



## Raffles World Academy PYP Language Policy

### **Our Guiding Statements**

#### **Our Vision:**

Providing world-class education

#### **Our Mission:**

To empower students with a holistic, rigorous and international education for success in an ever- changing world

#### **Our Philosophy:**

- To be recognized by the success of our students in achieving their personal goals
- To make student development the centre of all school decisions
- To aspire to the highest internationally recognized performance standards
- To build and celebrate a culture based on internationalism
- To enable the staff to become life-long learners through the development of their professional practice

#### **Core Values:**

Achievement | Collaboration | Integrity | Innovation | Respect | Responsibility |

#### **Our Motto:**

Towards Excellence

#### **RWA Acronym**

Rise Wonder Achieve

### **Introduction**

This document represents the school's essential agreements on language learning, teaching and assessing. All members of the academic staff are committed to this policy and responsible for the implementation, reviewing and upgrading of our language policy.

### **Raffles World Academy Mission Statement**

We are committed to excellence in education by striving to provide each student with opportunities to reach their full potential as lifelong learners in a holistic, challenging and supportive learning environment that will ultimately prepare them to play an active and responsible role as global citizens in a multicultural world.



### **Language Philosophy Statement**

Language is an expression of culture and must be valued as an essential part of a student's identity. It is the foundation of all learning and a major connecting element across the curriculum. Recognizing and supporting our students' mother tongues is crucial to developing their full potential. The Learner Profile, together with the five essential elements of the programme (knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and actions) are integral to teaching and learning language. Language study is a key factor in developing international understanding, in reinforcing cultural identity, enhancing personal growth and promoting effective communication. All members of the school community are language teachers and language learners. Our focus is on the application of language across the subject areas and programs. The learning process simultaneously involves learning language, learning about language and learning through language. At RWA we provide a caring language community in which learners feel supported by others in language learning. We structure language learning so that learners have opportunities for success. Learners grow in their understanding of how their own and other languages work in and beyond the classroom, using language as a tool to listen, think, discuss and reflect on information, ideas and issues. We believe effective language teaching and learning are social and cultural acts, dependent on relationships with others, with context, with the environment, and with the world. Language allows learners to engage with the world, express identity and to relate to and accept responsibility for helping to create a better and more sustainable world together.

### **Roles in Learning:**

At RWA, responsibility for language learning is shared by academic staff, learners, and parents. Language instruction is transdisciplinary, touching upon all aspects of expression and communication, whether in a class setting or outside of the classroom. Roles in language learning are explained below:

### **The school will:**

- provide opportunities and support for all learners to become proficient in English
- provide opportunities for all learners to learn Arabic, the language of the host country
- provide the opportunity for all learners to learn an additional foreign language
- provide opportunities for students to maintain and develop their mother tongue
- provide information to parents, informing them about the language policy and school practices
- provide opportunities for parents to take an active role in their child's language development
- provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning through meaningful and targeted assessment practices
- support teachers, through professional development, to meet the ongoing language needs of the students.

### **The School Management will:**

- provide the resources necessary for the delivery of a high-quality language programme.



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- review carefully the language profiles of prospective teachers at the recruitment stage, in order to ensure that curricular and pedagogical needs are met.
- support all teachers with opportunities for furthering language teaching strategies, professional development and assessment support

**All Teachers and Teaching Assistants will:**

- be responsible for language development.
- share a responsibility for developing language through multiple disciplines.
- use a variety of strategies to help learners comprehend, interpret, evaluate and respond to a variety of sources in a range of languages and a variety of cultures.
- encourage learners to maintain and value their mother tongue and to respect that of others.
- give learners specific and constructive linguistic feedback.
- incorporate language teaching and learning as a part of continuous professional development.

**All Parents will:**

- value and share responsibility for the development of language skills.
- recognize the pace at which languages skills develop.
- participate in meetings regarding the IB Programmes and language of instruction.
- commit to the Language Policy of the school, e.g. by taking opportunities to expose their children to relevant language beyond the school.

**All students will:**

- be taught language by all staff and have opportunities to read, write, view, investigate, inquire and present across the curriculum.
- learn literacy skills in context.
- be encouraged to develop a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, respond to, appreciate and construct texts.
- be encouraged to use self-correcting strategies.
- have access to, and are taught through, a variety of technological and information resources.
- be encouraged to express themselves, orally and in writing, in a variety of media and situations.
- be encouraged to share and develop their work in a social context.
- be encouraged to see language as a tool for thinking, inquiring, reflecting and learning.
- be encouraged to maintain and value their mother tongue and to value that of other students.
- be given the opportunity to become proficient in more than one language.
- be exposed to a broad range of literature reflecting a variety of cultures and perspectives.
- be encouraged to develop a love of language and literature.
- receive constructive and specific feedback from teachers and peers.



