



SCHOOL OF THE NATIONS
聯合國學校

LANGUAGE POLICY

School of the Nations

The School of the Nations Language Policy outlines the goals for language teaching and learning that meet the needs of the students and reflects the principles of the school.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the intimate connection between the language abilities of an individual and the development of their moral structure, the school seeks to cultivate students' power of expression. At one level, language is used to communicate, to convey ideas and concepts, social, mathematical, scientific, and literary. In addition, by learning diverse languages, students are able to develop a sense of world citizenship and international mindedness. Learning different languages also opens our minds to different perspectives and ways of understanding.

Language must be rich enough to enable students to explore and describe reality, both physical and spiritual. We strive to enable students to use language with greater clarity and precision to understand the many dimensions of reality, such as recognizing the nobility of each human being and distinguish between that which is conducive to wellbeing or that which is detrimental.

The School of the Nations seeks to cultivate a love of learning in students where they are enabled to strive for personal excellence.

English and Mandarin are the primary languages of instruction at the School of the Nations. A panoply of cultural and linguistic backgrounds are both recognized and celebrated. At the same time, we recognize that families have chosen this school as a passport to other countries when it comes time for tertiary education.

2. CONTEXT OF LANGUAGES USED IN SCHOOL

For an individual to actively participate in the progress of society, language is essential.

The School of the Nations provides for the development of language primarily in English and Mandarin. English is the primary language of instruction and enables the individual to access knowledge world-wide and interact with a significant percentage of people from all the nations of the world. It is also the expectation of parents for their children to gain proficiency in English through the education programs in the School. Mandarin enables the students to function throughout China, a region of growing economic, political, and social importance and influence.

Proficiency and familiarity with different languages is recognized as an important element in the development of a sense of world citizenship and international mindedness. Language is a window on the world. A knowledge of different languages opens the mind to different points of view and different ways of understanding.



3. LANGUAGE PROFILE

Students entering the IB Diploma Programme come from the following backgrounds:

- Cantonese-speaking families.
- English-speaking families from North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, Philippines, Singapore, or Malaysia, etc. who have developed their English language abilities in the school systems of these countries.
- Mandarin-speaking families who have provided opportunities to their children to acquire English to an adequate degree as ascertained through examination.
- Families with other home languages who have provided opportunities to their children to acquire English to an adequate degree as ascertained through examination.

4. LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

4.1. IB Language Courses

The IB Diploma Programme at the School of the Nations will use English as the language of instruction. As a general rule, students accepted to the IB Diploma Programme will have demonstrated adequate proficiency in English either through an admissions examination (see Admissions Policy) or through previous study at the School of the Nations. The School provides learning support in the library in the afternoons for various subjects including English and Chinese for students.

The majority of students will be learning in a language other than their mother tongue. For this reason, the curriculum of all subjects will take into account the fact that students may not naturally understand the language used. When necessary, explicit instruction will be provided to familiarize students with the subtleties of meaning, range of expression and structural forms appropriate for different subjects and purposes. This will occur either in the instruction of Language A or Language B classes, or in the respective subject class.

4.1.1. Language A – Studies in language and literature

All students are required to take English as their first language. In some cases, students may choose to study both English and their mother tongue as their Language A course. The study of another Language A course is subject to approval of the School and must comply with all rules and guidance from the IB.

Approval of each student's choice will be based on:

- prior experience with the student at lower levels of instruction at the School of the Nations
- entrance examination at the time of enrolment
- educational background
- family background



The School assists students who choose their mother tongue as an additional Language A course to find appropriate academic assistance. If the student chooses Chinese as his/her additional Language A subject, the class will be conducted during school hours. The school will encourage students of linguistic backgrounds other than English or Chinese to find opportunities for self-study of Language A: Literature in their mother tongue if so desired. The student's family must officially provide a qualified tutor for this course option. The School is able to provide the following logistical support if needed:

- printing/ photocopying services
- pre-arranged classroom/ meeting room
- suggestion on tutor's training and workshops
- administering major assessments

The School encourages teaching staff, irrespective of subject area, in their collaboration with other teachers, to address the needs of diverse language needs, to plan, and to cater for them.

4.1.2. Language B – Language acquisition

Language acquisition courses are designed to provide students the opportunity to develop in a language in addition to their home/personal/best language(s). They are not designed for students entering the course who already have the ability to communicate confidently and proficiently in the specific language. At the School of the Nations, students who take English as the only language A course are required to choose Mandarin, French or Spanish for the Language B component of the curriculum. The school will provide instruction in Mandarin and will assist students to find appropriate academic support for other languages. The School provides a Site-based Coordinator for IB-approved online Language B courses. Approval of each student's choice will be based on:

- prior experience with the student at lower levels of instruction at the School of the Nations
- entrance examination at the time of enrolment
- educational background
- family background
- student motivation and attitude towards independent learning

4.1.2.1. *Mandarin ab initio*

Language ab initio is designed for students with no prior experience of the target language, or for those students with very limited previous exposure. At the School of the Nations, students who are unable to pursue Mandarin at the Standard Level as their Language B course will be required to study it at the ab initio level. The growing importance and influence of China in the region and the world fully justifies the emphasis placed on Mandarin at the School.

In addition, the School will assist all students to study other languages according to their needs and desires. There are a number of organizations in Macau that are useful for this purpose as specified in the next section.



4.2. English Language Learning and English Language Learners

The demand for English language support has lessened since about 2015. However, the following supports/arrangements are available for student learning:

- the understanding that every IB Diploma Programme teacher is a language teacher who guides and trains students to be proficient in using the language of the subject area stands strong as one of the key pedagogical elements
- students may request occasional support from subject teachers
- students may use the library study support on a regular basis
- the School sets up periodic training for all teaching staff on strategies for student language support, e.g. Teaching ESL students in Mainstream Classrooms.

Students' primary language and culture are valued and acknowledged within a school system that seeks to strengthen their English and Mandarin Chinese skills. Understanding and skills from diverse backgrounds are consciously welcomed and incorporated into the learning. Respect and understanding of the diversity of students are promoted.

5. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

The School of the Nations regularly communicates with parents and also encourages parents to initiate communication with teachers and administrators. Written communication is carried out mainly in English, and important matters are translated into Chinese. Oral communication with parents takes place in English, Mandarin or Cantonese. Staff is available for translation from English to Mandarin or Cantonese and from Mandarin to English.

6. COMMUNICATION WITH ACADEMIC STAFF

Teachers at the School of the Nations are proficient in English, Mandarin, Cantonese or any combination of these. There are a certain number of staff members who do not share a common language. Written communications from the administration are provided in English and translated into Chinese in written or oral format. Translation is provided for oral communication between staff members. The School is consistently seeking improvement in reducing the language barrier between its staff members.

7. ACCESS

Information within this policy is available for staff, parents, and students.



8. UPDATES

Policies and handbooks at the School of the Nations are reviewed yearly before the beginning of each academic year. They are also reviewed when a situation – internal or external – demands it. The reviews and updates are done by the committees assigned for each document and the approval is obtained from the school's Pedagogical Leadership Team.

8.1. Change History

Date	Responsible	Action
2023-11-06	Dorothy Tsai (Chinese teacher) and Azita Crerar (English teacher)	Updated
2023-06-01	Vivek Nair (Director)	Approved
2023-12-12	Ignacio Marcovecchio (DPC)	Reviewed and formatted