



Language Policy



Al Sahwa Schools

Mission:

We are a learning community committed to our core values and Oman's rich cultural heritage while embodying high quality international education

Vision:

Educate students to become the leaders of the future

Our Core Values:

Respect, Gratitude, Proactivity

International Mindedness:

International Mindedness is a global perspective which enriches our community's understanding of intercultural harmony in order to bring greater peace to the world. International mindedness is exemplified in our commitment to multiculturalism and in our respect for other cultures.

مدارس الصحوة

رسالتنا :

نحن مجتمع تعلّمي، نلتزم بقيمنا الأساسية وبالموروث الثقافي العُماني الأصيل، وفي الوقت نفسه نطبق تعليمًا دوليًا عالي الجودة

رؤيتنا :

إعداد الطلاب ليكونوا قادة المستقبل.

قيمنا الأساسية :

الاحترام، الامتنان، المبادرة

العقلية الدولية :

العقلية الدولية هي منظور عالمي يُثري إدراك مجتمع مدارس الصحوة للانسجام بين الثقافات، لتحقيق أكبر قدر من السلام العالمي. وتتجسد العقلية الدولية في التزامنا بالتعدّد الثقافي، وفي احترامنا للثقافات الأخرى.. إعداد الطلاب ليكونوا قادة المستقبل

Contents

AI Sahwa Language Philosophy	5
Local Language and Culture	5
Learning of the language and culture of host country	6
The Aim of this Policy is to:	6
Language Profiles at AI Sahwa Schools	7
Language Learning Options at AI Sahwa Schools	7
Admission Procedure and Languages	8
Primary Years Programme at AI Sahwa Schools	8
KG1 – KG2	8
Grades 1 - 6	9
Middle Years Programme at AI Sahwa Schools	10
Language and Literature	10
Language Acquisition : English as Additional Language	10
Placement in Language Courses for MYP	11
Placement in Language Courses for DP	12
English as Language of Instruction and strategies to support the language development of our students	13
Listening and Speaking	13
Writing	14
Reading	14
Support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction	14
ICT Support for Language Learning	14
Support for Mother Tongue	15
Mother tongue support at AI Sahwa	15
Practices relating to language teaching and learning	15
Policy Review	16
Communicating the Language Policy	16
Policy Alignment	16
Sources	16
Appendix	17

Al Sahwa Language Philosophy

‘Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development, cultural identity and intercultural understanding. As well as being the major medium of social communication, it is tightly linked to cognitive growth because it is the process by which meaning and knowledge is negotiated and constructed. It is the main tool for building our knowledge of the universe and our place in it. Language then, is central to learning, as well as to literacy, and is thus closely related to success in school.’ Learning in a Language other than Mother Tongue - IB Programmes P. 1

“Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.” Rita Mae Brown

Language underpins and encompasses all we do as human beings. Al Sahwa Schools’ Mission is a commitment to promoting Oman’s rich cultural heritage, thus supporting, maintaining and developing Arabic language (mother tongue) through our Schools’ and Ministry of Education (MoE) curricula.

The bilingual nature of Al Sahwa enables our students to retain their identity as Omani’s, allows them to embrace the world around them and develop a sense of interculturalism. Students at Al Sahwa learn language, learn about language and learn through language. This empowers them to develop the mastery of thinking and reasoning critically, to be responsible and productive citizens, and enable them to be more proficient communicators in a multilingual world. This acquisition of language is a dynamic, lifelong process that permeates all aspects of students’ learning.

We strive to ensure that families believe that their mother tongue is valued and translation services are available within the school to support parents further. We at Al Sahwa strive to follow some of the IB Learner Profile traits, especially in our language policy. We want each student to be:

An inquirer: to use language to gain new information or knowledge in order to make sense of the world;

A communicator: with competent uses of oral and written language in a variety of situations, to be able listen attentively to details, speak confidently, read and write with fluency and comprehend what is conveyed;

Knowledgeable: to have acquired vocabulary and understanding to discuss literary styles;

Caring: to show care in use of language and the effect that language has on others;

Open-minded: to respect the differences and similarities in languages, dialects and personal communication skills.

