LANGUAGE POLICY

The International Academy- Amman

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1.1 Philosophy

Language is first and foremost the means of communication between individuals, groups and nations. Through the acquisition of language, students are enabled to access the necessary learning tools for their continued and future development and success; thereby enabling them to meet the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world.

IAA, therefore, believes that language and learning are inextricably linked. Through the languages spoken and taught at the school, students can develop attitudes and skills as well as knowledge about their own and others' social and national cultures; thereby encouraging multiple perspectives, understandings and international awareness.

IAA further believes that:
- all teachers are language teachers regardless of discipline or grade level
- mother tongue development (Arabic) is vital in order to maintain culture, heritage and community links
- whilst all languages are equally valuable; the language of instruction and mother tongue should receive additional support in order to further fulfil each student's educational and social potential
- all members of the school community have an important role in a student's language development either through use of language and/or promotion of language learning
- the school community should be encouraged to acquire and develop additional language/s
- students of other mother tongues should also receive additional support (where practicable)

2.1 Languages at IAA

IAA delivers an international programme to a predominantly Jordanian school population. All students must study Arabic regardless of nationality. The language of instruction is English with Arabic taught at all grade levels and Spanish offered as a third language (Language A/B) in Secondary. It is intended that all graduating IAA students will be bilingual in English and Arabic. Mother tongue (Arabic) is used in some classes depending on grade level e.g. Christian and Islamic Religion (in Primary and Secondary) and Social Studies (in Primary).

At primary level, the emphasis is on continuing acquisition of English language skills and refinement of Arabic. Core (English, Maths, Science and ICT) and Foundation subjects are delivered in English with Arabic as the language of instruction for Arabic Language, Social Studies and Christian and Islamic Religion (as required by the Ministry).

In secondary, all subjects are delivered in English with the exception of Arabic, Spanish and Christian and Islamic Religion. Spanish is offered as an additional language at IB Diploma level and MYP. All students will be encouraged to use the language of instruction in the corresponding class.

Arabic use within classes other than in Arabic, Religion (Christian and Islamic) and Social Studies (in Primary) is not, as a rule, permitted unless an Arabic equivalent is needed in order to explain a word. Teachers will refrain from using Arabic as a pedagogical practice.

As language is the key to all learning, appropriate linguistic strategies will be taught throughout all subjects regardless of language of instruction.

Through curriculum and language instruction students will be able to:

- acquire knowledge to help them make sense of their surroundings
- critically express thoughts with clarity and confidence
- develop communication and critical thinking skills
- confidently communicate, either orally and/or in writing
- understand the power of language and apply it appropriately
- choose appropriate registers according to audience, situation and need
- find a balance between listening and speaking
- reflect on how they use language

3.1 Mother Tongue (Arabic)

As the most widely used mother tongue, Arabic, takes an important role in the lives of our students. For linguistic and cultural reasons, the teaching of standard Arabic is given high value at IAA.

Arabic development in Primary is being supported directly for students through the teaching of Arabic by specialist teachers with hours allocated according to level and Ministry requirements.

At secondary level (Grades 6-12), all Jordanian students must study Arabic. Additional support will be given by the Arabic Department to students who are having difficulty. Mother tongue is further developed through the teaching of Arabic through Christian and Islamic Religion and Social Studies (Primary) as well as the scheduled Arabic classes. This is in accordance with Ministry regulations.

For students with other mother tongues (usually at Diploma level), language development is encouraged and supported where possible. For such students, IAA will attempt to find appropriate resources, including teachers, literature and cultural experiences. If mother tongue instruction is being provided by an outside tutor, the school is willing to provide access to a classroom after hours during the week (Sunday-Wednesday 1330-1630). For other needs, families are welcome to contact the school, which will consider each request on a case-by-case basis.

4.1 Additional Language Support

As an English medium school, IAA recognises that not all students learn at the same pace or have similar learning aptitudes as regards languages. Accordingly, additional English and Arabic support will be provided in a variety of forms for identified students; however, additional AAL/ESL/EAL support will not be provided for longer than 2 years (inclusive from

KG to Grade 8). By Grade 9 and 10, it is expected that no student will be given additional language support.

