

LANGUAGE POLICY

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Harfa International School Language Policy

Primary Years Programme (PYP) & Middle Years Programme (MYP)

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IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

HIS Mission Statement

At Harfa International School, our mission is to deliver the highest quality educational experience supporting students to become global citizens and lifelong learners; at the same time, enabling them to recognize and embrace their own uniqueness and achieve their full potential. We do so by combining engaging teaching methods, passionate teachers who serve as mentors, a diverse environment, and always challenging the status quo.

HIS Vision

To be students' and parents' number one choice in education by demonstrating scientifically based transformative methods that are embraced and implemented worldwide.

Policy Purpose and Scope

This is a whole-school language policy for Harfa International School. It establishes a shared philosophy and consistent expectations for language learning across the PYP and MYP while recognizing the distinct requirements and approaches of each programme. It is intended to guide teaching, learning, inclusion, assessment, communication, resourcing, placement and programme development.

The policy is aligned with the IB Programme standards and practices (2020), including Culture 4, which requires schools to implement, communicate and regularly review a language policy that fosters intercultural understanding through communication in more than one language. It also reflects the PYP and MYP programme frameworks and the linguistic context of Harfa International School.

- Clarify the school's shared philosophy of language and multilingualism.
 - Define the roles of English, Croatian, Spanish and students' home languages.
 - Describe how students access learning when they are developing proficiency in the language of instruction.
 - Establish programme-specific expectations for PYP and MYP language learning.
 - Clarify responsibilities of students, teachers, leadership, coordinators, families and the wider community.
 - Identify resources and structures that support language development.
 - Provide a basis for regular review, reflection and improvement.
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IB Standards, Approaches and Practices

Harfa International School uses the current IB Programme standards and practices as the principal framework for the implementation and review of this policy.

In particular, the policy responds to the following practices:

IB practice	Harfa policy response
Culture 4.1	The school implements and reviews a language policy aligned with IB language policy guidelines.
Culture 4.2	The school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning.
Culture 4.3	The school identifies physical and virtual resources that facilitate language development.
Culture 4.4	The school describes the rights and responsibilities of members of the school community and what constitutes good practice in the school context.
PYP 1 under Culture 4.4	Students learn a language in addition to the language of instruction, at least from the age of seven, as applicable within the school's multilingual context.

Policy statements are expected to be visible in practice. During review, Harfa therefore considers not only whether the policy is written and communicated, but also how its principles are evidenced in curriculum, classroom practice, student support, resources, collaboration and the experience of students and families.

Whole-School Language Philosophy

Language is central to learning, identity, relationships and participation in a community. Harfa International School views multilingualism as an asset and recognizes the languages students bring to school as resources for thinking, meaning-making, communication and intercultural understanding.

- All teachers are language teachers and share responsibility for students' language development.
- Students learn language, learn about language and learn through language across the curriculum.

- Multilingualism and plurilingual practices can strengthen cognitive development, identity, belonging and international-mindedness.
- A student's home language is an important part of identity and should be respected, maintained and developed whenever possible.
- Language development is developmental and individual; students progress at different rates and require different forms of scaffolding, challenge and support.
- Students should be able to access the learning materials while developing proficiency in the language of instruction.
- Language learning includes speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and multimodal communication.
- Language learning is strengthened through authentic contexts, inquiry, collaboration, reflection, literature, media, culture and meaningful interaction.
- Language practices should promote inclusion, dignity and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.

Whole-School Language Profile

Area	Harfa International School
Primary language of instruction	English
Host-country language	Croatian
Additional language	Spanish
Formal school communication	Primarily English; Croatian is used where appropriate for host-country and local requirements.
Informal communication	English and Croatian, with other languages welcomed as appropriate.
Languages represented in the community	The profile varies from year to year and has included Croatian, English, Spanish, Ukrainian, German and other languages.