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, all elements that are clearly in line with our [Guiding Statements](#).

Local Language and Culture

“Oman has a deep-rooted history and firm principles established ages ago and, praise be to God, what we have done is to confirm these principles, and express them in modern-day language.” Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said

The Sultanate of Oman for a vast majority of our students is their home country. Our belief in our cultural heritage is closely tied to our mother tongue, Arabic. In addition there are more than eight other languages spoken in different parts of Oman, namely Mehri, Hobyót, Jabbali, Swahili, Balushi, Lawati, Harsusi, Bathari and Kamzari. In the KG/Primary School, the Programme allows for information to be embedded in a meaningful context, supporting students understanding and value Omani culture, traditions and values. Omani Studies is taught from Grade 1 to 12 and furthers students’ understandings of Oman.

We acknowledge the many cultural and religious holidays celebrated by having the community share in these special days at school, eg. Omani National Day, Prophet Mohammed’s Birthday, Qarangkasho (an Omani celebration to mark the 15th day of Ramadan).

Learning of the language and culture of host country

Al Sahwa School values the language and culture of Oman by: Considering, whenever possible, all aspects of the host culture when planning units of work; Supporting teaching staff in their appreciation of Omani culture and language, including Arabic lessons for the teaching faculty; Recognizing and explaining important host country festivals and celebrations within the school. We support and sustain an awareness of Oman’s culture and language by teaching Omani Social Studies and Arabic at all acquisition levels. The bilingual nature of our programme, in each section of the school, reinforces literacy and cultural identity and reflects the multilingual society we live in, this fits within the Mission Statement of the school which states that the Al Sahwa School are a learning community committed to our core values and Oman’s rich cultural heritage while embodying high quality international education

The Aim of this Policy is to:

- Develop the understanding, knowledge, skills and confidence to clearly communicate in Arabic and English.
- Support and maintain the development of the mother tongue.
- Maintain books from Arabic language in our Library collections enabling students and staff to read, and value the culture and language of English and mother tongue.
- Develop and maintain school documents and policies in Arabic Language for parents and community who are not proficient in English
- Provide learning support, including English as an Additional Language (EAL), to enable all students in the Schools to access the curriculum in a manner that allows them to benefit fully from their education and to reach their full potential.
- Provide class teachers who are proficient in the two languages of instruction - Arabic and English.

- Develop students who have oral, visual and written language skills.
- Provide a sound foundation for progression to tertiary study or employment.

Language Profiles at Al Sahwa Schools

Al Sahwa Schools Language Profile	
languages of teaching and learning	Language of Instruction: English and Arabic Language Acquisition: English
languages of communication used in the school and outside the classroom	At the time of writing (January 2020), the following mother tongues are represented in our student population: Arabic :99.7% Other:0.3%
Language needs of the school community	
The range and types of mother tongue languages in the community	The Ministry of Education requires that all schools under the ministry teach Omani Social Studies and Islamic Education in their mother tongue (Arabic)
Language Education Logistics	
practices relating to the choice and planning of language courses for learners	Al Sahwa Schools offers English for students in Language Acquisition.
spelling and referencing protocols	Please refer to our Academic Honesty
preferred bibliographic styles	Please refer to our Academic Honesty

Language Learning Options at Al Sahwa Schools

Recognizing the diverse student needs and that differentiation within our classes is crucial for success for all students, Al Sahwa PYP/MYP language learning options include the following:

PYP	MYP
English	English Language and Literature
Arabic	Arabic Language and Literature
Support for Learning, SFL and EAL English	Language Acquisition (English)
Support for Learning, SFL Arabic	ELL support

Languages Offered in the IB Diploma Programme Al Sahwa School offers both Arabic and English Language A and Language B at higher and standard level. In addition, we will use the IB online programme offered by Pamoja for Ab initio languages. In support of the mother tongue/first language/native languages, we also have the ability to offer school supported self-taught languages in IBDP Group 1 if the need arose.