Students who are identified as Learning Support/SEN will continue to receive language support throughout their education. This will be provided by the Learning Support/SEN teachers/s. Support will be determined on a case by case basis with a mixture of pull out and in class support. The nature of the assistance will depend on the level of need. Support may take the form of additional classes and/or extra curricula activities.

In some cases, parents will be advised to seek additional forms of support, outside of school and at their own expense.

5.1 Placement

5.1.1 Admissions

All students entering IAA will undergo an admissions test (see 'Admissions Policy'). Based on the results student will be offered a place at IAA. Upon application and part of the application process, a language profile will be constructed for each student. This profile will include information on the home language, language of education and languages that the student has been exposed to.

5.1.2 Class Placement

Principals of Primary and Secondary have final say in placement of students into classes. This is usually done after consultation with Grade Leader/s, Heads of Department and review of student results. Parents and students cannot decide into which class students are placed, what level of instruction is given and/or subjects to be studied.

Mid-year entrants (for Grades 6-10) are placed in language groups according to available places, ability and course requirements. It is not usual for IAA to accept mid-year entrants in Primary.

5.1.2.1 English

For Primary students, placement in English language classes will be according to age and grade level; whilst in secondary (Grades 6-10), placement will be based on diagnostic testing conducted at the start of the academic year. This testing will be carried out in order to define the linguistic level of each student and will form the basis for which MYP Language course would be the most suitable for the student and what level of course should be offered.

Ongoing diagnostic testing will be conducted to ensure placement is appropriate.

In secondary, throughout the academic year, the different language levels will be continuously reviewed to ensure that each student is placed in the appropriate language course and level. Normally, movement between levels will occur at the end of a reporting period and only if it is determined that the student will be able to make the necessary adjustments and 'catch up' (if needed). Normally students will not be moved out of language support until end of year. Exit from a programme level is determined jointly by teacher recommendation and successful performance. As students will be behind their peers when

they re-join classes, families will be encouraged to support the school in helping their child to bridge any gaps.

5.1.2.2 Arabic

All Jordanian students (primary and secondary) must study Arabic preferably as a Language A. The exception is for students who can provide evidence that they went to an English speaking school in a non Arabic speaking country. In these cases, they will be assessed to ascertain levels and placed accordingly. In most cases, they will be taught at Language B (see Appendix C: Language B Placement Procedures). Additional support is also given by the Arabic Department to students who are having difficulty.

5.1.2.3 Spanish

Spanish is offered as a Language B in Grades 6-12. At Grades 6-8 level all students study Spanish B. At Grades 9 and 10, Spanish is offered as a Language B option. In Grades 11 and 12.

On occasion a student or students may be offered Language A Spanish in MYP. This, however, will be determined by the ability to timetable and staff the course.

6.1 Unique Situations

IAA's Language Policy has been designed according to the situations most often encountered. However, IAA recognizes that every student is unique, and it is possible that a student will enter IAA with a language background very different from the usual profiles. For such students IAA will assess each situation on a case-by-case basis, and attempt to find a solution which will meet those needs within the constraints of the school.

7.1 Curriculum

7.1.1 Reception-Grade 5

In English, students will follow a literacy scheme of work set out in the English National Literacy Framework (English) and in Arabic, a modified Jordanian Ministry of Education curriculum. These course are modified according to needs with work differentiated in response to ability.

Early Years

Early Years language teaching consists of a wide variety of opportunities for children to speak, listen and develop their language skills. This will come from planned activities and guided play as well as literacy specific tasks.

A structured phonics programme in English and Arabic to support the children towards reading and writing is taught. Parental support will be in the form of home/school conversations, talk homework and phonic sheets.

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 1 will continue the emphasis on speaking and listening skills and start to move the children towards more formal literacy sessions. These will include Shared Reading, Shared Writing, guided reading and phonic activities. 'Big Writing' will allow students to develop the

basic skills needed for independent writing. Guided Reading will introduce the children to text based comprehension.