The school language profile is reviewed as the student population changes. The school does not treat a fixed list of languages or nationalities as permanent policy data; current enrolment information is used to inform staffing, resources, support and community initiatives.

Language of Instruction and Access to Learning

English is the principal language of instruction across the school, except in language courses and learning experiences where another language is intentionally used. Students entering with developing English proficiency are supported so that language development does not become an unnecessary barrier to participation in the curriculum.

- Initial information is gathered from previous school records, family/student language profiles and appropriate diagnostic or formative assessment.
 - Teachers identify the language demands of learning and explicitly teach subject-specific and academic vocabulary.
 - Scaffolds may include visuals, modelling, sentence frames, graphic organizers, adapted texts, bilingual resources, peer support, additional processing time and targeted language instruction.
 - Students may use their full linguistic repertoire strategically to build understanding, plan ideas, make connections and demonstrate learning when appropriate.
 - Support is reviewed regularly and adjusted as students become increasingly independent.
 - High expectations are maintained; differentiation changes access and support, not the value placed on rigorous learning.
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Home Languages, Multilingualism and Cultural Identity

Harfa International School recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. The school seeks to create an environment in which students' languages are visible, valued and used purposefully without placing unrealistic expectations on the school to provide formal instruction in every home language represented.

- Students are encouraged to maintain and develop home languages through reading, writing, speaking, family interaction and community learning.

- Where pedagogically appropriate, students may brainstorm, research, annotate, reflect or prepare ideas in a home language before communicating learning in the required language.
 - Students may share language, literature, traditions, histories and perspectives from their linguistic communities.
 - Multilingual displays, greetings, texts and resources are used where meaningful.
 - Mother Tongue Week and other school-wide cultural experiences provide opportunities to celebrate linguistic diversity.
 - National days, cultural projects, performances and community events provide authentic opportunities for intercultural learning.
 - Families are invited to contribute linguistic and cultural knowledge to the school community when appropriate.
 - Where a student requires formal home-language development beyond the school's provision, the school may collaborate with families to identify feasible external or community-based opportunities.
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Language Across the Curriculum

Language development is a shared responsibility. Every subject has its own vocabulary, genres, conventions, ways of reasoning and forms of communication. Teachers therefore plan for both conceptual/disciplinary learning and the language students need in order to access and communicate that learning.

- Make language objectives and disciplinary language demands visible where appropriate.
- Model academic and subject-specific language in authentic contexts.
- Provide structured opportunities for speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and presenting.
- Use questioning, discussion and collaborative learning to develop language and thinking.

- Teach students how different text types and modes communicate for different audiences and purposes.
 - Provide feedback that helps students improve both communication and disciplinary understanding.
 - Collaborate with language teachers and support staff when students need additional scaffolding or extension.
 - Use inclusive texts and perspectives that reflect local and global linguistic and cultural diversity.
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Communication with Parents

Assessment of language is ongoing and informs teaching and learning. Teachers use a range of diagnostic, formative and summative evidence to understand students' current proficiency, progress and next steps. Assessment practices are aligned with the relevant PYP/MYP framework, subject requirements and Croatian legal/curricular requirements where applicable.

- Students are given multiple opportunities and modes to demonstrate understanding when appropriate.
 - Teachers distinguish, where possible, between conceptual understanding and limitations caused primarily by developing proficiency in the language of instruction.
 - Feedback is timely, specific and designed to move learning forward.
 - Students engage in self-assessment and reflection on their language development.
 - Language support and differentiation are informed by evidence rather than assumptions based on nationality or home language.
 - Progress and significant support needs are communicated with families.
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LANGUAGE IN THE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP)

PYP Approach to Language

In the PYP, language is integral to transdisciplinary learning and is developed within and beyond the Programme of Inquiry. Students use language to inquire, build relationships, construct meaning, communicate understanding, reflect and take action. Language learning is therefore not confined to a single subject or lesson.

