

GMIS LANGUAGE POLICY 2023-2024

Mission Statement

Statement of philosophy

The medium of instruction at GMIS is English. Every teacher at Gifted Minds International School (GMIS) is a language teacher who appreciates and values the importance of language. She/he knows that language is used for/to:

- A mode of communication with students, parents, staff, external parties and local community
- A holistic approach to teach content learning across multiple disciplines, using digital tools and technological applications to design activities in class
- Develop effective communicators who as global citizens can appreciate, respect interdependence of culture, language, identity
- Create a safe learning environment by setting essential agreements with the students
- Authentic and meaningful experiences promote intrinsic motivation
- Enhance one's personal growth and in all developments (Physical/Intelligent/Language/Emotional/Social)
- Celebrate cultures and nationalities plus sensitivity towards others

Essential Agreements

As teachers we agree that:

- All teachers support language
- Create a stimulating print-rich and language environment
- Support mother tongue and other additional languages with providing educational opportunities that are meaningful in and out of classroom
- Support students' actual development and will act as facilitators who guide them to reach their potential

- We recognize that we are all diverse learners and must be mindful about the language we use with each learner.
- Formative and summative assessments are conducted to students with different levels and abilities.
- All students are encouraged to become fluent in more than one language.
- All students are encouraged to develop their ability to communicate and think in English and other languages.
- All students are encouraged to express themselves through creative works, written, speaking etc.
- All students are encouraged to explore language through Drama, Arts, Music, PE, ECAs and events
- All students are encouraged to use technology as a tool to learn language and content

Language Development in Classroom

Preschoolers (Nursery to Kindergarten 2) will widen phonological awareness. They were introduced to the graphemes and phonemes to enhance their alphabetic and print awareness. Each week, learners develop new vocabularies (language skills) and are introduced to different beginning, medial and final sounds through our in-house "Green Friends" Literacy Program. This is a multi-modal holistic approach where each grapheme is associated with a sound and a kinesthetic movement. Through songs, learners learn how to sound out simple 3-letter blend words associated with the letter of the week. Lastly, to work on fine motor skills and penmanship, we continued with craft works and "rainbow writing".

Students in preschool and primary sections extend their knowledge and language skills through the IBPYP scope and sequence which encompasses the IBPYP theme and central ideas which will be taught by the Homeroom Tutors of each respective grade and Specialist Teachers.

GMIS has adopted the US Common Core standards for the learning outcomes. The Common Core Standards address different areas of concern about language, at roughly three levels. The first level relates to the realization that language is a key contributor to the requirements of all subjects. The second area is that of the ELA standards, which specifically focus on the development of communicative and academic language skills, both within the subject area of ELA itself and across all other subject matter areas.

Thirdly, those standards that focus specifically on language emphasize primarily linguistic conventions, knowledge of language, and vocabulary acquisition.

Students who have difficulty with English language will be sent to Immersion EAL and Accelerated EAL lessons. During EAL lessons, students will learn to expand their vocabulary and sharpen their speaking, writing, reading and listening skills so that they can be able to cope with the mainstream lessons.

Language Feedback beyond the Classroom

GMIS relies on the support of parents and caregivers to enhance a child's language learning. Parents play a pivotal role in supporting their child's language learning journey, providing a nurturing environment that fosters linguistic development. This is supported by the regular check out of library books in multiple languages as well as feedback sent to parents via Homeroom Teachers. Active engagement and family bonding in reading activities, storytelling, and encouraging questions helps stimulate curiosity and critical thinking, reinforcing the importance of language in various contexts. The emotional support and encouragement from parents create a positive attitude towards language learning, instilling confidence and a lifelong appreciation for effective communication.

Support for students not proficient in the language of Instruction

EAL English as an Additional Language:

Differentiation in language lessons is based on the requirements of the learners. Smaller group teaching with a Specialist EAL Teacher who teaches lessons based on age and language competence level using a plethora of teaching resources as well as changing the level of questioning and tasks for individual students. Students may also have choices so they can follow their own interests or use a preferred learning style.

A placement test will be conducted during admission. Students will be assessed in an international testing tool based on their four language skills. Formative assessments will be used to assess their progression of language competence regularly in each term

Students who have difficulty with English would follow EAL lessons to improve their English skills. Intermediate English learners go to Immersion EAL lessons while beginner English learners go to Accelerated EAL lessons. Both Immersion and Accelerated EAL lessons are twice a week (40 minutes a lesson). In Immersion EAL lessons, students revise the vocabulary and grammar content of the Homeroom



Tutor classes. In Accelerated EAL lessons, category-based vocabulary and more speaking-based activities will be conducted.

Additional Languages (AL):

French or Dutch are taught as an additional language from nursery to grade 6 where Specialist Language teachers teach twice a week (40 mins per period) and they learn this new language which she/he can use in different parts of the world.

Extra Curricular Activity (ECA):

In the past we have offered language clubs for Ukrainian, Hindi, and Mandarin. These language clubs significantly enhance language development among students. As part of our ECA program, they do not follow a curriculum but rather allow learners to learn at their own interest. These clubs can provide a dynamic and immersive environment where participants engage in conversations, cultural activities, and collaborative learning experiences.

Reading Program:

As students display different reading levels, leveled books are the reading tools for students. During primary school reading lessons, reading strategies in three different phases are introduced to improve the reading skills of the students. During classes, students are provided with materials suitable to their assessed reading level and are taught how to choose books that are high in interest and appropriate to reading capability.

