



Language policy

2023-2026

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1.0 Standards and Practices

1. The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language. (Culture 04)
2. The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (Culture 04-01)
3. The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning.(Culture 04-02)
4. The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development.(Culture 04-03)
5. The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context.(Culture 04-04)
6. The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support. (Student support 2)

2.1 SKT Language Philosophy

At SKT International College, we believe that:

1. Language is central to learning for all subjects. Therefore, all instructors are also language instructors who help students develop effective communication skills at SKT International College.
2. Students are potential leaders, responsible citizens and role models in different fields of their respective communities, and they have to be equipped with necessary tools for effective communication; as, through meaningful interactions, the students communicate with and understand other people and the world to develop intercultural awareness and explore different perspectives.
3. Language acquisition is a dynamic, life-long process integral to learning and is a key factor in developing a student profile. Students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language in an environment where they explore concepts, solve problems, formulate hypotheses and share and explain ideas and opinions.
4. The development of the mother tongue of all learners is essential to foster cultural identity and promote cognitive development.
5. Every event and activity in the classroom or in school is an opportunity for students to learn and develop language skills.

2.2 Objective of SKT Language Policy

The language policy document aims to clarify the philosophy and beliefs of SKT International College regarding language education and its implementation. It outlines the systems and strategies in place to support the development of English and promote the use of the students' mother tongue within the school community. The primary goals are to equip students with the skills needed for adult life and work and to communicate effectively. As an IB World School, this document ensures alignment with the IBO Standards and Practices 2020.

This document supports us in the planning and implementation of language teaching, curriculum planning and professional development and is communicated to the school community through our school's website, our shared folder on Google Drive and through staff meetings.

3.0 SKT Language Profile

SKT International College is located in Yangon, Myanmar. With around 60% of the students being local, most students speak Myanmar- the host country language, we are committed to provide the opportunity to develop their mother tongue. We therefore offer Myanmar as a second language. The second and third most common mother tongue of our students is **Hindi 18% (or a variety of languages from India) and Chinese 8%.**

In addition to the development of the English and Myanmar language, we recognize the role an additional language plays in cognitive, metacognitive and cultural identification of self, hence at SKT we offer additional languages such as Mandarin and German.

4.0 SKT Language Pathways

Pathways of language learning at SKT College:

Year Group and Programs	Language A/ Language of Instruction and learning	Mother tongue language	Language B/Language acquisition
Year 2 to Year 6 Cambridge Primary Program	English A	Myanmar	-
Year 7 to Year 9 Cambridge Lower Secondary Program	English A	Myanmar	Chinese or German
Year 10 and Year 11 Cambridge IGCSE Program	English A	-	Chinese or German

Year 12 and Year 13 IBDP	English A/Self-Taught Literature	-	English B/Chinese AB or B/ German B or AB
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5.0 SKT Language Programs

At SKT International College the following language pathways are available for our diverse student population with varying language needs.

5.1 English as a First Language or English A

English A classes are the mainstream English classes at SKT International College. English Language A is mandatory for all students in our Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Curriculum. Students continue to study English in Years 10 and 11 (IGCSE) and English Language & Literature in the IB Diploma Programme. Students are advised about the choice of English as a first language or a second language certification by the teachers based on the students' abilities.

School-wide activities such as Spelling Bee and Debate Competitions are coordinated so as to promote usage of the English language.

5.2 English as a second language (ESL Program)

Students who have no or very limited command of the English language are placed in an ESL Primary or ESL Secondary class depending on their age. ESL Secondary classes are preparation courses where students take a year-off from their mainstream classes to learn English intensively. Students join their mainstream classes only during P.E and art subjects. After one year, students join the regular classes, including English Language A. As for 2023, no Primary ESL classes are offered separately. Instead Primary ESL classes occur once a week with the regular schedule.

5.2.2 Support for ESOL Speakers

Primary through secondary levels (English & Social studies)

As part of the Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) programme of the IB DP, IB students have been invited to act as peer tutors for struggling learners in English and maths. Some Years we might have a lack of peer tutors. Nonetheless, teachers are encouraged to employ various strategies to support struggling learners in order to reduce reading and writing anxiety, increase motivation and participation and reduce dropouts. For example,

- activity stations/learning stations (i.e. that target specific skills or content)
- buddy reading, partner reading or reading mentor
- collaborative learning groups (e.g. collaborative translation)
- flexible grouping with rotating roles
- graphic organizers to plan writing assignments

- literature circles

Collaborative planning for horizontal alignment can include choosing pairs of literary and non-literary texts that overlap between the English and social sciences curricula. For example, topics such as colonialism, conquest, immigration can be used as unifying interdisciplinary threads. Examples include historical fiction and graphic novels about war and immigration.

