



SCHOOL WIDE LANGUAGE POLICY

2020-2021
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Purpose: The purpose of this document is to set out the underlying philosophy and approach to the teaching of languages at Brighter Horizons Academy (BHA) In order to foster tolerance and inter-cultural understanding among young people, being able to communicate effectively in more than one language is key. With this in mind, BHA has developed a policy in line with the fundamental principles of the International Baccalaureate program and the state of Texas' vision for our scholars.

Brighter Horizons will be a model Islamic educational system, within which learners may develop to their fullest potential and become a generation of leaders and individuals who are highly motivated to be successful in this life and beyond.



The International Baccalaureate's Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Brighter Horizon Academy's Mission Statement

Mission:

Brighter Horizons Academy aims to develop practicing Muslim leaders who are lifelong learners that serve their diverse community and global society as respectful citizens

Brighter Horizon Academy's Vision Statement

Vision:

Brighter Horizons Academy is a model educational institution that produces generations of leaders to be successful in this life and the Hereafter.

The IB Learner Profile

Inquirers: We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable: We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers: We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators: We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Principled: We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Brighter Horizons will be a model Islamic educational system, within which learners may develop to their fullest potential and become a generation of leaders and individuals who are highly motivated to be successful in this life and beyond.



Open-minded: We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.



Caring: We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

Risk-takers/Courageous: We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced: We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, (spiritual) and emotional— to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

Reflective: We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

Language Philosophy

Brighter Horizons Academy is mindful of the overarching significance of the IB Mission Statement in all we do. We use English and Arabic languages as a medium of inquiry, providing opportunities to challenge, nurture and develop both first and second language speakers. Learning language is integral to the development of personal, cognitive, social and cultural identity as well as to making meaning of the world around us. Students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language. Because BHA recognizes that language is the key to all learning and is a major connecting element across all aspects of the curriculum, we view the on-going language development for all students as the responsibility of all: teachers, parents and students. We also believe that students bring their prior knowledge to any learning situation and engage with the curriculum through the activities and assessments experienced. Within the interrelated components of the curriculum, students make sense of these experiences and construct meaning.

We understand that because our students come to us with varying levels of readiness, they will all progress at different paces. BHA values differentiated and varied instruction, which embraces multiple learning styles. Through language, our students acquire the ability to think and learn, to develop social skills and values, and to acquire knowledge. Teaching through all academic content areas aims to integrate the skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. As language is the key to all learning, all teachers at BHA are language teachers and the language development of our students to be the shared responsibility of teachers, parents and students. BHA understands that the most conducive environment to language learning is a positive and encouraging one, wherein students have the opportunity to engage in authentic and meaningful learning experiences.

All teaching and learning is driven by the idea that through language, we are encouraging intercultural awareness and new perspectives, a culture of curiosity, as well as an appreciation of the richness of our world's diversity. We strongly believe that through this exploration of language, students develop as deeper, independent thinkers; as responsible, understanding citizens of the world; and as better communicators in our multilingual world.



Rationale:

All students should therefore:

- Communicate, think, feel and carry out practical activities through language across all areas of the curriculum
- Develop confidence and pleasure in their own use of language
- Develop progressive skills to ensure the understanding of the nature, structures and conventions of language
- Access books and literature appropriate to age and stage of development
- Empathize with and understand cultural and ethnic diversity
- Be aware of the importance of language
- Become equipped to face the challenges of a technological society

Aims:

- To ensure that all those involved in teaching in the school do so in context of a common policy.
- To express the shared understanding of the central role that language and literacy play in learning, educational progress and achievement.
- To ensure that students are encouraged at all ages to develop a love for and appreciation of all aspects of language and recognize the value of effective communication.
- To ensure that teachers will recognize the individual needs and abilities of the students.
- To seek to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of learning and teaching and of students' attainment in language.

Language of instruction

The Language of Instruction at BHA is English. All subjects, with the exception of the Arabic is taught through the medium of English. All students in grades PreK – Grade 12 experience a rigorous English-medium language program through the Texas Essential Standards and Skills - English Language Arts and curriculum standards. The school system also delivers the Arabic Language Standards to every student as developed by BHA administration. BHA strives to make every student proficient in two languages. All students will have the knowledge of and the ability to use two languages, but not all of them to the same extent. Students vary in their ability to learn a second language; some will achieve functional proficiency in the target language while others will become truly bilingual. The acquisition of language must be seen as a continuum along which each individual student progresses at his/her own speed. Over 90% of our teachers speak more than one language although English and Arabic are the common languages used for all collaborations, planning meetings and communications within the school. The Pedagogical Leadership Team are dedicated towards providing support in both languages where possible.



