

# Abroad

International School



## Language Policy

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## **AIS Mission**

Our mission is to develop confident lifelong learners who are;

- multilingual,
- inquiring,
- open-minded and
- respectful of all cultures.

Through balanced reflection, and risk taking, our learners will be able to communicate, develop knowledge and pass on positive principles for the benefit of both themselves and others.

## **AIS Vision**

Our vision is to help shape the future for a better world by using leading educational practices to nurture internationally minded learners who show caring, respect, and compassion through their actions.

## **Introduction**

This document describes our philosophy and practice on language learning and how these principles influence our planning and teaching of language.

- It provides the school with a framework that will promote consistency in approach between grade levels and subjects.
- It provides parents with information about our principles and practices and assists them in understanding our curriculum.
- It will assist teachers in the planning, presenting and evaluation stages of teaching.
- It will serve as a guide for teachers to reflect on their language practice and to guide professional development and appraisal.

## **Language Philosophy**

At Abroad International School we believe language plays an essential role in all learning areas. We

recognize that language development is an ongoing process. Students learn language, about language, through language and therefore, we acknowledge that all teachers are language teachers. Language is reinforced in multiple ways, including technically, practically, and as a medium of instruction. Language is the true transdisciplinary medium by which students and teachers make connections across the curriculum. Although English is the main language of instruction, systems are in place to encourage the support and development of all other languages used by students.

## Guiding Principles

- Language learning at AIS-Okayama will reflect International Baccalaureate PYP Language Scope and Sequence learning outcomes.
- All members of the school community are learners of language.
- Language development programs are developed using constructivist theories.
- Teachers assist students to scaffold their learning and to work within the students' "Zone of Proximal Development."
- Teachers take background knowledge and previous learning experiences into consideration when planning their lessons.
- Teachers provide comprehensible input and present language through meaningful tasks.
- Teachers provide age-appropriate scaffolding strategies such as visual aids, graphic organizers, demonstrations, dramatizations, and small-structured groups.
- Teachers guide learners to extend their language by combining high expectations (complexity and abstraction of concepts, increased density of low frequency and technical vocabulary, sophisticated grammatical constructions) with learner-centered practices in a contextualized learning environment.
- Teachers promote a school environment that welcomes diversity of cultures and perspectives.
- Teachers collaborate with parents to achieve shared goals.
- Teachers encourage usage of inclusive language.

## Language Profile

As of April 2017, the AIS student body consists of 72 students. The nationalities represented in the Abroad International School-Okayama are as follows: Japanese, Turkish, Jordanian and Myanmar. The linguistic backgrounds in the school community are as follows: Japanese, Turkish, Arabic and Myanmar.

## Mother Tongue

The mother tongue describes the language most frequently spoken at home, but there may be more than one language a child uses comfortably at home. We believe mother tongue support is

crucial for affirming identity and emotional stability of students. In our classroom library, we try to offer fiction and nonfiction books in the languages represented in our school community. We also welcome our parents to support the provision of mother tongue by providing opportunities throughout the academic year whenever we have chance.

Mother tongue languages are used to facilitate the development of an additional language. Language resources are provided whenever possible for mother tongue languages represented at AIS-Okayama.

## Language Development Plan

- PYP Language outcomes guide instruction and assessment of student language development.
- Aspects of language development are incorporated into AIS-Okayama PYP collaborative planning.
- Language learning is structured to assist students to experience success so differentiated learning strategies are applied, when needed.
- An interactive class structure is facilitated by teachers. Activities and tasks are designed to give a wide range of communication forms.
- A variety of hard/soft copy of books, references, resources, and materials are available for classroom use according to the language abilities of the students.
- The EAL teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to help learners who need extra guidance and support in English.
- Activities are designed at various levels to meet all students' needs.
- Success criteria and language learning outcomes are designed according to the overall level of the target learner body.
- Self and peer assessment is encouraged through the use of rubrics and one-on-one conferences.
- Students are encouraged to get involved in designing assessment criteria for their work.
- The summative task and type/amount of support given are differentiated according to the students' language ability and academic background.
- Various grouping strategies are utilized to cater to different abilities and learning styles.
- Students are placed in pull out EAL classes that will suit their language needs during some language classes.
- Students can move to full-time mainstream classes once their language abilities develop.
- Dynamic language grouping (based on students' abilities) is used within the classroom in order to develop specific aspects of language and to meet the requirements and expectations of a given task.
- Additional support for EAL learners is provided through in-class support.