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- be exposed to modelling of rich language experiences.
- be given time to reflect on their learning and to apply techniques appropriately.
- become active language learners through inquiry and authentic real-life applications.
- reach operational language proficiency in more than one language
- be respectful of others' language and culture.
- see language as a tool for life-long learning.

### **Admissions, Placement and Tracking**

- We assess applicants through multidimensional assessment procedures, which include testing for English proficiency, appraisal of past records and current academic levels, student's literacy or language-readiness skills and observation of emotional and social development.
- We place students in appropriate instructional settings based on the data of our assessment procedures
- We conduct regular assessments of students' academic and language accomplishments and needs.
- We collect representative samples of students' work to document linguistic and academic growth in language.
- We communicate clearly with parents regarding students' accomplishments and needs as they progress through the grades.

*For more detail, see our "Assessment and Reporting Policy"*

### **Teaching and Planning Practices**

We employ a variety of teaching styles and learning techniques to enable students to access to the whole curriculum, to cater for the variety of learning styles within each class and to ensure the progression and reinforcement of skills and concepts.

### **We expect teachers to:**

- present language through meaningful and authentic contexts
- use a wide variety of teaching and assessment strategies
- provide a balanced language programme as laid out in the PYP scope and sequence document
- structure teaching and learning situations so that students have opportunities for success
- plan in collaboration with classroom teachers and specialist teachers to maintain consistency
- provide challenges to students by giving them opportunities to reach their full potential
- acknowledge differences in developmental stages, learning styles and previous language experiences
- encourage parental involvement
- publish student work
- use questions as a tool for learning
- use a wide variety of materials to enable every student to access the planned learning experience and to achieve the planned teaching and learning objectives



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- give students the opportunity to work in a variety of ways – whole class, groups (of differing sizes and composition), as pairs and individually, according to their needs, the nature of the activity and the learning objectives
- build students' confidence and self-esteem and enable them to become effective language users by:
- sharing teaching and learning objectives and clarifying expected outcomes in a way that students can understand
- teaching students to self-monitor
- encouraging students to learn from and support one another, and to realise that they do not all have to be at the same level or arrive at the same point at the same time
- giving positive and constructive oral and/or written feedback
- creating an environment where all students can make progress at their own pace

**We plan activities where students:**

- integrate prior and new knowledge
- acquire and use a range of learning skills
- solve problems individually and in groups
- reflect on their successes and challenges
- evaluate conflicting evidence and think critically
- accept that learning can involve uncertainty and difficulty

**Students are expected to speak English in all classes except Arabic, Islamic Studies A, and other language classes.**

**Recognizing that language usage contributes to cognitive knowledge, students will:**

- develop their knowledge and understanding of the English language through purposeful use in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- learn to speak, read and write English developmentally, progressing across a continuum of skills in each area;
- endeavour to express themselves confidently in English in a variety of situations;
- be given the opportunity to take part in other language instruction as is deemed necessary for globally mobile students;
- be encouraged to seek and use resources in their first language, as necessary, to help in the understanding of academic content;
- respect each other as valued members of the school community regardless of their first language;
- develop an appreciation of literature and a variety of texts;
- establish links between subjects, cultures, and other areas of experience;
- use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning and self-expression

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**Practices for implementing reading, writing, oral and visual skills**



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In order to promote inquiry-based language learning within the context of the PYP, our school recognizes the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language through the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. The mastery of the essential language skills - reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing - is a vital part of a student's overall development.

**Reading practices:**

- Reading will take place in all subject areas, and students will read across the curriculum whenever appropriate.
- A variety of practices will be used when planning for instruction, including, but not limited to, guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, graphic organizers and the use of leveled reading material.
- Students will be encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure, read aloud expressively and also discuss, analyze, compare and contrast the texts they read.
- Students will be exposed to a variety of genres, including multicultural literature, poetry, plays, short stories, newspapers, magazines and informational texts.
- Students will learn how to understand, interpret and respond to the ideas, attitudes and feelings expressed in various texts, to think critically about what they read and to be able to make predictions and inferences based on information that is both explicit and implicit in a text.
- Teachers will promote and incorporate supplementary reading incentives and support programmes.
- Vocabulary building techniques will be used across the curriculum whenever appropriate, e.g. word walls, word of the day, spelling programmes, use of idioms, metaphors, and similes.