- Language is developed through authentic inquiry and meaningful contexts.
- Teachers plan opportunities for language development within units of inquiry as well as through purposeful stand-alone learning when this is the most effective approach.
- Student agency is supported by giving learners opportunities to make choices about texts, topics, modes of communication and ways of sharing learning.
- Literature, informational texts, digital media and multimodal texts are used to build understanding and expose students to diverse perspectives.
- Oral language, visual language and written language are interconnected and developed across the curriculum.
- Play, dialogue, collaboration, questioning and reflection are recognized as important contexts for language development, particularly for younger learners.

PYP Language Provision at Harfa

English

English is the primary language of instruction and is developed throughout the school day. English learning includes explicit literacy instruction and language development embedded in transdisciplinary inquiry. Students develop comprehension, communication, vocabulary,

grammar, spelling, reading fluency, writing craft and the ability to communicate through oral, written, visual and digital modes.

Croatian – Host-Country Language

Croatian language and culture are important elements of the school's context and are taught in accordance with applicable Croatian requirements. Provision is differentiated according to students' proficiency and prior experience. Native/proficient speakers and students acquiring Croatian require different pathways, expectations and scaffolds.

Additional Language

Harfa provides learning in a language additional to the principal language of instruction in accordance with PYP requirements and the school's programme design. Spanish forms part of the school's additional-language provision. The programme aims to develop communication, curiosity about language and culture, confidence and intercultural understanding.

PYP Language Learning Continuum

PYP teachers plan language development as a continuum rather than as isolated year-level skills. Collaborative planning supports progression and continuity across grades. Teachers consider prior learning, developmental readiness, the language profile of the learner and the demands of the current inquiry.

- Listening and speaking: participating, presenting, discussing, questioning, explaining, negotiating meaning and responding.
- Viewing and presenting: interpreting and creating visual, digital and multimodal texts for different purposes and audiences.
- Reading: developing fluency, comprehension, critical literacy, response to literature and the ability to make text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections.
- Writing: developing control, voice, organization, vocabulary, conventions and the ability to create a range of authentic text types.
- Cultural and Media Awareness: attending different cultural events, learning about culture, national heritage and tradition, media literacy

PYP Support for Students Developing English

Students who are new to English or are still developing academic English participate in the PYP community and Programme of Inquiry with appropriate support. Whenever possible, support is connected to classroom learning rather than functioning as a separate curriculum.

- Teachers use language profiles and formative evidence to identify strengths and needs.
- Classroom teachers and language/support teachers collaborate on strategies, vocabulary and learning goals.
- Students receive explicit instruction in the language needed to participate in current learning.
- Visual, oral, practical and multimodal supports are used to make concepts comprehensible.
- Home-language knowledge is treated as a bridge to additional-language learning.
- Support is intensified, reduced or changed according to evidence of progress.

PYP Collaborative Planning and Responsibilities

The PYP Coordinator, classroom teachers, language teachers and relevant support staff collaborate to ensure that language development is represented in curriculum planning and that students experience continuity across the programme.

- Classroom teachers plan language through and alongside inquiry.
- Language teachers connect learning to the Programme of Inquiry where authentic and educationally meaningful.
- Teams review student language needs during collaborative planning.
- Teachers share strategies and evidence of progress when students work with multiple educators.

The PYP Coordinator supports alignment between the written policy, the Programme of Inquiry and classroom practice.

LANGUAGE IN THE MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME (MYP)

MYP Approach to Language

In the MYP, language is essential to identity, communication, conceptual understanding and participation across all subject groups. Harfa supports both language and literature learning and language acquisition while expecting all subject teachers to develop the disciplinary literacy students need for success.