## EAL Support

Since the language of instruction is English, the objective of the support programme is to enable the inclusion of EAL (English as an Additional Language) students in the mainstream classes. AIS-Okayama works with the EAL teacher in cooperation with the homeroom teachers to enable the EAL students' transition into the mainstream class. This support is continued until the student has the skills and knowledge needed to access the regular curriculum.

## **Entry Criteria**

- An assessment (AIS-Okayama Assessment Kit) and an interview is conducted by the respective homeroom teacher before and/or after the application process
- After collecting the data and feedback from the homeroom teacher, the administration, the EAL specialist and the homeroom teacher decide what type of EAL Support is appropriate for the student.
- If the student is within the Level 1 or 2 benchmark(K-Alberta Education), (s)he will participate in pull out EAL support.
- The EAL specialist will have ongoing communication with the homeroom teacher so that they can discuss and facilitate the progress of EAL learners.
- If the student is within Level 3 or above, (s)he will receive in-class EAL differentiation and support from the homeroom teacher as necessary. (Example pre-teaching technical vocabulary, providing visual aid to help organize your thoughts etc. We believe most strategies to help EAL learners are part of good teaching practices and benefit everyone, not just EAL learners.)

## **Exit Criteria**

- If a student who is receiving pull-out EAL support starts to move towards the Level 3 benchmark(Alberta Education, Canada), (s)he will join the mainstream classroom setting full time. There the homeroom teacher will differentiate the learning environment according to the student's language proficiency until (s)he can fully participate in the mainstream classroom without that support.

## **Benchmark**

ESL Benchmark, Reading A-Z

## **Resources**

- AIS-Okayama Assessment Kit Reading A-Z benchmarks
- Students are allowed to pick leveled books from Reading A to Z website according to their level and the class book case.
- Teaching materials that are relevant to the current unit of inquiry and provided by the homeroom teachers.

## **Planning**

- The EAL specialist use the PYP planner and AIS-Okayama weekly planner template for planning.

# Language for Successful Communication

- Language development activities provide opportunities for critical thinking.
- Students reflect on their language ability according to the set criteria through self assessment.
- Teachers encourage the development of critical thinking skills such as debating, active listening and thoughtful writing.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of concepts through discussion and daily ongoing communication.
- The social language of AIS-Okayama is English, which is inclusive and understood by all members of the school community.
- Even though, the written communication amongst the school community is mostly in English, we provide Japanese translation when it is necessary.
- Teachers organize various events and special days to promote an understanding of different cultures and languages.
- Students are actively involved in selecting their own books according to their level during guided reading time.
- Students are encouraged to use online reading programs to develop reading skills at their own pace.
- AIS-Okayama holds memberships in book clubs for school community to purchase books in English.
- Students are given opportunities to visit the library during class times.

## Classroom Library

- The AIS-Okayama Classroom Library supports the learning environment and enriches the various languages represented in our classroom community.
- The AIS-Okayama Classroom Library is designed to meet the study and research needs of both individuals and groups.
- A wide range of materials (language games, references, online resources, etc.) are available mainly in English.
- The teachers and teacher assistants will look for opportunities to increase the amount of resources in additional languages represented in our school community.
- The teachers and the teacher assistants will provide support for students to find books, online teaching resources, and other materials.
- The teachers will strive to increase awareness and appreciation of a wide variety of languages around the world through creating mother tongue language displays.
- Print materials including fiction and non-fiction books, Reading A to Z series, EAL support books, dictionaries, and reference books are available.

## **Review**

This AIS-Okayama language policy is reviewed every two years by coordinators, administrators, school board, teachers, students, and parents.

## **References**

Making the PYP happen, 2009

Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes, 2008

Guidelines for developing a language policy, 2008

Towards a continuum of international education

Programme standards and practices, 2011

IB PYP Language Scope and Sequence, 2009