As a bilingual school the expectation is that every student takes Arabic A in years 11 and 12. The study of Arabic A ensures that the students receive a bilingual IB Diploma which is prestigious and attractive to universities. Arabic A also supports the Omani Ministry examinations

Admission Procedure and Languages

Students entering Al Sahwa Schools need a basic knowledge of English that will enable them to access the curriculum and have a reasonable prospect of progressing from their time at Al Sahwa Schools. Potential students will take an English Language admissions test as per [Al Sahwa Admissions Policy](#) . Students entering the MYP from Al Sahwa PYP Section will not be required to take the official admissions testing but will be assessed using the Standardised testing and Language Acquisition Carousel lessons, to determine their level of proficiency, whether they are a Language Acquisition student and if so, at which phase will they enter MYP.

Primary Years Programme at Al Sahwa Schools

Language is the major connecting element across the curriculum. The focus is on how language is used across subject areas and throughout the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. In an inquiry-based classroom, language instruction is integrated into all learning activities. Teachers strive to develop a caring language community in which all students feel accepted and confident in taking risks in their language learning. (Adapted from Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education)

KG1 – KG2

Students use play to make meaning of and understand the world around them, develop oral language and symbolic competence. Teachers support language learning by providing authentic opportunities for play and social interaction, and engaging learning environments. Play and learning are constantly developing. Children play to practice skills, try out possibilities, revise hypotheses and discover new challenges, leading to deeper learning. Reading and telling stories is a natural way to learn a new language. Through exposure to a variety of stories, students learn to appreciate and respect their own culture, heritage and values as well as those of other people. This familiarity to language in different contexts forms the foundations of literacy in both Arabic and English languages.

In KG, almost all students are Arabic first language speakers, with a few being English first language speakers. Developing the students' mother tongue is a priority in this early stage of learning. In KG, the programme is bilingual with 50% of lesson allocation to each language. This model supports all both languages as the programme is taught simultaneously in both languages, allowing students to make connections between both languages as well as to different disciplines within the programme.

Our relationship with the parents is a vital link to keeping communication lines open. We see ourselves as partners with parents in developing students' fullest potential. Parents receive weekly updates from KG staff and are invited to participate in assemblies, events and social responsibility projects throughout the year eg. fundraiser to build a well in Bangladesh, Prophet Mohammed's birthday celebration-parents donated supplies to a mother and child charity, students designed and presented gift boxes.

Grades 1 - 6

English is the main language of instruction in grades 1-6. Lessons are divided into 68% English and 32% Arabic. English and Arabic teachers regularly collaborate to ensure consistency and deep connections are made between the two languages through key vocabulary and understanding. They provide a classroom that is rich in both languages to promote student interpretation and understanding of the curriculum.

Development of language is fostered within authentic, meaningful contexts. Teachers provide opportunities to engage with both languages through a variety of modes, such as literature, drama, story writing, technology and discussion. Teachers make provision through lesson design to create opportunities for students to use language in transdisciplinary and subject specific contexts.

English language uses the Al Sahwa scope and sequences to develop sequential language learning along agreed objectives and conceptual frameworks. The PYP Units of Inquiry play an integral role in the development of English. For each UoI teachers identify a particular purpose for writing which fits with the context of the unit and the appropriate writing skills are taught.

As students learn language, teachers and others in the learning community, interpret and rephrase, question and provide models of and for language learning. Teachers scaffold language to facilitate access to resources the students need in the pursuit of their inquiries. They use language to provoke thought, spark interest and promote independent, motivated students.

Texts and writing in Arabic and English are displayed and discussed to allow students to learn that text conveys meaning. Providing and promoting a wide range and variety of texts around us (including stories, poems, digital media, lists, instructions and posters) support this process.

Students develop critical literacy through classroom experiences such as questioning and comparing texts, relating text to prior knowledge, and sharing personal reactions and experiences in everyday life.