Support for Mathematics

The main obstacles that ESOL/EAL students face are textbooks designed for native speakers of English. In addition to simplifying vocabulary and grammar, such as avoiding passive constructions with word problems, mathematics teachers are encouraged to employ various strategies. For example:

- flexible grouping of stronger and weaker students
- graphic organizers
- manipulatives (e.g. geometric shapes and counting rods)
- variety of supplementary materials and activities
- UDL learning strategies, such as the “rule of four” in calculus (i.e. graphic, numerical, symbolic plus verbal representations)

Support for Natural Sciences

As in the case of mathematics, struggling students find textbooks designed for native speakers to be challenging. In addition, ESOL/EAL do not have a level of proficiency that includes academic English. Science teachers can help struggling students and academically disadvantaged students by employing various strategies. For example,

- identify Greco-Latin roots
- bilingual vocabulary notebooks either paper or web-based
- graphic organizers

5.2.3 English B

To support ESOL/EAL students, in 2023 the DP began offering English B for those who find English A too challenging or who scored below ten thousand word family benchmark on the Vocabulary Size Test created by Paul Nation:

(<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/paul-nations-resources/vocabulary-tests>).

Students whose vocabulary size is significantly below ten thousand word families are academically disadvantaged. In this situation, students who lack academic English must spend a disproportionate amount of time searching for the meanings of new or unfamiliar words in the dictionary. It also means that they cannot understand adult literature in English A beyond the superficial level of plot and characters.

5.3 Mother Tongue Programs

5.3.1 Mother Tongue Myanmar (Host country language)

As a part of internationalism or international-mindedness, the school strives to foster students’ love for their own culture, tolerance and respect for others. In order to achieve this, students need to have a good level of command of their own language, this increases

their self-esteem which aids in acquiring and progressing in English language. We believe in the significance of the mother tongue for the future of the students, their country and the implications of their mother tongue proficiency in their respective community. The majority of the students are Myanmar nationals with various ethnic backgrounds. Their mother tongue (the official language) is Myanmar. Hence, the school provides mandatory Myanmar Language Classes to Y2 to Y9 students.

Myanmar language classes are offered at two different levels in order to meet the different language acquisition levels of the students: Myanmar as a Second Language for foreign students and Myanmar A for local students. At the time of admission, the school tests the Myanmar language ability of students and accordingly places them into Myanmar A or Myanmar as a second language. Please see admission policy for more details.

The school promotes Myanmar language and culture through:

- Forming Myanmar discussion circles
- Organizing essay competitions and drama shows
- Improving library resources in the Myanmar section
- Organizing International Culture and Food festival
- Providing opportunities to students to participate in school assemblies, talent shows in the host country language etc.
- Daily use of Myanmar National Anthem in all school assemblies
- Celebration of Myanmar National Day
- Musical Recital in Myanmar language for all our students
- Translators available during Parent teacher conferences
- All office staff speaks Myanmar language fluently

5.3.2 Mother Tongue - Other languages

As an international school we value the importance of our student's mother tongue. We encourage the parents of our students to speak in their mother tongue at home, and supply our library with books in several different languages. Based on the findings of the language committee, the school is committed to promoting the development of mother tongue languages of the students apart from Myanmar and Chinese which are offered as a part of curriculum to our students. It is for this reason that the school would be willing to offer Hindi language as an after school activity twice a week, if parents and students express an interest. The students in IBDP have an opportunity to self study with the help of school appointed tutors in their mother tongue languages as Group 1: Self Taught literature course SL.

5.3.3 Partnership with Parent Community

Parents are encouraged to:

- Foster student's love for their mother tongue and culture
- Speak to the student in the mother tongue language
- Provide opportunities to the students to participate in the celebration of culture

- Supply material at home in the mother tongue

5.3.4 After School Activity Program (Club Time)

The SKT offers a Mother Tongue program as an after-school activity (Club), contingent on the needs of specific groups in the school community.

The school employs staff from various cultural backgrounds, with mother tongues other than English. These members of staff can be a great resource for practicing different mother tongues for offering study of their mother tongue as an after-school activity during club times.

Parent volunteers or spouses of staff can also be used to offer mother tongue clubs.

