admission to the MYP is inclusive, however, the student must undertake the following admissions procedure. Students must undergo entrance exams in English, Arabic

and Mathematics, followed by an interview with the student and his/her parents in order to assess the capability of the student. Based on this, the decision can then be made to see whether the student needs additional English language support.

From Grades 6-10, the student must undertake an entrance exam in the subjects of English, Arabic, Mathematics and the Sciences. The student must then undergo an interview with the Head of Section. The purpose of the interview is to assess the prior knowledge of the student alongside the written entrance exam.

Language and Literature (Language A)

YIS provides students with studying national curriculum in language A: Language and Literature that is Arabic due to the majority of students as Native Arab and due to the host country language. Also, the school offers English as language A: Language and Literature for all students.

At YIS, students have to get into diagnostic test to determine their language abilities or by taking in consideration their previous study courses in his/her file at the admission time to help a student which language to chose in Language and Literature.

Language A courses at YIS focuses on making meaning in reading and expressing meaning in writing. In Language A courses, students read full-length, high quality and culturally diverse novels as a class, in small groups, and independently. Students write essays on various reflective and/or evaluative topics and interact with text through discussion. Language A curriculum is designed to affirm, reflect on, and extend identity, as students explore and understand themselves through the study of language.

Language Acquisition (Language B)

In addition to supporting students in their development of the language of instruction, we also respect and celebrate the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our learning community. The acquisition of language must be seen as a continuum along which each individual student progresses at his/her own pace.

YIS strives to make every student proficient in more than one language. All students possess the knowledge and ability to use at least two languages, but not all of them are equally proficient.

The school offers French from subject group Language acquisition. Language acquisition is taught in six phases, students of grade 6 to 10 could be placed in any phase according to their language proficiency and abilities. (Policies should include all years of the programme that the school intends to offer, regardless of what the school is offering at the time of the visit)

All students are given diagnostic tests in the chosen language in order to see their level and to assess them accordingly then place them in phases, a progress check will be made to determine the move of one phase to another. Decisions about moving a student from one

group to another, from one B group to another, or from language B to language A are done in consultation with all parties in order to make the move successful.

Language Acquisition is currently offered to our students in French and the level, a student is placed into French, is determined on an individual basis backed by teacher recommendation. Language Acquisition must be sustained in the same language for all five years of the programme.

Language Assessment

Language assessment is an essential part at YIS. Students are assessed in a variety of ways: both formative and summative assessments, in order to assess the on-going development of the students' language in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

English as the Primary Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction with YIS. From the Kindergarten grade level to Grade 12, the classroom provides enriched language instruction and is sensitive to non-native speakers' needs. Students will usually need more intensive, small-group language instruction. All students are given diagnostic tests in English in order to see their level and to assess them accordingly.

With the support and expertise of YIS, Teachers support the development and acquisition of oral and written language for proficient and non proficient students through the following strategies, among others:

1. Language taught through the curriculum
2. Differentiated instruction
3. Multi-sensory stimulus
4. Eliciting prior knowledge
5. Making connections
6. Modeling
7. Cooperative learning
8. Trans-disciplinary skills (reading, speaking, writing, and listening)

Within the MYP, languages are taught by promoting inquiry based learning and integrating speaking, reading and writing in all subjects within the Units of Inquiry. YIS offer remedial classes for students who struggle with the English language as a language of instruction.

Host Language Learning

The host language, Arabic, has high importance and it is compulsory to learn. For non-native speakers of Arabic, a special programme (Easy Arabic) is implemented since this is a requirement from the ministry of education in KSA. Students learn the Arabic language as to help with their social integration within the school and within their community. The school organises many events wherein there is always an integration of the mother tongue and the host country language as one of the areas of performance and presentation. Festivals and morning assemblies are conducted in the Host country language as well as English language. In addition, a special programme has been designed for weak students to help them to master both reading and writing skills.

Students are given a diagnostic test at the beginning of the year in order to see their level. Once assessed, they are placed in one of two Arabic programs at the school:

- Arabic: This includes the mother tongue students whose Arabic language skills are grade level proficient
- Easy Arabic, Language Acquisition: This includes students who have limited Arabic language skills according to their grade level and also non-native speakers. If they show considerable improvement, they are able to join the normal Arabic classes.
- Arabic teachers also integrate their classes with the Units of Inquiry within the MYP.

Mother Tongue Support

The preservation of the mother tongue is an essential belief of YIS. Among our multilingual, multicultural staff are speakers of several languages, who are often called upon to assist as translators as needed for parent conferences. If students have a different mother tongue language that YIS cannot cater for, parents are encouraged to volunteer in order to teach that specific language at our facilities. If we are unable to provide that instruction, we provide information to parents on where certain language programs can be found. Also, Parents and students are encouraged to speak, read, write, and develop their mother tongue at home. This strengthens the child's language skills while instilling a sense of importance about his or her culture. YIS library has variety of resources in addition to the e-books to support mother-tongue development.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Pedagogical Leadership Team (PLT) and teachers are involved in the development of the language policy and agree on it.
- The language policy is revised yearly.
- All staff ensure that the language policy is a working document and that it is referred to and cross-referenced with any other working documents in the school.
- The staff communicate the language policy to all the school's constituents and stakeholders.
- All members of the teaching staff research resources for language acquisition.

- The school librarian incorporates multilingual resources which are culturally and globally diverse. These resources are accessible to all students and staff.
- Regular evaluations by the Pedagogical Leadership Team (PLT) ensure that teachers and students are using good practices that support our language policy.