*(please refer to the reading policy for more details)*

**Oral language practices:**

- Teachers will model correct language use in conversation, while being sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds and mother tongues.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to develop and utilize oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations. This will be done through oral presentations, assemblies, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, books on tape, listening stations and performing arts.
- Teachers will plan activities that expose students to conventions of oral language and aid them in responding appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

**Writing practices:**

- Students' natural desire to communicate through writing will be fostered by giving real purpose to their writing, and by exposing them to varied, challenging and meaningful writing opportunities.
- There will be consistency in promoting the writing process (planning, drafting, editing, proofreading, revising and publishing) throughout the grade levels.
- Students will be encouraged to focus on meaning first rather than accuracy and to enjoy the writing process.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through different genres.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use language specific to relevant subject areas.



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- Constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults will support the development of writing.
- Teachers will model and provide instruction in the correct use of language conventions, including spelling, grammar, rules of punctuation and handwriting.
- We will incorporate a variety of spelling strategies including spelling conventions and patterns, high frequency words and unit-related vocabulary.

**Viewing and presenting practices:**

- Students will have the opportunity to create visual presentations, and to use multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purpose and audience.
- Opportunities will be provided for students to view high quality performances in a variety of media.

**Mother Tongue Languages**

RWA believes that mother tongue language development is crucial to maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability. While we do not offer bilingual programmes, we do recognise that strength in mother tongue supports students in learning other languages. International schools have a special responsibility to recognise and support each and every aspect of language development.

Arabic is the language of our host country, and many of our neighboring countries. Arabic is taught as a mother tongue to all Arabic speaking students. This is explained in the section on Arabic Language.

German, French, Spanish, Russian, Italian and Hindi is offered to native German, French, Spanish, Russian, Italian and Hindi speaking students, and is conducted during school hours where possible and after school where it is not possible to offer especially for KG and G1. The teacher is paid by the parents. The school assists with some of the costs of the programme.

In addition to above mother tongue programmes, the school is committed to explore opportunities to provide other mother tongue classes as an After -school activity.

**Arabic Language**

Arabic teaching at RWA has two strands. Students who speak Arabic as a mother tongue are taught Arabic literacy and culture (Arabic A). Students who do not speak Arabic as a mother tongue learn Arabic as a foreign language (Arabic B). Learning Arabic takes on special significance as it is the language of our host nation. Through the teaching of Arabic, and through links to UAE culture across the curriculum, students develop an appreciation of the host nation's culture as well as an awareness of different perspectives.

All students are required to learn Arabic as per UAE Law and in accordance with KHDA requirements. Both Arabic A and Arabic B students follow an enriched version of the appropriate UAE syllabus. Arabic Language Heads of the Department are employed in the school to cater for the continued development of Arabic. The school will ensure that sufficient qualified teachers are employed to support the teaching of Arabic in the school. The development of curriculum resources is budgeted for and provided.



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### **Modern Foreign Languages (French and Spanish)**

RWA recognizes the importance of students developing a range of languages and learning about different cultures for their personal and educational growth. This will provide students with a multitude of opportunities to develop the attributes in the learner profile and to become effective, multilingual communicators and members of the global community. French or Spanish is offered to all Arabic B students from Grade 1 upwards within the school day. Additionally, other languages are offered to interested students as an after-school activity. Foreign language teachers support the school's reading, writing and oral language practices, the IB learner profile, and the PYP attitudes, as well as the programme of inquiry, whenever and wherever appropriate. Students receive instruction using an interactive, immersion approach to foreign language learning. The school will ensure that sufficient qualified teachers are employed to teach foreign language throughout the school. Student teacher ratios will support the effective interaction with and learning of a foreign language. The school library will include literature and resources in a range of languages representative of the school population. The development of curriculum resources will be budgeted for.

### **Support for English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

The term EAL is used to refer to students for whom English is an additional language. Students of all linguistic backgrounds are considered for admission to RWA. However, the admissions process seeks to determine whether learners are sufficiently proficient in English so that they can successfully access the curriculum in an English medium learning environment. Upon admission, a language profile for incoming students is developed and a traffic light system is used to identify those students who may need English language support. The school undertakes to provide EAL support for students who have not reached a level of English proficiency that allows them to access fully the curriculum. EAL support is provided using both in-class and pull-out models. The goal of EAL support is to have the support primarily conducted in class. This is to enable students the maximum opportunities to use language in meaningful contexts, particularly in their interactions with fellow students and to ensure that EAL students are not excluded from valuable lessons. As different students have different levels of language proficiency, the language needs of all students in the class will be considered in joint planning by the EAL teachers and classroom teachers.

The English proficiency of all new students will be assessed prior to entry. On admission, an initial assessment will be conducted to determine a student's English proficiency. Recommendations will be made to the Heads of School regarding placement in appropriate programmes. All academic staff will be notified of a student's English proficiency upon entry. Teachers can refer students to the EAL programme. The kind of support the student needs will be decided by the class teacher and the EAL teacher.