5.3.5 Opportunities for Self-Study

Students have the option to study their mother tongue in the form of a Self-taught Literature program at an IBDP standard level. This provides the student an opportunity to continue the study of their mother tongue language which may also be a national requirement in some countries. These students cannot always be provided with a tutor by the school to support them with their mother tongue. For example, in 2022 Russian Self-taught could not be offered because no tutor could be found. Therefore, the School cannot guarantee that it will be able to provide tutors with the appropriate prescribed list of authors, oral commentary questions and alternative assessment procedures, and copies of the handbook of procedures (outlining school, supervisor, tutor and student responsibilities) but the school commits to leverage all the resources in their power to find a suitable tutor for the self- study of mother tongue language. At the same time, some languages are available for self-study through <https://www.mihunlimited.com/ibdp-language-a-ssst.html>

The parents should commit to bear the cost of any such tutors appointed by the school.

The IB Coordinator will explain to the students the requirements of the self-taught literature course and acts as a liaison between the tutor of the language, the students and parents to oversee implementation of all guidelines, syllabus and assessment requirements with respect to IBDP requirements.

Due to language difference, on many occasions it might not be possible to avail services of a tutor in a specific language, in such cases school can explore association with Pamoja for languages (Spanish) offered by them.

5.4 Language B or Language Acquisition courses

SKT International College believes that learning a new language contributes greatly to a child's development. Through exposure to a new language, a student explores a new world of the culture,

customs and traditions of a country and becomes a more internationally minded person. For this reason, SKT offers the following second and third language classes:

Program	Languages on offer	Languages on offer
Lower Secondary (Foundation courses- Students choose any one language)	Chinese	German
IGCSE (Students choose any one language)	Chinese	German
IBDP (ab-initio or Language B course)- Students can choose up to two languages.	Chinese	German

IBDP course	Requirements of students
Foundation, Ab Initio	For students with little or no experience. Generally, this is for students with less than two years of study in the language. However, if the student is struggling with the language or has specific learning needs, they may have studied the language for longer.
Language B SL	For students with some prior study in the language, probably two to five years.
Language B HL	For students with significant prior study, probably four to five years.

The school offers English B as a second language for students who choose to study a language other than English A in Group 1 of the IBDP program. On certain occasions, if a student wishes to pursue Spanish ab or Spanish B course, the school is open to collaboration with Pamoja online platform to benefit the student from such an experience.

Placement of the students in the appropriate IB language course will be done as per the IB guidelines mentioned in Appendix 1.

5.5. Special request languages for study in IBDP

Every year the IB releases a list of languages which are automatically available for study. If a candidate wishes to study a language which does not appear on this list, the school may submit a special request at least 20 months before the written examinations in May, for certification in language A: literature subject that does not appear on these lists.

Approval process for the study of such language is contingent on the availability of sufficient body of printed literature, to allow the language requested to be taught and examined as DP language A: Literature course and availability of examiners in the particular language. A new request should be submitted for each examination session.

6. Admission criteria for English language assessment (Links to the admission policy)

Decisions regarding assessments are generally made by the pedagogical leadership and admissions team in consultation with the Head of School. However, the final authority rests with the Head of School.

Every student seeking admission to the school undergoes an assessment in English, Math and Science

Year 2 to Year 9: IPT English admission tests are used which test the students' English ability on three domains - reading, writing, oral proficiency. If the student scores a beginner or early intermediate level on the IPT test he/she is admitted to the ESL classes. Students who are at an intermediate, early advanced and advanced level join the mainstream English classes.

Year 10: A candidate seeking admission to Year 10 will write a *Cambridge Checkpoint* examination paper. If the candidate scores less than 50% marks he/she is admitted to the ESL secondary classes. Students scoring more than 50% marks join the mainstream English classes.

Year 11: A candidate seeking admission to these grades will write an internally prepared school examination paper. If the candidate scores less than 50% marks he/she is admitted to the ESL secondary classes. Candidates scoring more than 50% marks join the mainstream English classes.

Apart from the English test score, there are several factors which govern the final decision about admission of a student. Please see our admission policy for more details.

Year 12: A candidate seeking admission to IBDP will undergo a word families test, the minimum score to access the Language A curriculum is 10000 word families. A student scoring less than 10000 word families will be put on the English B route in Group 2.