Key Stage 2

Grammar and comprehension will be taught through in depth study of genres. Comprehension will be further extended through Guided Reading where students will be introduced to text analysis and higher order questioning. Big Writing skills continue to be developed as new genres are introduced. Speaking and Listening are more formalised through use of drama, presentations and debating in the upper primary.

At all levels, technology will be used as appropriate.

7.1.2 Grades 6-10

All of the language specific classes in IAA Secondary School generically follow their respective International Baccalaureate guidelines. All Languages A and B respectively, regardless of whether it being Arabic, English or Spanish, work with and apply the published MYP and DP aims, objectives, including the MYP interim objectives, and assessment criteria for their respective subject group. In Secondary School, technology is incorporated into language learning and there is an increased emphasis on cross disciplinary work and real life usage.

Students in Grades 6-10 follow the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. According to IB specifications, Language A (Arabic and English) follow an integrated approach to language learning and focus on language through literature and use of film and other media. Language A programmes are designed for students who are native or near native level. Students will be expected to write academic essays and original creative pieces as well as responses to literature.

Students who study Language B (English, Arabic and/or Spanish) are usually non native speakers or students who have been predominantly in a non Arabic/English/Spanish speaking environment. The emphasis is on fluency and accuracy in the language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Lessons will focus more on acquisition of language skills as opposed to literature appreciation and analysis. The goal for Language B learners is to have functional fluency in Arabic and English by the end of Grade 10, though not necessarily the ability to use the Language B as extensively as Language A.

7.1.3 Grades 11-12

Students at International Baccalaureate Diploma level must take as a minimum two languages- one from Group 1 and one from Group 2 or alternatively two languages from Group 1. Levels are similar to IB MYP in that student must take a Language A (Group 1) which is usually their best language and which is designed for students who intend to continue post high school studies in that language. It is also usually their native language. Language on offer at IAA in group one will vary year to year. At present, IAA offers Language and Language and Literature options.

At DP level, Language A: Literature focuses developing an understanding of the literary criticism techniques including teaching students how to make independent literary

judgments. It is intended as a course which provides for continued mother tongue development.

Language A: Language and Literature focuses on developing in students an understanding of the 'nature of meanings generated by language and the web of relationships they share with the social world' (IBO (2011), 'New Language Provisions' p. 2) with the addition of exploring a wide variety of non-literary texts.

Students may also study a Language in Group 2. This may be taken as language B or ab initio (if offered by IAA). These courses are designed to provide students with the 'necessary skills and intercultural competence that will enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the language studied is spoken' (ibid, p.3). The ab initio course is designed for students who have little or no experience of the language, whilst Language B is intended for students with prior learning of the language.

At DP level students may opt to take their mother tongue as a school supported Self-Taught A1 language, if that language is not already offered at the A1 level at IAA. Students interested in this option will need to discuss it with the DP Coordinator as early as possible. The school will make reasonable efforts to accommodate Self-Taught requests, but this option cannot be guaranteed due to scheduling and teacher considerations.

The IB has now introduced a provision for award of a bi lingual diploma (first award 2013). At IAA it may be possible for students to be awarded this diploma by completing two languages selected from Group 1, subject to meeting IB DP qualification for such an award and IAA's ability to staff and timetable it.

