

RHHS Language

Policy and Procedures

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Vision

Empowering a community of self-directed learners and responsible global citizens.

Mission Statement

RHHS aims to develop compassionate, respectful, and lifelong inquirers. We are committed to promoting well-being, education for sustainability, and innovation, nurturing learners to become proactive change agents in an interconnected world.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to help the community understand the RHHS perspective on language in addition to the main understandings, beliefs, practices, and policies we adhere to, that meet the needs of students and reflect the principles of the IB. RHHS sees language as a key to all learning and teaching; it is considered as a tool by which students learn language, about a language and through a language in an authentic setup.

I. KEY UNDERSTANDINGS AND BELIEFS

RHHS believes that:

- the acquisition of more than one language and the maintenance of the mother tongue (first language) enriches personal growth and help facilitate international mindedness.
- the learner's mother tongue is a direct link to the person's culture, identity, and heritage.
- the development of the mother tongue is crucial to maintaining cultural identity; thus, we encourage the use of mother tongue as a tool for understanding and sharing knowledge.
- the acquisition of additional languages allows students to further reflect upon and explore different cultural perspectives.
- learning language is integral to the development of students' identity as well as making meaning of the world around them.
- the development of language is fundamental to the instinctive need to communicate.
- the development of the essential language skills – reading and writing, listening and speaking, viewing and presenting – is an important part of a student's development.
- the learning process involves learning language, learning about the language, and learning through the language.
- language provides an intellectual framework that supports the conceptual development and critical thinking of students.
- language is an important connecting element across the curriculum.
- both the form and the functionality of language should be encouraged and appreciated.
- all teachers are language teachers with responsibilities in using language as a tool to facilitate communication.
- the language development of students is a shared responsibility of all community members: teachers, students, and parents. Thus, language learning includes the development of home and family languages, languages of the school, and additional languages and literacies.
- Multilingualism is significant in building international mindedness as it gives students insights into the thinking and perspectives of the self and others.
- The language learner:
 - All students have unique language and cultural backgrounds. They learn to communicate confidently and creatively.
 - Through language, the students express identity, develop international mindedness, become literate, become effective inquirers, and communicate.
 - The student's language profile captures the language backgrounds, experiences, and goals.

A. The language learning community:

- A learning community builds a positive culture of language learning in different ways, such as:
 - embracing the values and beliefs that underpin multilingualism.
 - recognizing the importance of belonging and connectedness in personal and cultural identities.
 - recognizing the vital role families play in supporting, developing, and sustaining children's language development.
 - creating environments where students use their home language with pride, and access host or global languages to engage with the world.
 - promoting language learning as a means to build and strengthen intercultural relationships.
 - reflecting on the community's effectiveness of building a positive culture of language learning through collaboration.

B. Language learning and teaching:

- Language learning and teaching immerses students in the interplay between learning language (for example learning a new word), learning through language (for example reading a text to get information), and learning about language (for example learning how to spell a word). Although these aspects are inseparable, they are used to support an understanding of how language is learned and used to make meaning.

In brief, language learning provides the students with an opportunity to:

- expand their view of the world and develop in social contexts,
- encourage critical reflection on the relation between language and culture and language and thought,
- help to build practical skills that may be used in other disciplines,
- foster their understanding of the interrelation between language and the human nature.

II. PRACTICES

- The main languages of instruction at RHHS are Arabic, English, and French.
- Students either take the program in Arabic and English or Arabic and French.
- The literacy target is Standard Arabic, English, and French.
- There will be a balanced emphasis between Arabic and English/French according to students' needs in the curriculum.
- All teachers will use a wide range of strategies to provide a balance between the students' mother tongue and second language of instruction.
- Students will be allowed to appreciate language as a tool, so emergent writing is to be encouraged.

- Conventional writing will not be emphasized in preschool. It will be emphasized gradually starting with the age group 6-7 years.
- The early emphasis will be on the sounds of the letters. Students will then move to relating sounds to letters then to conventional language.
- Conversations will be emphasized, so students are given chances to build their vocabulary and become good readers and communicators. Students will be encouraged to ask their own genuine questions.
- Students will be encouraged to express themselves in various forms of communication, whether oral or written.
- Students will be encouraged to comprehend language through listening, reading, and viewing and to express language through speaking, writing, and presenting. Since all these language areas go hand in hand, the school promotes integrated language development.
- Language is integrated into the program of inquiry in the PYP and the units of study in middle and secondary schools. Students use language all throughout the units of inquiry and units of study by asking questions, researching, writing findings, presenting research findings, etc.
- Students engage in inquiry-based authentic language learning engagements, specifically in the PYP. Thus, language experiences are relevant, challenging, significant, and engaging.
- Random code-switching while communicating with students is not allowed.
- Bilingual labels will be used in classes.
- All school publications and notices to parents will be written in Standard Arabic, English or French depending on what is needed to be communicated.

General Language Expectations

- By the end of Preschool,
 - a. students are expected to express a complete thought without any stress on conventional writing.
 - b. students' sentences will reflect their original thoughts.
 - c. students will be beginning readers and writers.
 - d. students need to have accurate phonemic awareness.
- By the end of Elementary,
 - a. students will be fluent readers and writers.
 - b. students are expected to
 - express their original thoughts using conventional writing in mother tongue and second language.
 - read different genres of literature for meaning.
 - communicate with their peers and teachers using their mother tongue and second language upon need.