7.1 Languages at SKT (Language of instruction)

The language of instruction at SKT is English. It is therefore integral that the students have sufficient proficiency in English to acquire and benefit from the curriculum. It is for this reason that at the time of admission, the student's English skills are assessed with the help of written and oral assessments, interviews with the students and former report cards from the previous school. Based on the results of these assessments students are put into mainstream English classes or ESL classes. The ESL students are accepted on a case by case basis depending on the language needs of the learner and resources including staffing available at school. Further differentiation within the classroom by our teachers supports the varying abilities of our students.

7.2 Languages at SKT (Language of communication)

The language of communication used by all teachers, staff and administration inside and outside the classroom is English. Any communication to the parents will be in English and Myanmar both. Outside the classroom, students are encouraged to speak in English with their peers. However, we understand that for younger students it might not always be possible, especially for students who are coming from a very

diverse cultural background. However, the older students who have developed confidence and good ability in English are strongly encouraged to speak in English at all times.

7.3 Maintaining language profile of the students

7.4 Language developmental targets for students at every grade level

7.5 Reviewing the process to identify the language needs of the students

7.6 Monitoring the effectiveness of the differentiation strategies for students with specific language learning needs

8. Links to other policies: Access arrangement for additional language learners

At SKT, we firmly believe that instead of categorizing students into labels, a sustained focus on creating the appropriate learning opportunities enables every learner to progress at his/her own pace. Our teachers therefore endeavor to remove barriers to learning. Please refer to our inclusion policy 2023-2026 for further details.

9. Professional Development

At SKT, teachers and administrators plan professional development to equip our language teachers, administrators and staff adopt the best practices related to teaching and learning of the language. This training is delivered by the head of languages departments in collaboration with other teachers. Some of the areas of professional development include:

- Devising strategies to reach the diverse proficiency of our learners using differentiated instructions.
- Determining and using the best technology tools to promote language learning.
- Fostering international mindedness and promoting self-identification and association with one's culture.
- Reflection on the instruction and other pedagogical approaches.
- Collaborative planning including peer observations to benefit from the best approaches to teaching.

10. Spelling and Referencing protocols

- British spelling is used for all formal communications.
- APA style of citation and referencing is used school wide for referencing purposes. (See section "Referencing Styles" in our Academic Honesty policy)

11. Library Support at SKT

The SKT library is a central place for language learning, promoting the love for reading, researching, collaborative planning for the teachers and teacher's professional development.

The SKT library has many print books in English as well as languages other than English such as Myanmar, Chinese, German and Hindi. The library also provides access to various e-books, audiobooks, electronic newspapers apps, games for promoting and developing language skills in students. For our older students, the library is a place where they learn key research and effective citation skills. Access to key academic research databases is provided to the students through the librarian.

The school management team is aware of the need to expand the library collection in languages other than English specially for those students whose mother tongue is not english. Because of our geographical location, small student size as well as diverse profile of students for mother tongue support, it is challenging to make available print copies in large numbers for languages other than English. Our librarian therefore aims to keep a database of a wide variety of resources such as fiction, non-fiction books, newspapers, magazines, games, apps, vocabulary builder in languages other than English. This database of electronic resources in English and languages other than English is called SKT's Virtual Library, the librarian trains the students and teachers on how to access the virtual library.

12. SKT Review and Communication Process of Language Policy

At SKT we review and revise the language policy once every three years, and make changes as needed to adapt to the best practices. In this way we keep our policy up to date to the needs of our community and aligned with the Cambridge and IB philosophy. The review is done by a steering committee, consisting of the head of school, IB DP coordinator, head of primary, head of secondary, head of languages department, language teachers, other subject teachers and school librarian. Suggestions are also collected from IB students and parents.

Following steps have been taken in reviewing the policy:

- The updated language profiles of our students have been collected to identify the diverse language needs of our students, both English language ability and mother tongues abilities were recorded.
- At the beginning of the academic year, the language teachers along with subject teachers reviewed the policy and provided the recommendation to the school leadership team.
- The DP five year evaluation recommendations were then taken into consideration by the language teachers and school leadership team.
- School leadership team then reviewed the various IB and Cambridge publications to align our policies with the requirements of these two organizations.
- Parent and student suggestions regarding mother tongue languages on offer as well as suggestions for the offer of a second language and the effectiveness of our language programmes were collected in the form of surveys and informal meetings and interviews.
- All the action points (e.g. the need for recording students' language development status) were added to the schools strategic and DP action plan to ensure there are systems, processes, monitoring in place to achieve the action points.