The school counsels students about their choices for language acquisition courses before the start of the MYP by

- meeting with teachers from PYP and MYP to discuss individual student language proficiency based on formal and summative assessment
- organizing an Introduction to the MYP orientation as part of the transition process that includes information about language acquisition course
- setting up a languages carousel in the final year of PYP, during which students can experience a brief introduction to each language acquisition course offered in the MYP
- providing an information meeting to final year PYP parents to inform them about the scope and purpose of the language acquisition course

Middle Years Programme at Al Sahwa Schools

Learning to communicate in a variety of ways in more than one language is fundamental to the development of intercultural understanding in the IB. The MYP curriculum supports complex, rich, dynamic learning across a range of language domains. Students becoming grounded in an additional language is valued at Al Sahwa Schools. In the MYP, our current students take Language and Literature in English and Arabic. During the Admissions' process, a student's language proficiency is assessed in English and Arabic. This assessment is used as part of the process to determine which MYP language courses a student is recommended to attend.

Language and Literature

The curriculum of English and Arabic language and literature is designed to engage students in the study of many aspects of language and literature. Students explore a collection of texts that span both place and time, written by authors from around the world, in both historical and modern contexts. They study various genres of literary and non-literary texts, including poetry, novels, plays, and documentaries, and develop their oral and written communication skills

Language Acquisition : English as Additional Language

The curriculum for EAL language acquisition classes provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, viewing and behaving in the world. The curriculum is designed to support the development of the students' academic communication in English. This is done through various concept-based learning engagements that allow students to develop, practice, and apply strategies for reading, writing, listening and oral communication.

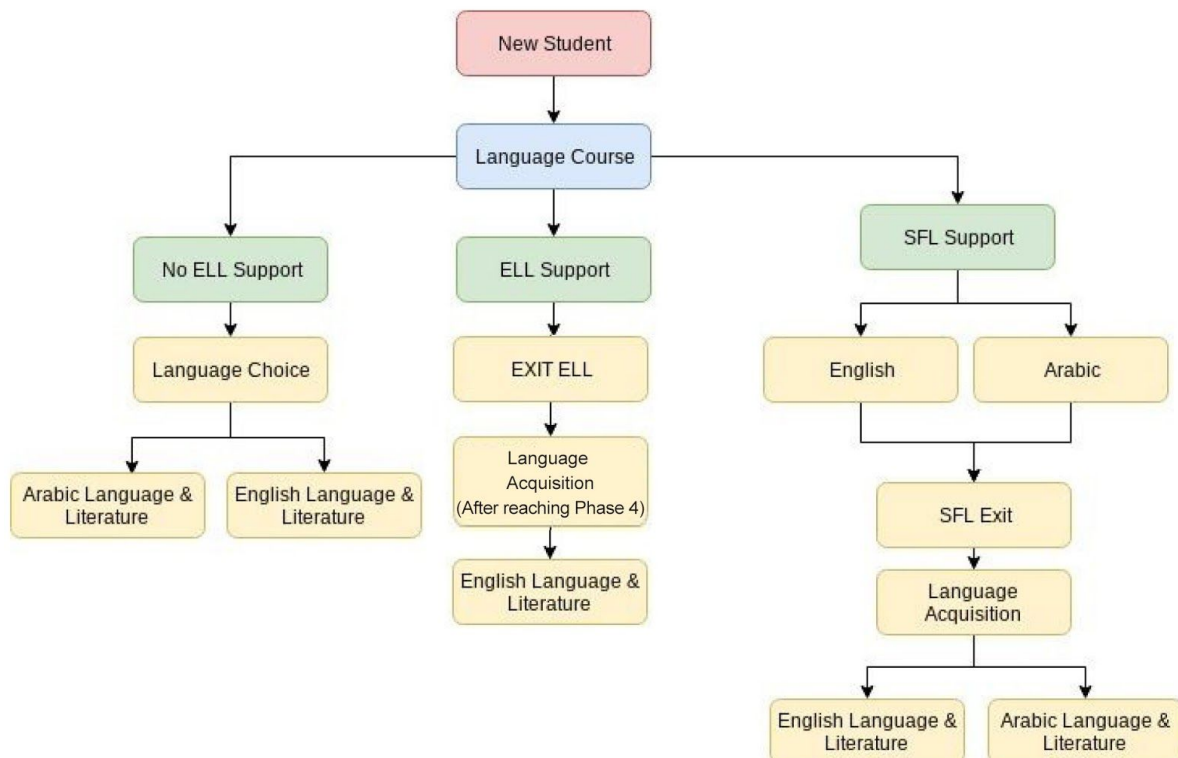
EAL follows the MYP aims and objectives and specific learning needs of the students in order to support the student's mainstream classes. The focus of the course is to develop and improve the students' English language skills to ensure the necessary academic language for success in the mainstream courses

