



**International
School**
Riyadh · Saudi Arabia

LANGUAGE POLICY

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1. Introduction

English is the language of instruction at SEK RIYADH, but the school is in a community where about one third of the school population comes from the host country and their first language is Arabic. The rest of the school population comes from all over the world.

Therefore, SEK RIYADH has the dual objective to combine an international program with a strong Arabic language and culture base so that students can benefit from the values and advantages of both the IB approach as well as the rich Arabic cultural heritage.

Being an international school, teachers are from countries with different English dialects with the result that all types of English are acknowledged and recognized. Teachers who teach other languages are the only ones allowed to communicate in languages other than English with students: If a teacher that has to teach in English knows another language (Spanish, French, Dutch, German, Polish...) can use it for support to SLA (Second Language Acquisition) students.

2. Language Philosophy

English being the language of instruction, we want to ensure that students are firmly placed in an English-speaking environment while at SEK RIYADH. At the same time, home languages are celebrated and acknowledged; for example, during student-led conferences, children can present to their families in their home language.

SEK RIYADH believes that languages are a fundamental tool for developing internationally minded students, and we encourage students to study three languages from the beginning of the primary program.

English requirements

SEK RIYADH is a non-selective school that considers its status as an international school a duty to be inclusive and support the enrollment of both foreign and domestic students who wish to approach an international education out of either need or choice. For us, this implies that there are no minimum English language entry requirements up to grade 3.

Students whose initial level of English is below the grade-working level will be supported through in-class differentiated activities, specific curricular ELA (English Language Acquisition) lessons, and/or additional extra-curricular ELA lessons. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the best individualized solution will be implemented. However, any learning experience related to the units of inquiry and in any context encourages the learning of English

and helps to reinforce that skill based on each child's own learning.

From grade 4 onward, the school wishes to provide students who are not fluent in English with the opportunity to join the program if they meet minimum requirements and demonstrate a strong motivation to learn. For this reason, the minimum recommended requirements for enrollment are as follows:

Grades 4 to 6: A2 level of the European framework, KET with Merit.

Grades 7 to 8: B1 level of the European framework, PET.

From Grade 9 onwards IBDP: High B1 level of the European framework, PET with Merit, IGCSE English Second Language grade C or equivalent.

Students who fall short or barely reach the minimum entry requirements for English are obliged to follow additional English classes that are aimed at reaching a full B1 level/PET by the end of MYP2 and a full B2 level/FCE by the end of MYP5.

Mother tongue support

Native languages other than English or Arabic will be supported throughout the school. SEK RIYADH provides a wide range of multilingual resources to support the learning of multiple languages, including mother tongue languages.

In the Diploma Years section, native languages other than English or Arabic will be supported by offering self-taught language subjects. In lower grade levels, students will have access to extra-curricular courses organized by the school, contingent on the needs of specific groups in the school community. There is currently a mother tongue programme for Spanish and planning to implement French and other languages.

The libraries will support students through all levels with sections dedicated to the different native languages of our students. The school also provide access to different electronic resources: reading apps, online encyclopedia, online magazines which offer access to information in languages other than English.

3. Language in the continuum

Language in the PYP

Language is an essential tool for young learners to construct meaning and make connections to support their development. At SEK RIYADH, language instruction is transdisciplinary and incorporated into the program of inquiry, and all teachers at SEK RIYADH are teachers of

language. Language instruction and learning outside of the program of inquiry is also taught through a constructivist, inquiry-based approach to encourage authentic learning experiences for language development. The PYP follows the IB Language Scope and Sequence, which includes three interrelated language strands: oral language, written language, and visual language. These three interrelated strands consider both the receptive and expressive aspects of language, and encourage a balanced approach to language development.

Language instruction aims to develop balanced learning and includes phonics, grammar, guided reading, subject specific vocabulary development, reading of a variety of texts, authentic writing experiences and writing for different purposes, the writing process, and creative expression. Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all students, and classroom teachers regularly assess their students' language development throughout the year to inform individual and small group instruction. Teachers regularly communicate with families about student progress. Parents are an important part of the SEK RIYADH community, and in the PYP parents are encouraged to read with their children and/or support their child's language learning at home.

Though English is the primary language of instruction, all PYP students also have four/five hours of Arabic lessons per week starting in the Early Years. From PreK1, all PYP students choose an additional language of study. Children are also encouraged to share and study their mother tongues, and we strive to make connections with our families to ensure that children have access to books and resources in their mother tongue in our PYP library. Families are also encouraged to regularly use their mother tongue to support the continued development of mother tongue language learning. The school currently offers Spanish and French mother tongue courses as extracurricular activities for the PYP students and their families.

Language in the MYP

Direct language instruction happens in the relevant language classes. However, all teachers are considered language teachers and are expected to include strategies to support language learning and incorporate a range of teaching and learning strategies to ensure that students have access to necessary skills in terms of oral communication, written communication, and visual communication.

In the MYP, language is divided into two departments: Language & Literature and Language Acquisition. Every student is required to take three languages. Students' allocation into either of these courses is directly related to their level of fluency in the specific language (as indicated by prior test scores or in school tests).

English is the primary language of instruction, all MYP students take one language course in Arabic. Native-speaking Arabic students follow an IB MYP Arabic Language & Literature course

that meets the standards of the national curriculum. Students who are not native-speaking Arabs follow the Language Acquisition course, where teaching and learning is organized into six phases.