8.1 Language Curriculum Continuum

English   **Arabic**   **Spanish**
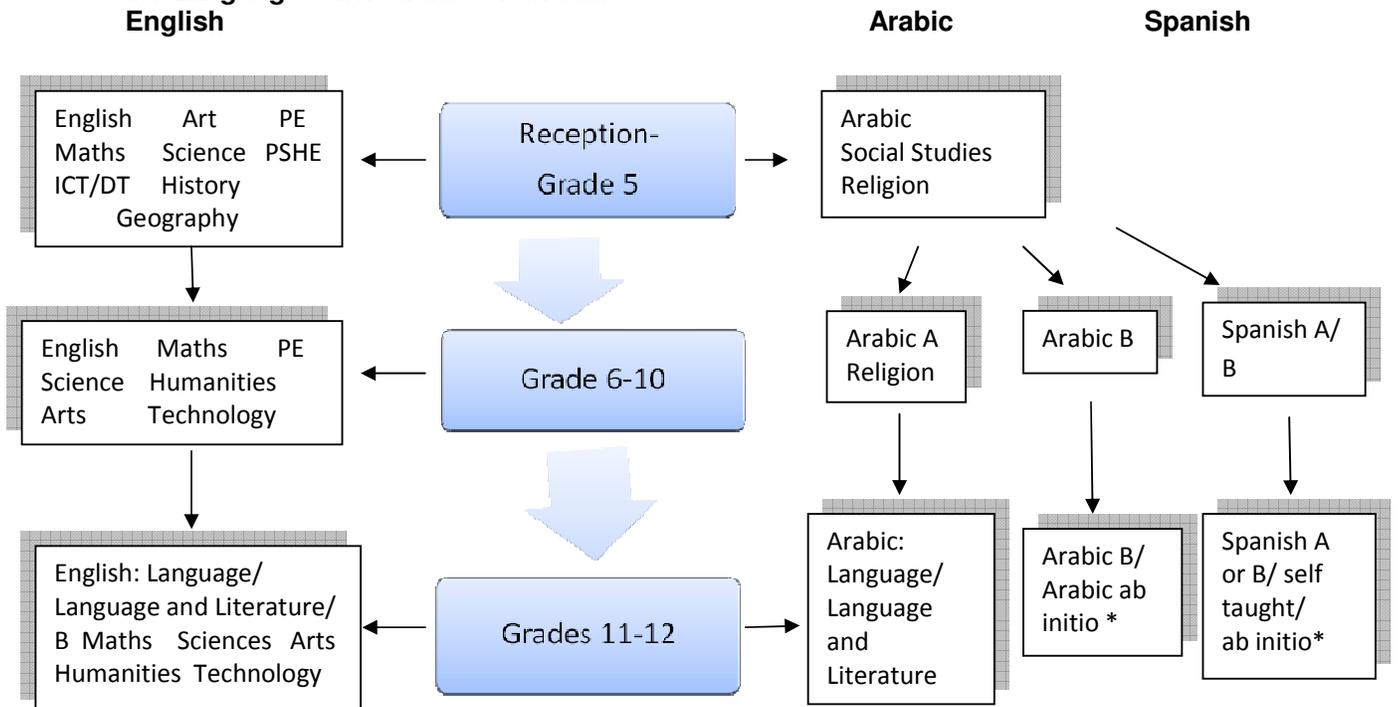
(* ab initio is offered to students with one year or less of study)

9.1 Methodology

The various teaching methodologies at IAA promote a stimulating learning environment, integrating knowledge, critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. Students, at all grade levels, are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work, as well as to think for themselves through active learning. Teachers will provide a wide range of learning experiences and opportunities so as to develop and enrich student language skills. They are also mindful in their methodology in accordance with the age of their classes. Younger students develop their language skills through examples and patterns as well as having a large sensory input. Older students, on the other hand, require more logical and abstract teaching, and are able to develop cognitive and analytical skills.

The many nationalities present amongst faculty and staff also will provide a wide range of teaching approaches. Through interactive learning students will be given the opportunities to engage as both receivers and senders, as well as participate in meaningful communication. Cooperative learning will enable students to achieve goals as a group within the classroom, sharing information and skills. By actively engaging in content and skills based learning, language skills will develop also through other subject areas, and allow students to appreciate the power within language and language learning.

IAA also recognizes that each student has their own learning style, hence differentiation is seen as an invaluable tool. Teachers will provide work which caters to the students strongest way of learning, whether this be auditory-sequential, kinaesthetic-tactile, or visual-spatial, whilst at the same time giving students opportunities to absorb knowledge and skills through a less favoured style. Technology will be used in the classroom as appropriate in order to enhance student learning.

IAA recognises that each subject has specific vocabulary students must master. With this in mind, subject specific vocabulary will be introduced (by the class teacher) prior to each unit of work and continuously reinforced during the unit and reviewed post unit.