Beginner EAL students will initially follow an immersion program that involves intensive EAL. Students in the EAL programme will be regularly monitored and assessed. EAL classes will provide new students with a supportive, protected environment in which they can try out their language skills and develop confidence in their abilities. EAL students are part of the regular class, and teachers should be aware of their needs and modify or differentiate lessons and





assessments accordingly. In this way, EAL students will not only achieve competency in meeting academic goals, but they also will be able to participate in school culture and become fully integrated members of our community. Assessments and reports will be coordinated and determined by the EAL teachers and class teachers. The school will ensure that qualified EAL teachers are hired to assist English language learners.

### **Inclusion support for students with SEND**

In keeping with the mission statement, RWA has adopted an inclusive model of learning support. This means that students with individual needs are supported within mainstream classes and all students are given full access to the curriculum.

Teachers respond to the diverse learning needs and styles of the students in their care through using a variety of differentiation strategies to deliver the programme. These strategies may include the use of learning technologies, simplifying texts, supplementing information, providing checklists, using alternative forms of assessment and making assessment arrangements.

In cases where students' barriers to learning preclude the development of age appropriate literacy skills and additional support is required, mainstream class teachers may refer the student to the Learning Development Team. Please see the referral process for more information.

Once referred to the Inclusion Support Team, students may be supported through parallel teaching, co-teaching, small group conferencing and if circumstances require, there may be some more intensively individual support provided. It is expected that RWA and parents work in partnership to help develop students' literacy skills.

### **Support for Gifted Students**

Students who have been identified as gifted receive differentiated instruction in class. Teachers use strategies that further encourage vocabulary development, reading and writing across the curriculum, and the exposure to various forms of literature and informational texts. Classroom teachers work with other specialists in order to ensure continuity of the delivery.

### **Library Media Specialist**

The Library Media Specialist works closely with teachers, students, parents and the school administration to ensure the availability of curricular and support materials that are necessary for the development of languages. The Library Media Specialist holds workshops for teachers and students so that they can effectively access the many online resources that are available. The library has print and non- print books, CDs, posters and recorded books in a variety of languages. Resources are available to teachers, students and parents.

All students have timetabled access to the library and other ICT.

### **Policy Review**



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This policy is a working document and as such will be reviewed by the Language Coordinators and academic staff annually.

**The following criteria will be used to measure its success:**

1. Has the quality of student learning been enhanced?
2. Has the quality of teaching been improved?
3. Can we identify a range of teaching and learning styles in each classroom?
4. Are staff and students following procedures?
5. Is there clear evidence of assessment informing planning?
6. Has any part of the policy been difficult to implement, or been ignored?

**Appendices**

1. Language Development in the context of the IB Learner Profile
2. Language Expectations at RWA
3. Reading Literacy Policy

***Policy last reviewed– April 2023***

**Appendix Number 1**

**Language Development in the context of the IB Learner Profile**

In line with the IBO, the language programme not only helps students to gain an instrumental means of communication, it helps them develop the cognitive, emotional and attitudinal skills which promote a well-balanced and holistic education. We strive for students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to be:

**Inquirers:** They use language as their prime medium of inquiry to make sense of the world around them.

**Thinkers:** They use language precisely and skillfully in the context of higher- level thinking to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly.

**Communicators:** They are confident users of oral and written language in a variety of situations.

**Risk- takers:** They attempt to read, write and speak in situations where they may not feel totally competent.

**Knowledgeable:** They understand the internal structures of language and the various influences on its development. They have experience with a wide range of literature and acquire the vocabulary and understanding to discuss different literary styles.

**Principled:** They are aware that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect and that it must be used responsibly.

**Caring:** They show responsible, caring attitudes towards the use of language and they value literature for the



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insight it gives into the feelings of others.

**Open- minded:** They respect differences and similarities between languages and dialects. They are aware of the use of language as an expression of bias and strive to maintain an objective stance.

**Well- balanced:** They are aware of the need for an educated person to be an effective communicator. They use literature for both learning and leisure.

**Reflective:** They reflect upon their own levels of language development in their mother tongue and other languages. They consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

## Appendix Number 2

For further details on the Language curriculum please refer to the following documents:

- Language Scope and Sequence for Speaking & Listening, Reading, Writing, Viewing and Presenting
- Language PYP and IBPYP Scope and Sequence Documents
- Curriculum Maps and scheme of works for each Grade

## References

- IB Documents International Baccalaureate Organization, Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy, 2008
- International Baccalaureate Organization, Learning in a Language Other Than Mother Tongue in IB Programs, 2008
- International Baccalaureate Organization, Language and Learning in IB Programs, 2008
- International Baccalaureate Organization, Guidelines for School Self-Reflection on its Language Policy, 2008

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