MYP Language Provision

LANGUAGE	ROLE	PATHWAY
ENGLISH	Principal language of instruction	All subjects (except language courses) are taught in English. Students are placed into Language and Literature or Language Acquisition based on prior proficiency. Native or near-native English speakers take English Language and Literature. Non-native or near-native students are placed in English Language Acquisition Phases. Placement is guided by IB MYP Language Acquisition Phases (Phases 1–6). Formative assessments determine placement and progression.
CROATIAN	Host-country language	All students are required to study Croatian. Native or near-native speakers enroll in Croatian Language and Literature. Non-native or near-native students follow Croatian Language Acquisition, with grouping based on proficiency and MYP Language Acquisition Phases (Phases 1–6). Croatian is also used in informal school communication and cultural events.
SPANISH	Additional language	All students study Spanish through Language Acquisition. Placement is determined by prior experience and mapped to MYP Language Acquisition Phases (Phases 1–6).

The exact organization of groups may vary according to enrolment, student language profiles, staffing and the school timetable. Any pathway described in operational documents must

remain consistent with MYP requirements and with the principle that placement is based on demonstrated language proficiency and prior experience.

MYP Language Acquisition Phases and Placement

MYP Language Acquisition is organized through six phases. These phases form a continuum of language development and do not correspond to particular ages or MYP year levels.

Students may enter the continuum at different phases depending on prior language-learning experience and demonstrated proficiency.

- Initial placement draws on prior school information, student/family language background, appropriate diagnostic evidence, and proficiency assessments.
- Teachers use MYP Language Acquisition phase expectations and subject guidance when determining the most suitable placement.
- Placement is reviewed through ongoing formative and summative evidence.
- Movement between phases is based on demonstrated readiness and professional judgement, supported by evidence and teacher standardization where appropriate.
- Placement decisions are communicated clearly to students and families.
- Students are not assigned a phase solely because of age, nationality, length of time at the school or year level.

MYP Language and Literature

Students who are appropriately proficient study Language and Literature in the relevant language according to the school's course provision. Courses develop critical and creative engagement with literary and non-literary texts, communication for different audiences and purposes, analysis of language and context, and appreciation of culture and perspective. The school seeks to support students' strongest languages and mother tongues where feasible.

MYP Language Acquisition

Language Acquisition provides sustained additional-language learning and develops students' ability to communicate across cultures and contexts. Harfa uses the MYP phase continuum to plan appropriate challenge, monitor progress and support movement toward increasingly independent and sophisticated language use.

- Learning experiences integrate receptive, productive and interactive communication.
- Students engage with authentic and appropriately challenging texts and contexts.
- Culture and language are taught as interconnected.
- Teachers differentiate within groups where students are at different points on the continuum.
- Assessment follows current MYP subject requirements and informs subsequent teaching and placement.

MYP Language Across Subject Groups

All MYP teachers explicitly support the language of their disciplines. This includes helping students interpret command terms, understand specialist vocabulary, read disciplinary texts, construct explanations and arguments, use evidence, communicate through subject-specific conventions and reflect on their learning.

- Subject teachers identify language demands during unit planning.
- Teachers scaffold complex texts and tasks without reducing conceptual challenge unnecessarily.
- Approaches to Learning (ATL) communication skills are developed across subject groups.

- Teachers provide models, exemplars and success criteria that make expectations visible.
- Language and subject teachers collaborate where students need targeted support.

MYP Students New to the Language of Instruction

Students entering the MYP with limited English receive targeted support to access subject learning while developing English. The nature and intensity of support are determined by the individual language profile and available school structures. Support may include targeted language intervention, differentiated classroom scaffolding, adapted access materials, additional language instruction and coordinated teacher planning.

A student's developing English proficiency should not be interpreted as limited cognitive ability. Teachers use multiple forms of evidence to distinguish language-development needs from conceptual understanding and other learning needs.

Transition from PYP to MYP

Harfa promotes continuity in language development between the PYP and MYP. Transition information includes relevant language profiles, prior support, demonstrated strengths, areas for development and significant assessment evidence. PYP and MYP educators collaborate where possible so that students experience progression rather than unnecessary repetition or abrupt changes in expectations.