10.1 Assessment

Teachers regularly use diagnostic, formative and summative assessment, self and peer assessment to assist in the teaching and learning. Assessment takes place in accordance with IAA's Assessment Policy and policies and practices as outlined by accrediting authorities (IB in secondary). Student work is assessed using rubrics and/or pre established criteria/descriptors/objectives according to grade level. Students and parents will be kept informed of student progress through informal parent teacher meetings, scheduled Parent /Teacher consultations, Progress Reports, Student-led Conferences and/or Portfolios. Each or any of these are according to grade level.

11.1 Resources

IAA is well provided with resources for languages at all grade and age levels. Resources will be age and grade appropriate with emphasis on developing language skills and providing for extension and/or remediation.

The school libraries play a key role and are a central part of the school language program. They are used as an integral part of the curriculum, by students and teachers, and are frequently

developed with updating of resource materials. A wide range of literature in the school libraries will extend and supplement classroom resources. The aim is to help students become independent and committed readers, through free interaction with a variety of texts and to develop literacy skills. The school library includes both Arabic and English literary and non-literary texts. In the Secondary school, there is a smaller selection of the same in Spanish.

Each department will also ensure an adequate number of resources which further supplement subject specific resources eg vocab wall charts. Teachers are also able to access the EAL/AAL teachers and resource materials as well as SEN for additional teaching materials and support designed to assist in developing subject specific language skills.

12.1 Language Use Around School

IAA is aware of the power of language and words, and acknowledges that what individuals say, and how individuals say things, directly affects people's perceptions of our intentions, goals and values. IAA therefore encourages all its community members to develop positive means of communication that foster a sense of community. For this reason, IAA students and teachers should, when in group situations, use the language that is common to that group. This also means avoiding the use of words that denigrate, degrade or alienate others.

13.1 School Documentation

IAA uses British spelling for English language documents and standard Arabic for all documents produced in Arabic. As a general rule, school documents will be produced in English.

14.1 Professional Development

In order to better provide for staff language acquisition, IAA will regularly provide in school professional development on language acquisition and language teaching methodology. All Faculty are expected to participate and are encouraged to deliver and adopt proven strategies. As life long learners, Faculty will also be encouraged to develop their own language skills.

Review Date: 14th May, 2011

Appendix A

Definitions

ab initio
This is the study of a language at beginner level for students who have no previous experience in it.

Differentiation
The adaptation of teaching strategies and content to help students access the curriculum

Language of instruction
This is the language by which the school curriculum is delivered

Mother tongue
This is the also known as 'first language', 'native language', language of culture and/or 'best language'

Second language
This is the language that a student acquires after their first language. It is also usually used when describing the language of instruction when it is not the student's first language.

Language A
This may be the student's mother tongue; but not necessarily so. It is the student's best language and is usually the language of their future education. At DP level this is offered as Language or Language and Literature.

Language B
This is usually the language that a student has some previous experience either through study or exposure. It is usually expected that a student will use this language to a fairly sophisticated level.

School Community
This is defined as students, parents, teachers, administrators and other staff who work within the school facility.

Appendix B

International Baccalaureate Language Definitions (for Secondary only)

Ab initio (Standard Level)	The language ab initio course is a language acquisition course for students with little or no experience of the language. (1)
Language B	Language B SL and HL are language acquisition courses for students with some background in the target language. While learning this additional language, students also explore the culture(s) connected to it. (2)
Language A Language A: Literature Language A: Language and Literature	These are designed as courses to support future academic study by developing high levels of language competence and communication skills as well as social, aesthetic and cultural literacy. Literature has a central role in these courses. Language A courses are suitable for students who have experience of using the language in an academic context.(3) Language A: Literature develops understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism and promotes the ability to form independent literary judgments. It supports the Mother Tongue entitlement at DP level. (4) The Language A: Language and Literature course develops skills of textual analysis. A study of the formal structures of a text is combined with an exploration of the way the use of formal elements and our understanding of their meaning is affected by reading practices that are culturally defined. (5)

1. IBO 'Guidance for Language Provision in Groups 1 and 2' (2009) p. 9

2. Ibid, p. 8

3. Ibid, p. 2

4. Ibid, p. 3

5. Ibid, p. 5

Appendix C

Language B Placement

Arabic at IAA

Upon entry into IAA, each student is placed into Arabic A or B as appropriate for their background and ability level. This decision is made by the Arabic teacher/s, the Head of Department (Secondary), Principal (Primary/Secondary), the MYP/DP Coordinator (Secondary) and the Curriculum Coordinator after consideration of the student's prior history with Arabic and their linguistic abilities.

