



HKCA Po Leung Kuk School

保良局建造商會學校

Language Policy

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1. Guiding Statements

1.1 Vision

Our students will become creative, critical thinkers who are internationally minded lifelong learners

1.2 Mission

We will:

- Provide a transdisciplinary, challenging learning environment in a happy, safe and caring school
- Develop our students' confidence and desire to inquire, in order to expand their knowledge, skills and understanding
- Nurture individual interests, strengths and abilities
- Foster an inclusive language atmosphere where English, Chinese and other mother-tongue languages are valued and respected

2. Language Philosophy Statement

We believe that every teacher at HKCA Po Leung Kuk School (the School) is a teacher of language and that every member of the learning community plays a significant role in language development. Language is a medium of inquiry and plays an essential role in the School. Language is the major connecting element across the curriculum. It is necessary to learn language, study language and learn through the use of language.

The primary language of instruction at the School is English. In our school community, a command of English is the key to accessing information and communicating. We recognize that English is not the first language of many of our students and that they come to us with a range of different language levels. Therefore, in order for all students to be successful academically, all teachers are committed to the growth and development of the students' English language skills. We believe that language learning is a three-way partnership between the School, parents and students.

We believe in the importance and value of the host country's culture and languages. Access to Chinese allows the students to appreciate their cultural surroundings and participate more fully in the local community.

We also believe the development of mother tongue language is crucial for cognitive development and in maintaining cultural identity. We recognize it is essential to have a strong foundation in one's first language, as it facilitates the acquisition of other languages.

3. Language Needs

3.1 Language of Instruction

The language of instruction throughout the School is English, the only exception to this being Chinese classes. Teachers, as role models of good language practice, are expected to conduct their lessons in the target language of the class. For those students who are not proficient in English, the primary aim of language instruction must be to achieve an academic working level in English. All students are expected to use English to the best of their language ability. We do not have an English-only policy for students at the School. Where it will deepen the conceptual understanding of their learning, students may use their mother tongue. However, language should not be used to intentionally exclude others.

3.2 Language of Communication

Community Translation

All official school documents are produced in English. Those relevant to the School are made available electronically to facilitate the use of translation software, thus allowing documents to be read in other languages.

3.3 Teaching and Learning Within the Academic Programme

The International Baccalaureate's (IB) Language Scope and Sequence documents guide the School curriculum in order to promote inquiry-based language learning. The language programme strongly relates to the programme of inquiry. However, teachers also identify, plan and teach areas of language that are outside the programme of inquiry. All students are required to learn at least two languages; English and Chinese. Learning to communicate in a variety of ways is fundamental to their development of intercultural understanding and crucial to their identity affirmation.

3.3.1 English

Oral Language: Listening and Speaking

Oral language is an integral part of the learning programme. Each day, students are encouraged to use English in the classroom through aural and oral learning engagements in order to develop, consolidate, and extend their listening and speaking abilities.

Written Language: Reading and Writing

Reading: Teachers use a range of strategies that create regular opportunities for them to read to and with students (shared and guided texts), and have students read independently. They also incorporate the five components of reading (Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, Fluency, Comprehension, and Vocabulary).

Writing: The School identifies specific text types to be introduced at each year level. As students progress through the years, their understanding of these will be deepened and consolidated. Referring to the 6+1 Traits of Writing (Ideas, Organisation, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions and Presentation), teachers regularly model writing to students (shared and guided writing), and provide opportunities for students to write independently. The teacher guides handwriting practices to ensure clear letter formation and a functional, legible, handwriting style.

Visual Language: Viewing and Presenting

We identify the processes involved in interpreting, using and constructing visuals and multi-media in a variety of situations, for a range of purposes and audiences. This allows students to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs.

3.3.2 Chinese (Mandarin)

There are Pathways 1 & 2 in Grade 1, and Pathways 1, 2 & 3 from Grade 2 to Grade 5, all taught in Mandarin using traditional characters. Chinese teachers make pathway placement recommendations to the Principal based on their on-going student assessments.

Pathway 1: This introductory programme is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of the language and culture. This pathway focuses mostly on listening, oral language and culture, incorporating reading and writing at a developmentally and linguistically appropriate level.

Pathway 2: This programme is designed to provide students with a deeper understanding of the language and culture. It is a balanced programme of listening, oral language, reading, writing and culture.

Pathway 3: This is a high-level programme focused more on reading, writing and culture than on listening and oral language. It is most suitable for those assessed as being at a level at which they are able to manage this programme's high linguistic and academic requirements.

3.4 Language Assessment

This section should be read in conjunction with the School "Assessment Policy".

Language is assessed according to IB guidelines in the areas of oral, visual and written communication. Assessments are given to determine literacy levels and skills, with reference to IB Language Scope and Sequence documents.

3.4.1 Entry Assessment

This section should be read in conjunction with the School "Admissions Policy and Procedures".

Prospective families are required to indicate their child's language ability and language background on the School application form. All prospective students take an English assessment and, when

appropriate, a Chinese assessment. Results determine the level of support they should receive. The School may delay the start of Chinese language classes for students who are identified as needing intensive ESL support.

3.5 Language Support

The School recognizes the need for ongoing language support. Teachers support all students in their learning of English using available resources to meet this need. The School provides various professional development opportunities for teachers to improve student language acquisition and learning.

3.5.1 English as a Second Language (ESL) Support

Students who are admitted to the school without grade-level fluency in English are provided with ongoing language support through differentiated activities within the regular class. Students identified as needing additional ESL support may be required to take extra ESL classes outside of school at the parents' own expense. Student progress will be regularly monitored and those who have not reached the necessary English level may be required to continue these ESL support classes.

3.6 Mother-Tongue Development

The School promotes mother-tongue development as it facilitates students' cognitive development and deepens the understanding of their learning. Teachers regularly communicate with parents about the programme of inquiry and other curriculum areas, so they can reinforce this learning in their mother tongue at home. The school offers complimentary use of school facilities for language classes after school, and encourages parents to donate books in their mother tongue to the library.

4. Expectations of Language Usage

4.1 Academic Writing Conventions

Spelling, punctuation and character conventions will reflect the international character of the school; emphasis is placed on consistency of use in a student's work.

4.2 Around the Campus

The School encourages English and Mandarin usage around the school by teaching the importance of linguistic inclusion and the understanding that English and Mandarin, regardless of proficiency, are our community languages. Mother tongue languages are also valued and respected. However, language should not be used to intentionally exclude others.

5. Communication and Review Process

5.1 Communication of Policy to the School Community

The School shares and discusses this policy document with staff at the beginning of each academic year and makes it available to all members of the school community.

5.2 Policy Review

The School establishes a review committee to collaboratively evaluate and review this policy document annually using the IB document, *Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy*.³

6. Sources

1. Making the PYP Happen. IBO 2009
2. Guidelines for developing a school language policy. IBO 2008
3. Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy. IBO 2012