After the review and update, the steering committee is responsible for communicating the policy to the entire school community. Some methods which will be followed to communicate the policy to our stakeholders are as follows:

- All the teachers at the beginning of each academic year have to undergo a self-study of the policy which is followed up with a test of the teacher's understanding of the policy. Teachers in groups also present the policy to the other teachers. This takes many forms such as presentations, Q And A sessions and role plays etc.
- All the policies are saved on the common drive for teachers' easy access.
- The parent community is introduced to the policies during the parent induction session and from time to time a reminder session is done for the parents.
- The policies are also a part of the student-parent handbook which is provided to the school community every year.
- The link to the policies is shared on the school website for the community members to access.

Roles and responsibilities to oversee the implementation of the language policy

- The Head of the School is responsible to ensure that apart from offering English, English B, English as a second language is available for any and all students who will benefit from the experience of studying English where it is not the first language.
- The Head of School is also responsible for organizing all the resources as well professional development training which will be required to effectively implement all the language programs.
- The School Leadership team is responsible for creating opportunities such as celebrations, assemblies, contests to create opportunities for practicing second languages and mother tongue languages.
- All subject teachers are responsible for differentiating the instructions, maintaining student language developmental profile. Review the profile every 3 months by collecting classroom data, develop classroom strategies to further enhance the language abilities of the students.
- The head of every section is responsible for reviewing the development profile of some of the students jointly with the teachers. The head of every section is also responsible for monitoring that year level language goals are met by the teachers by reviewing the long term short term plans of the teacher initiating discussion with teachers in this area.
- The head of every section along with the head of school should create professional development opportunities for the language teachers.
- The head of the language department is responsible for ensuring that the recommendations from the five year DP evaluation are actioned by discussing with the relevant stakeholders.

The current policy has been written and revised in May 2023. The pre-work for this policy started in September 2022. Next revision work to begin in March 2026.

13. Bibliography

DP Language courses and Placement Guides, Program Resource Centre, IBO August 2021

Guidelines for developing a school language policy, Program Resource Centre, IBO April 2008

Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy, Program Resource Centre, IBO 2012

Language and Learning in the IB Programmes, Program Resource Centre, IBO August 2014

Learning in a Language other than mother tongue in IB Programmes, Program Resource Centre, IBO April 2008

Programme Standards and Practices, Program Resource Centre, IBO April 2020

Appendix 1- Guidelines for Placement of the students in appropriate language course at IBDP

If a student can...	the recommended course is...
Receptive Skills	Language A: literature or Language A: language and literature or Literature and performance
...demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts, including literary texts; ...demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of oral texts; ...recognize some subtleties of specific language use and their effects.	
Productive skills	
...speak mostly clearly and fluently and use a varied range of language mostly accurately; ...write fairly detailed texts demonstrating a good command of vocabulary with a good level of grammatical accuracy; ...show a reasonable ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose; ...express ideas and organize work coherently.	
Interactive skills	
...handle ideas mostly effectively with generally full interaction; ...exhibit some difficulties with more difficult questions.	

If a student can...	the recommended course is...
<p style="text-align: center;">Receptive Skills</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Language B HL</p>
<p>...demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts;</p> <p>...demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of oral texts.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Productive skills</p>	
<p>...speak generally clearly;</p> <p>...respond appropriately to most questions but struggle with responding to difficult questions;</p> <p>...demonstrate an adequate command of vocabulary and grammatical accuracy;</p> <p>...use basic and some complex language correctly;</p> <p>...show a reasonable ability to adapt writing to suit the intended audience and purpose;</p> <p>...express ideas and organize work appropriately.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Interactive skills</p>	
<p>...respond appropriately and demonstrate comprehension;</p> <p>...use pronunciation and intonation which facilitate the understanding of the message;</p> <p>...make independent contributions;</p>	

If a student can...	the recommended course is...
Receptive Skills	Language B SL
...demonstrate adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; ...demonstrate adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of oral texts.	
Productive skills	
...develop some ideas using a logical structure; ...use a range of basic cohesive devices; ...use basic grammatical structures accurately; ...use a range of basic vocabulary and appropriate register.	
Interactive skills	
...respond appropriately and generally demonstrate comprehension; ...use pronunciation and intonation which often facilitate the understanding of the message; ...make some independent contributions; ...produce mostly clear messages.	

If a student...	the recommended course is...
...has no prior experience in or has had very limited previous exposure to the target language.	Language ab initio