Arabic A

IAA believes that development of Arabic language abilities is of great importance for all students with Arabic cultural heritage. For this reason, students with clear Arabic cultural heritage are required to take Arabic A in all grades. Exceptions are made only after careful consideration on an individual basis.

Students who study Arabic A are students:

- who are Jordanian (Primary and Secondary) and are required by the Ministry to study Arabic
- who are already fluent or close to fluent in Arabic
- with Arabic cultural heritage.
- with citizenship in an Arabic country, whether or not they also hold citizenship in a second non-Arabic country, as well as students with one or more Arab parents.

All exceptions must be recommended by the student's teacher and approved by the Head of Department (Secondary), Principal (Primary/Secondary), MYP/DP Co ordinator (Secondary) and the Curriculum Coordinator. If an exception is made, the student is required to study Arabic B.

Students who are identified as Learning Support (SEN) will not normally be put into Arabic A and will receive additional support as appropriate and decided by IAA. AAL students may receive additional support either in Language B Arabic or on a withdrawal basis.

Arabic B

The Arabic B course is mainly designed for international students who are working towards fluency. The goal for Arabic B students is to have functional fluency.

Students who study Arabic B are:

- students who can provide evidence that they went to an English speaking school in a non Arabic speaking country and/or have therefore had very little academic Arabic experience before entry to IAA
- international students who are working towards fluency.
- students who have less than 4 years exposure to the language (Secondary only)

Students who are **NOT** Arabic B are:

- students who are in Language A and their skills in Arabic are weak because of their effort or motivation
- students who are special needs
- students who have had more than 5 years exposure to the language (Secondary only)

Since international students may have different levels of experience with Arabic upon entry to IAA, ranging from no previous exposure to several years of studying Arabic as an additional language, the Arabic B teachers provide a more intensive experience to new learners. The aim is to bring new Arabic learners up to a competent standard within two years of study.

Placement into and Promotion within Language B levels
(Grades 6-10)

Arabic B Advanced

These students:

- show a high level of competence in Arabic, but will not yet be ready to undertake the language as Language A. This is assessed by the student having a higher level of competence, as determined by grades and competencies in language use and fluency. This may be the result of prior exposure to the language, ability to access the language in the host community, or other special circumstances.
- show the need for a greater challenge than that offered through Language B Standard are aiming to study the language further at IB DP as a Language A or B Higher Level

Language B Standard

These students:

- will have studied Arabic for less than five years
- will have had little or no formal instruction,
- were not proficient in the language before starting the course
- intend to study Arabic at DP as Language B Standard Level
- show competency in Arabic beyond basic language skills, both orally and in writing

Language B Foundation

These students:

- have not studied Arabic for at least due to transfer from another school where Arabic is not taught or other special circumstances
- have studied Arabic for two years or less and therefore have only a basic competency in the language
- are not aiming to continue their study at IB DP level except if Arabic ab initio is offered and they qualify according to current IB DP guidelines
- have had limited experience and exposure to Arabic

- have not resided in a country where Arabic is the host language

Language B Foundation is not intended for students who wish to continue studies in the language as it only provides for simple level of communication, orally and in writing and is not a satisfactory preparation for IB DP Arabic Language/Language and Literature courses.

Arabic at IAA (Grades 11 and 12)

IAA annually reviews its language offered at IB DP level. The decision to offer any other courses (eg ab initio) is reviewed annually and a decision is made based on the cultural/linguistic make up of and needs of international and local students in Grade 10.

IAA follows the recommendations for placement of students into Arabic as outlined in the IB Diploma Language Guides.

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