- By the end of the Middle and High School,
 - a. students will be able to become highly proficient, literate, and knowledgeable multilinguals.
 - b. students are expected to
 - study literary texts and their varying contexts.
 - have critical literacy and identify the construction of meanings.
 - express their original thoughts using conventional writing in mother tongue and second language.
 - read different genres of literature.
 - communicate with their peers and teachers using their mother tongue and second language upon need.
- **Learning a Third language:**
 - a. Students start learning a third language at the age of 3-4 years at the following frequency:
 - KG1 (3-4 years) till KG3 (5-6 years): One session per week
 - Grade 1 (6-7 years) till Grade 5 (10-11 years): Two sessions per week
 - Grade 6 (11 – 12 years) till Grade 8 (13-14 years)
 - Grades 10 and 11 (15-17 years): Two sessions per week
 - Grade 9 (14-15 years) and Grade 12 (17-18 years): One session per week
 - b. Early emphasis will be on the listening and speaking then on the reading and writing.

III. SUPPORT FOR MOTHER TONGUE

- During their first years at preschool, students are encouraged to use colloquial Lebanese Arabic for communicating with peers and adults.
- Colloquial Lebanese Arabic is the starting point for building students' literacy. Students are encouraged to feel at ease with the language, so they could easily express themselves and communicate with their teachers and peers.
- Students will start to be exposed to Standard Arabic from KG1 (age group 3-4 years). The Standard Arabic will be used in oral discussions, reading stories, etc.
- As students move from one level to another, there will be more stress on Standard Arabic than on colloquial Arabic.
- The school provides additional support for the academic needs of students who come from a background that might not have Arabic as a mother tongue.
 - An Arabic placement test is provided for these students, so their Arabic level is determined.
 - These students can join Arabic classes to learn Arabic at a suitable level (Standard or Advanced), taking into consideration their background knowledge and level.

- The teaching, learning, and assessment practices are differentiated and catered to their levels and needs of the students (the school can provide Arabic ab initio / French ab initio).
- In addition, the students join specialized Arabic classes which help them acquire the main language skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- The school provides resources and support for students whose first language is not Arabic. The school community works with the students to promote the learning of the Arabic language to promote basic understanding of the language use and culture.
- We are planning to introduce Arabic ab initio language to non-native speakers in collaboration with the parents to promote understanding of the language and the culture.

IV. LANGUAGE LEVEL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR IBDP

As per the school's admission policy, the below requirements should be met in order to enroll in one of the following three categories:

- Students solely holding the Lebanese nationality and based on decree no. 4554 – Law 60 – dated 17/10/2017, are required to have a high proficiency in Arabic language and in English language as the choices of Arabic as Language A is mandatory to this category of candidates.
- Students exempted from the Lebanese official exams are required to have a high proficiency in English language and a prior wide exposure to the French language if they chose English as Language A and French B.
- Students wishing to acquire a Bilingual Diploma are required to have a high proficiency in both English and Arabic languages to be entitled to choose them as Language A.

At the end of Grade 10, RHHS students need to meet the following requirements for their language of choice:

- a minimum score of 65/100 in the language(s) chosen as Standard Level and a minimum score of 70/100 in language(s) chosen as Higher Level.
- a minimum score of 65/100 in English language, which is the IBDP Language of instruction.

V. LANGUAGES AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The common language of communication in school is Arabic. The language of instruction is Arabic, English, and French. Most of the teachers have a proper understanding of the English Language.



- All the members of the pedagogical team – administrative and teaching body – are first and foremost language educators. RHHS believes in continuous language proficiency development at all levels and in both the English and French sections.
- All IB teachers are officially certified by the International Baccalaureate Organization and have academic qualifications in the teaching language.
- Teachers in the French section are also required to receive official DELF (Diplôme d'Etudes en Langue Française) / DALF (Diplôme Approfondi de la Langue Française) certifications by the French Ministry.

VI. ASSESSMENT AND DIFFERENTIATION

- While the language acquisition of students passes through phases, as per the IB language scope and sequence document which we have adopted, and while the rate of acquisition varies from one individual to the other, language teachers assess all language skills, including viewing, presenting, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, using varied tasks and on a regular basis. Through observations and formative and summative assessments, teachers are informed about the language growth of students. Therefore, they determine and follow up on the students' language performance.
- Formative assessment of language abilities and skills is employed to ensure students' progress and to inform practice.
- Teachers take different measures to ensure the proper language acquisition related to each subject. Therefore, they take different measures to support learning and outcomes. They specify up to 5% of the total grade for the spelling of words related to subject fields.
- If observation and assessment results highlight the need for additional accommodations to enable the student to develop his/ her language profile further, teachers plan for remedial work. Where necessary, parents also get involved.
- Students receive remedial support in language, including reading, writing, and comprehension exercises, and their progress is regularly monitored.

VII. PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT

Because RHHS believes that language starts and develops at home, parents are encouraged to contribute, along with the school, to play a role in the language development of their children. They will be encouraged to:

- create chances for their children to communicate using different forms of communication.
- support their children in completing language assignments.
- not to code-switch with their children at home.

VIII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- mother tongue/first language: the language which a person has grown up speaking from early childhood
- colloquial Lebanese Arabic: Lebanese spoken Arabic used in ordinary or familiar conversation
- Standard Arabic (often called Modern Standard Arabic or MSA): the standard and literary variety of Arabic used in writing and in formal speech in the Arab world
- Standard English: the variety of English that is held by many to be “correct” in the sense that it shows none of the regional or other variations that are considered by some to be ungrammatical or non-standard English
- Emergent writing: refers to the dynamic and overlapping stages of early writing ability that all children pass through, leading up to conventional writing.
- Conventional writing: is writing that practices the standard form.
- Code-switching: is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation.
- Multilingualism: refers to linguistic ability in more than one language. It is the interplay among languages within a person, with their interactions with others and with the learning community’s attitudes towards languages.

Language Policy Revision

The RHHS team reviews the language policy regularly, systematically and on a yearly basis, and the revision process is open to all members of the school community.

*The policy was reviewed and reflected on by the PYP team in June 2024.

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