Essential Agreements for the Teaching of Language: Beliefs and Practices

All students are:

- Provided ample opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak across the curriculum.
- Taught literacy skills in context and across content areas.
- Taught strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, respond, appreciate, and construct texts.
- Taught through a variety of technological and information resources.
- Encouraged to express oneself orally and in writing, in a variety of media and situations.
- Encouraged to share and develop their work in a social context.
- Encouraged to see language as a tool for thinking, inquiring and learning.
- Encouraged to maintain and value their mother tongue and to value that of other students.
- Provided the opportunity to become proficient in more than one language.
- Exposed to a broad range of literature reflecting a variety of cultures and perspectives.
- Encouraged to develop a love of language and literature.
- Provided constructive and specific feedback from teachers and peers.
- Exposed to modeling of rich language experiences.
- Given time to reflect on their learning and to apply techniques appropriately.

The language offered at Brighter Horizons Academy operates within the curricular framework of the International Baccalaureate Program. Student's study of language supports the IB fundamental concepts of holistic learning, intercultural awareness and communication. Through language, students are able to access knowledge and see it as an interrelated whole. We encourage students to make links within and across subjects through the transdisciplinary themes, global contexts, theory of knowledge, approaches to learning and through explicit reference to the Learner Profile attributes. We encourage students to consider issues from multiple perspectives, and learn about their own and others' cultures and societies. As students mature and gain a greater awareness of themselves and the world in which they live, their language development is supported through an increasingly sophisticated engagement and appreciation of world literature.

Language teaching at BHA builds upon the TEKs language progressions with rich language experiences of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and presenting through a range of media and information technologies. The overarching focus is language as a means of exploration, expression and communication. Clarity and accuracy of language as well as confidence of self-expression are fostered. In all subject areas, communication facilitates understanding and student self-reflection.

The aim of BHA is for each student to reach the highest level of literacy and proficiency in Arabic. Entering students have varied backgrounds. They are afforded the opportunity to accelerate and support their learning by the means of extra instructional time.

Modern Classic Arabic

The school is committed to enabling students to achieve proficiency in Modern Classic Arabic as a second language. Arabic language instruction is achieved through the balanced literacy approach and includes rich language experiences in reading, writing, listening, speaking viewing and present through a range of media and technology. Arabic learning is facilitated through regular classes dedicated to language learning and language rich activities. All students in the Primary Years Program are enrolled Arabic as a Second language.



Meeting Diverse Learning Needs

A teacher might call upon curriculum and administrative assistance if a student continues to struggle with various aspects of schoolwork even after adequate time has been given to settle in and understand his/her routine. An observation of the student would be carried out and depending on the outcome of this observation a decision would be made as to whether the student needs any additional support. The 'MY IB' provides a meeting student diverse learning needs document which outlines some examples of those needs and strategies to support those needs.

Language and the Primary Years Program

English for Academic Purposes

All PYP teachers recognize that language – which includes spoken, written and visual language - is central to learning. We also recognize that a major task for *all homeroom* teachers at this level is the explicit teaching of Arabic for academic purposes.

Study of the Language of Instruction

BHA requires all students to study English Language Arts approximately eighty percent of the school week Arabic, Islamic studies, and Quran for approximately twenty percent of the school day. Teachers determine the appropriate level of proficiency based upon ongoing formative and summative assessments.

Language for communication and learning

To facilitate learning for all students, but especially second language learners, teachers are encouraged to use the following methods:

- Use visual materials (graphic organizers) alongside oral instruction to deepen understanding
- Use actions (Total Physical Response-TPR) alongside oral instructions
- Reinforce oral instructions with written instructions
- Emphasize academic vocabulary specific to the subject
- Actively use visible thinking strategies
- Provide student-centered activities which allow students to explore ideas and concepts through dialog
- Structure tasks and scaffolding lessons/assignments to maximize student's opportunity for success
- Allow students to give an oral response at times rather than a written; how far this can be allowed depends on the subject specific marking criteria
- Use language for reflection, either by journaling or in direct email contact with the teacher



Home and Family Languages (HFL)

As a school we promote international mindedness on the part of everyone. We encourage access to different cultures, perspectives and languages.

As a school we subscribe to a model where there is a strong presence of Arabic, in which students:

- Acquire a second language
- Self-esteem and/or personal identity do not suffer
- Become highly proficient in both languages

We believe that HFL support aims to achieve bi-literacy by facilitating the learning of the language of instruction and additional languages. The support also increases intercultural awareness and understanding, for both the student and his/her peers. It enables students to remain in touch with their culture, and re-adjust to their home community and/or education system, should they return.

The school will actively help and support any parent who is seeking mother tongue instruction for their child. The school will seek to ensure that the Library resources represent the languages and cultures of the whole school community.

The school's IB Coordinator is responsible for:

- Maintaining a list of teachers of languages other than English
- Working with the Librarian to improve resource collection for other languages represented in school