Conceptual Understanding:

Conceptual understanding in language is crucial for effective communication and comprehension. We use dimensional learning to go beyond memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules, delving into the deeper comprehension of underlying concepts and structures. A strong conceptual foundation enables learners to grasp the nuances of language, allowing for more expression. It empowers language learners to go beyond one dimensional learning, encouraging critical thinking and adaptability in various linguistic situations. A strong conceptual understanding of language cultivates inquisitiveness, encouraging individuals to explore linguistics and language processes, cultural contexts, and diverse expressions, fostering an inquiring mindset that seeks deeper comprehension and richer communication.

Connecting Language and Policies

Library Policy: Based on the language profile of the students in school, the library and media center will be equipped with resources to support language learning through books, reading programmes, software, videos, dictionaries, magazines, journals and newspapers. The resources will cater to the diversity of the school community. Students are encouraged to borrow English or Additional Language books once a week. The GMIS Library offers books in multiple languages including English, Dutch, French and Ukrainian as well as a small Additional Languages section.

Admissions policy- GMIS accepts students at all levels of proficiency in English Language. Due to the medium of instruction, all applicants will complete an entrance placement test to indicate their English language proficiency. The result is then taken up with the Preschool/Primary Section Coordinators and EAL Specialist in charge of providing support to language learning in each grade level.

Assessment policy- Language learning and acquisition differ with every student. Teachers will assess language skills - reading, speaking, writing, listening regularly and differentiating through guidance and extension if required. Formative and summative assessments will provide quantitative evidence on the language growth of students. The Homeroom Tutors will provide support to students who are weak in the areas of speaking, reading, writing and listening. The students will also attend EAL lessons until they reach the grade level.

Inclusion Policy: Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be taught only in English so that it will help them improve their skills and focus and communicate in one language - English. As GMIS supports inclusive education, students with special needs follow the mainstream classes. During speech therapist and occupational therapist instructions, SEN students have a pull out time on 1-1 building up on targets.

Pedagogical Attributes

IBPYP promotes inquiry-based authentic language learning where students at GMIS are involved in learning in, about and through languages where they make meaningful constructions that help them think critically and express their thoughts through language. Learning of the language through speaking, reading, writing and listening are categorized into 5 phases where it is a developmental continuum.

Language Policy Review Process

The GMIS Language Policy is regularly reviewed. The Language Policy Team members are Language Teachers (French and Dutch Teachers), the EAL Teacher and the IBPYP coordinator. They are responsible for implementing and monitoring the Language Policy to ensure that the Language Policy is reviewed bi-annually with the collaboration of IB recommendations.

Communication of GMIS Language Policy

The GMIS Language policy is available through many of the communication channels utilized within the school community. These channels include: the GMIS website, school drive and email communication.

Incorporation of translanguage at GMIS

GMIS recognizes that mother tongue is an integral part of an individual's identity and it is important to affirm values and promote students' mother tongue. By promoting translanguage instruction we are empowering students to move fluidly between languages while also strengthening the teacher's pedagogical approach. This promotes open-mindedness for both students and teachers to be receptive about translanguage learning. It also recognizes the need for developing and maintaining students' mother tongues. This belief encourages the attributes identified in the IB learner profile, as well as promotes responsible action and international mindedness. We celebrate different cultural events that promote Chinese (Chinese New Year), Hindi (Holi and Diwali), Japanese (Hinamatsuri) etc. All students can learn the heritage and history of different cultures and traditions.

Students are also given opportunities to express their thoughts, creativity in their Mother Tongue. This plays an important role in developing and affirming the student's personality and identity. Adhering to the belief that when a language one uses in daily communication is denigrated, a part of him or her is also being denigrated, there are no discipline procedures that impact students or teachers on use of their mother tongues in classes. However, there is a concern of using the mother tongue as a crutch while expressing and in the process, suppressing the development of English language fluency. Therefore, the guideline for use of mother tongue in the classroom is that it should be used as a support language –inter-lingual translation should be used wherever the teacher feels the need and sees value in its use. An example of this could be: activating prior knowledge of students, recording anecdotes of students in early years verbatim, exploring cultural beliefs and values etc.

Language Policy Revision for Academic Year 2023-2024:

This Language policy was drawn up in 2017 with the collaborative effort of the GMIS Community (1Preschool HRT, 1 Primary School HRT, 1 Specialist Teacher, Admissions Office, Parent Volunteer (Preschool and Primary School), Governor Body Member, Information Technology Teacher, Pedagogy Leadership Team and Principal/IBPYP Coordinator). Initially, we reviewed the Language Policy biannually and then once a year. The second revision was done in 2019. This document was revised by all the HRTs/Specialist Teachers/2 staff from the Admissions department, the Head of the School, and Parent Volunteers (Preschool and Primary School) of GMIS on 28th June 2019. The third revision was done in 2022. This document was revised by 2 HRTs'(primary and preschool)/ 2 Specialist Teachers/1 staff from the Admissions department, the Head of the School, and Parent Volunteers (Preschool and Primary School) of GMIS on 25 November 2022. The Fourth revision was done in 2023. This document was revised by 2 HRTs'(primary and preschool)/ 2 Specialist Teachers/1 staff from the Admissions department, Head of the School and Parent Volunteers (Preschool and Primary School) of GMIS on 10th November 2023 .