Rights and Responsibilities

Students

- Have the right to have their linguistic identity respected.
- Have the right to appropriate access and support when developing the language of instruction.
- Are expected to engage actively in language learning and take increasing responsibility for progress.
- Are expected to use language respectfully and value linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Are encouraged to maintain and develop their home language(s).

Teachers

- Recognize their role as teachers of language within their discipline or classroom context.
- Plan for the language demands and provide appropriate scaffolding and extension.
- Use assessment evidence to monitor language development and adapt teaching.
- Create inclusive environments in which multilingualism is valued.
- Collaborate with colleagues, coordinators and support staff.
- Communicate significant progress and support needs to students and families.

PYP and MYP Coordinators

- Support implementation of the policy within the relevant programme.
- Promote consistency between IB requirements, curriculum planning and classroom practice.
- Facilitate collaborative reflection on language provision, pathways, resources and student access.
- Support integration and professional learning related to language and multilingualism.
- Contribute to policy review and the collection of evidence of implementation.

School Leadership

- Ensure appropriate structures, staffing and resources are considered in relation to the school language profile.
- Support professional development in language acquisition, multilingual pedagogy, differentiation and disciplinary literacy.
- Ensure the policy is communicated and reviewed.
- Monitor the effectiveness and inclusiveness of language provision.

Parents and Community

- Share accurate information about students' language backgrounds and prior learning.
- Support continued development of home language(s).
- Encourage reading, communication and positive attitudes toward multilingualism.
- Participate in language and cultural events where possible.
- Communicate with the school when language-related concerns arise.

Physical and Virtual Resources

In accordance with IB expectations, Harfa identifies and develops resources that facilitate language development. Resources are reviewed according to student needs, curriculum priorities and available provision.

- School and classroom libraries with literary and informational texts at varied levels.
- Dictionaries, thesauruses, bilingual resources and reference materials.
- Graded readers and accessible texts for developing language learners.
- Digital reading, writing, translation and language-learning tools used appropriately and ethically.
- Audio, video and multimodal resources.
- Visual supports, graphic organizers, vocabulary resources and teacher-created scaffolds.
- Authentic cultural materials and texts representing diverse perspectives and languages.
- Dedicated or flexible spaces for targeted language support and collaborative learning.

Professional Development

- IB workshops and programme-specific professional learning.
- Professional learning in multilingual and inclusive pedagogy.
- Strategies for supporting students developing the language of instruction.
- Disciplinary literacy and language across the curriculum.
- Collaborative planning and internal sharing of effective practice.
- Reflection on bias, linguistic inclusion and culturally responsive communication.
- Integration for new staff on the school language profile, this policy and programme-specific expectations.

Communication of the Policy

The Language Policy is made available to staff and families and is introduced as part of relevant staff introduction and programme communication. Key procedures, including language pathways and support arrangements, are explained to students and families when they are directly affected.

Monitoring and Evidence of Implementation

Implementation is monitored through normal school improvement and programme-development processes. Evidence may include:

- PYP Programme of Inquiry and collaborative planning documentation.
- MYP unit plans and subject-group planning.
- Student language profiles, placement evidence and records of support.
- Student work demonstrating language development across contexts.
- Assessment evidence and teacher feedback.
- Classroom observations and learning walks.
- Reports about cultural events, visits and celebrations.
- Resources and multilingual displays.
- Professional-development records.
- Student, parent and teacher feedback.
- Evidence of multilingual and intercultural events and community participation.

Policy Review

The policy is formally reviewed every two years and may be reviewed earlier when there are significant changes to IB requirements, Croatian requirements, the school's programme structure or the linguistic profile of the student body. The review is collaborative and involves the PYP Coordinator, MYP Coordinator, language teachers, school leadership and other relevant staff. Student and parent perspectives are considered where appropriate.

The review process considers both the wording of the policy and evidence of implementation. Revisions are approved by school leadership and communicated to the school community.

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