Language Acquisition

Students are placed in classes according to the IB's continuum of language learning phases. The school has a flexible placement policy that allows student movement throughout the school year in relation to the student's progression along this curriculum

Moving from Language Acquisition to Language & Literature

Teaching and learning in the language acquisition subject group is organized in six phases. The phases do not correspond to particular age groups or MYP years. Students do not necessarily begin in phase one – they can begin at any phase, depending on their prior experiences, and may exit from any phase on the continuum.

At the beginning of the school year, students will be placed in the pertinent phase according to their level. It is at the school's discretion to group students in the six phases. However, it is essential to consider first and foremost a reasonable differentiation and manageable combination of proficiencies in one class:

Students placed in a phase may move into another phase throughout the year depending on their development across all areas of language.

Students meeting all criteria for one phase of the Language Acquisition continuum will be placed in the next phase.

Students in phase 6 of the Language Acquisition continuum for Arabic will be placed in the Language and Literature class.

Students in phase 5 of the Language Acquisition continuum for English will be placed in the Language and Literature class.

For students moving up from the MYP to the DP, successful completion of phase 4 at MYP level will allow students to register for a group 1 language if required by their study plan. Successful completion of phase 5 is recommended.

Mother tongue support in the MYP

The school supports students who cannot be provided with formal tuition in their mother tongue during school hours, and it helps organize Mother Tongue classes outside the school curriculum using school facilities at the end of a regular school day. Spanish and French courses are currently on offer.

[Language in the DP](#)

The school is non-selective except for one requirement: all students entering the school must have a level of competence in the school's language of instruction (English) such that they are

able to study that language at one of the following IB Diploma Program courses from group 1 or 2: English A or English B at HL or SL.

Language proficiency tests will be administered when students apply for the Diploma Program to assess their competence in English and /or Arabic. Results from the test will be used to place students appropriately.

For students moving up from the MYP, successful completion of phase 4 at MYP5 level will allow students to register for a group 1 language if required by their study plan. Successful completion of phase 5 is recommended.

The school recognizes the centrality of language competence in the academic development of students and since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers. It is a requirement of the DP that all candidates study either one group 1 and one group 2 language course or two group 1 languages courses where this is appropriate. A further language, from either group 1 or 2, could be studied instead of a group 6 subject

The following languages will be offered on a taught basis:

- English A Language and Literature HL/SL
- Arabic A Language and Literature HL/SL
- English B HL
- Arabic B HL/SL/Ab Initio
- Spanish B HL/SL

The DP Coordinator will support students and parents in choosing the most appropriate course when making their subjects choices for the DP.

Mother tongue support in the DP

Students whose mother-tongue language is neither English nor Arabic can study their mother-tongue on a school supported self-taught basis if the mother-tongue language is offered by the IB. The course is largely independent, but students must enroll in a study hall supervised by an English A Literature teacher during both years of the program. This time is allocated to provide students with scheduled time to meet with the supervisor and tutors, as well as complete coursework. Through guidance from the English teacher, acting as a supervisor, students will receive the necessary support and resources to understand the course requirements and assessments. These students are required to hire a tutor to support them with their mother tongue. An English teacher meets with students and tutors to explain their timeline, assignments and other expectations during the study hall block. The IBDP coordinator provides tutors with the appropriate prescribed list of authors, oral commentary questions and the Diploma Program assessment procedures (Sections C1a.12: "School-supported self-taught candidates", C1a.13: "Responsibilities of a school with language A: literature school-supported self-taught

candidates”, C1a.14: “External assessment for language A: literature SL school supported self-taught candidates”), and the Language A Literature guide.

4. Non-native English-speaking Teachers

Non-native English-speaking teachers who are required to teach subjects in English are required to have an appropriate level of the language, intended as a full C1 or upper intermediate level. The school offers professional language training for teachers and staff who wish or need to improve and consolidate their level.

The school seeks the best teachers for our students, no matter their origin, hence encourages non-native English-speaking teachers to teach subjects other than their own language, as this is seen also as a way to promote cultural exchanges which enrich the environment and are beneficial to the students.

5. Policy development and revision

The School Principal, Academic Coordinator and the pedagogical leadership team oversaw this policy’s development in January 2022. As indicated below, all members of staff have been involved in the revision of this policy in June/August 2022.

At the time of first revision of the policy, members of the Team involved were:

School Principal: Iván Martínez
Head of Learning and Innovation (PYP Coordinator): Sandra Ospina
General Manager: Joan Blázquez
IT Director: Jesús Castillo
Head of Counselling and Admissions: Julie Alonso

The pedagogical leadership team, that includes the School Principal and the Academic program coordinators (PYP, MYP, DP) is in charge of the policy revision process.

The pedagogical leadership team will be drafting the policy on the basis of indications provided by IB documents. Teachers will be asked to provide feedback on the draft, and the policy will be updated accordingly if the input is consistent with IB guidelines and the school vision.

For the first couple of years, the policy will be revised on a yearly basis and either confirmed as is or modified accordingly. The School Principal and Academic Coordinator will be in charge of approving the new version and sharing it with the school community through the school website and on Managebac.

After that, the policy will be revised on a rotational basis at least every evaluation cycle.

6. Bibliography

IB publications :

- o Guidelines for developing a school language policy (April 2008)
- o Language and Learning in the IB Programmes (September 2011)
- o Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB Programmes (April 2008) o IB: Programme Standards and Practices
- o MYP: From principles into Practice (August 2008)
- o Second Language Acquisition and Mother-tongue Development (January2004)
- o Towards a continuum of international education (September 2008).
- o Subject Guides (MYP language A and B, DP Language A1, Language B, Language A: Literature, Language A: Language and Literature)