



LANGUAGE POLICY

Language Philosophy:

At King Heights Academy, we appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity making the Language policy an integral part of designing and implementing the curriculum both within the classroom and outside. We believe that all teachers are language teachers and all students are language learners.

This Language policy is a working document compiled by all the members of the staff under the leadership of the Pedagogical Leadership Team (PLT) to help all our students understand and use language appropriately, skillfully and intelligently with confidence and empathy in a variety of ways.

We believe:

- Language is an instrument of collective expression
- Language is constantly evolving
- Multilingualism is an important vehicle to promote international mindedness
- Language is the bridge that allows people to communicate and connect with one another

First Language:

At King Heights Academy, English is the language of instruction and documentation. Therefore, it is the first language of the school and as such all teachers are language teachers.

King Heights Academy is committed to strike a balance and alignment between provincial and IB PYP language expectations. For this purpose, teachers will plan collaboratively both vertically and horizontally.

Recognizing that language will drive the inquiry in the PYP units, the staff will endeavour to provide students meaningful and relevant instructions, practice and interactive opportunities.

Students will engage daily in meaningful and developmentally appropriate literacy experiences that support their growth in reading, writing, listening and oral communication. Language experiences are also built into the *Program of Inquiry* and literacy experiences support the development of strong communication skills.

The expectations for Kindergarten to grade three focus on the foundational knowledge and skills that students need in order to establish a strong basis for language development. These include students' oral language, prior knowledge and experience, understanding of concepts about print, phonemic awareness, understanding of letter sound relationships, vocabulary knowledge, semantic and syntactic awareness, higher order thinking skills, and capacity for metacognition. The expectations for grades four to six focuses on students' ability to use their knowledge and skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. They develop their ability to understand, critically analyze, and communicate a broad range of information and ideas from and about their multicultural and multimedia environment. For a detailed description of each grades language curriculum, please refer to the King Heights Academy Curriculum guide.

All grades have libraries in their classrooms or access to our school library with fiction and non-fiction texts for guided, shared and independent reading. Students who are beginning to read have levelled readers to pace the reading program as per the developmental needs of the student.

The school also makes use of the Vaughan Library to procure teaching-learning resources, as and when necessary.

Equal emphasis will be placed on reading, writing, speaking and listening. In the elementary grades, media literacy will be incorporated into the PYP units of inquiry. The learning in the language classrooms will progress from guided and shared to independent, where the teacher becomes the facilitator. Language assessment will be varied and continuous.



Support for Students who are not Proficient in the English Language (ESL)

As stated in our inclusion policy: King Heights Academy believes in meeting the unique needs of each individual child; which includes English as second language learners. King Heights Academy does not have separate ESL classes, yet we meet the needs of ESL learners by providing modifications and accommodations to the individual student's program based on the ESL needs. When a student enters the school who is not proficient in English an assessment is provided to determine their language level and then an individual Education plan is created in collaboration with the homeroom teacher, Language Committee and the Inclusive Education Team.

Second Language:

Keeping in mind the international and national significance of French in Canada, King Heights Academy offers French as a Second Language. While provincial regulations make it mandatory to teach French as the second language from grade 4 onwards, we at King Heights, start this journey from Pre-Kindergarten onwards.

In our Kindergarten program, the emphasis is on oral communication and the joy of learning French. In the Elementary grades, grammar and syntax will be introduced and developed. By the end of grade 4, students will have the skills to write small paragraphs in simple structured sentences containing learned vocabulary. In addition they will listen to and talk about short oral texts, read a variety of and simple texts and identify and use language conventions.

French will be heard and seen in and outside of the classroom. It is incorporated in the units of inquiry in all grades, where feasible. The PYP Learner Profile is used to support the linguistic development of the learner in French. At King Heights Academy, 80 minutes per week are spent on French with the Pre-Kindergarten students, 100 minutes per week with the Kindergarten students; and 225 minutes per week with Grades 1-6.

Personal Language/Home Language/Mother Tongue:

The Mother Tongue of second language learners (also known as first language, preferred language, native language, heritage language, and best language), describes the language that students use at home, and/or outside the classroom environment, (IBO Second Language and Mother-Tongue Development, January 2004).

King Heights Academy's Library has a collection of multilingual resources that can be accessed by all students at any time. School assemblies will be used as an important forum for awareness of Personal Language/Home Language/Mother Tongue in coordination with parents who will volunteer to share their rich cultural heritage as well as Personal Language/Home Language/Mother Tongue. Personal Language/Home Language/Mother Tongue will also be available in the library.

Transdisciplinary Language:

At King Heights Academy we ensure that the students learn to express and articulate themselves in different disciplines. The Language and vocabulary of mathematics, arts, music and technology will be given due attention by the teachers for transdisciplinary learning.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Language learning of the students is the responsibility of students, teachers and parents.

Students:

King Heights Academy students gradually develop respect and responsibility for their language learning with the help of appropriate instructions and linguistic exposure. Students are encouraged to actively pursue opportunities within and outside the classroom to enrich their communication process.



Parents:

Parents' help is effective if they know what the language expectations are for their child and are updated and informed on the class activities. Parents can help their children use the language appropriately and meaningfully. They are also an important resource for imparting Personal Language/Home Language/Mother Tongue to their own child and share it with the other students.

Some of the ways in which parents of King Heights Academy students are expected to help in the following

- ways:
- Make reading material and opportunities available at home
 - Attend parent-teacher interview regularly
 - Visit the library often
 - Encouraging students to complete the assignments at home
 - Involving children in discussions and encourage them to use language in their daily lives. · Encourage their children to read signs, billboards, license plates of cars etc to show the pervasive presence of language in our daily lives.
 - Speak in their Personal Language/Home Language/Mother Tongue at home

Parents are continuously encouraged to play an active and crucial role in the promotion of third language and mother tongue. Their involvement ensures that the students get these valuable linguistic experiences in order to make them more internationally minded.

Teachers

King Heights Academy teachers have in depth knowledge and understanding of the King Heights Academy Curriculum, the Ontario Curriculum and the PYP IB Language scope and sequence, and use differentiated instructional strategies and assessment tasks. They design a balanced literacy program that focuses on reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and presenting. The instructional activities and assessment tasks require higher order thinking skills making them principled inquirers and reflective communicators.

Teachers also create opportunities for students to acquire and apply new language learning in the wider context of community and the world. This may be in the form of extra-curricular activities that support the language program like Spelling Bee, public speaking, essay-writing contest etc. King Heights Academy teachers are also committed to their own professional development and will bring in innovative and effective ways of language instruction.

Pedagogical Leadership Team (PLT)

The PLT ensures that the students have access to the best linguistic experience and that the teachers have the resources for designing such experiences. The PLT encourages and supports the initiatives and professional development of teachers in the teaching of Languages. Please see Professional Development Plan for details.

The PLT ensures that the teachers plan collaboratively to articulate the Language program vertically and horizontally through the grades.

The PLT ensures proper implementation of the Primary Years Program and with appropriate accommodations and adequate support, whenever required by students.

This policy will be reviewed annually by all staff.

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