The course will be structured around the phases of acquisition found in the IB Language Acquisition Subject Guide to allow for a range of profiles that students bring to the classroom. Teaching and learning is organized into six phases. The phases do not correspond to particular age groups or MYP year levels. 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. In the MYP, students in language acquisition are grouped into six phases. Because we recognize the need to experience sustained learning in one language in order to benefit from the exposure, students will not be permitted to switch out of the Language Acquisition course into Language and Literature unless they achieve beyond Phase 4 in their Language Acquisition course.

Al Sahwa offers MYP language acquisition course at three possible level:

- Emergent level students: phase 1 and 2
- Capable level students: phase 3 and 4
- Proficient level students: phase 5 and 6

Placement in Language Courses for MYP



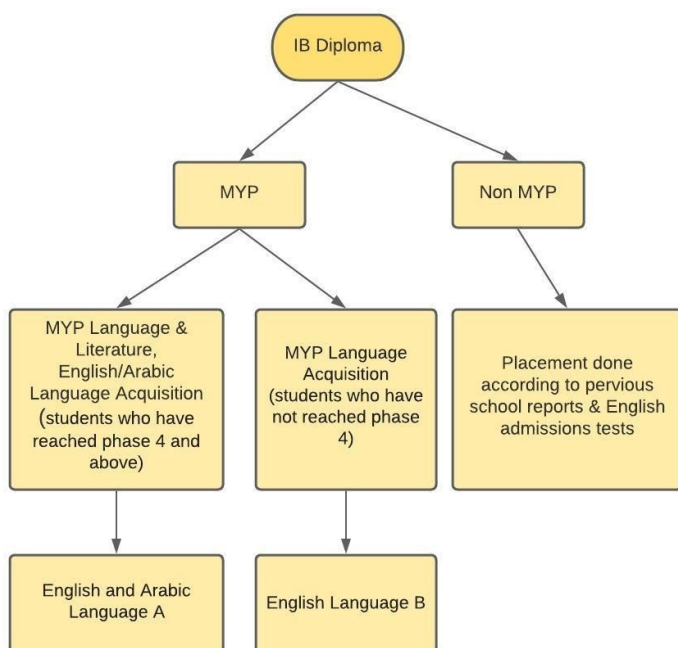
Student placement in MYP Language acquisition courses is based upon the levels achieved in the PYP(Language Acquisition Carousel), previous MYP years, MIDYS Standardization Tests scores and teacher recommendation. For students entering MYP and are new to Al Sahwa, the Admission Test scores will be used to ensure the student studies his/her additional language at a level that will lead to success. The placement test takes into consideration the MYP Language Acquisition continuum and global proficiency table as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide.

It will entail the following four major sections:

1. Visual interpretation component (images with some/no text stimuli).
2. Reading comprehension component
3. Writing component
4. Oral component (brief interview with section principals).

The placement test will be taken at the end of the academic year. In addition to the test results, "best-fit" approach will be applied to determine the student's placement in the phase that corresponds to his/her linguistic competencies.

Placement in Language Courses for DP



The curriculum framework for language courses is devised by the IB and follows its curriculum review cycle. Using the IB framework from the current IB DP guides, Al Sahwa

teachers develop a detailed two-year program that will enable students to be successful in the course and its final IB exams. Student placement in DP Language courses is based upon the levels/phases achieved and Language courses studied in MYP, CEM Standardization Tests scores and teacher recommendation. For students entering DP and are new to Al Sahwa, the Admission Test scores will be used to ensure the student studies his/her additional language at a level that will lead to success.

- Students choose their Diploma Group 1 and 2 languages, towards the end of the MYP course (MYP 5/ G 10)
- All Al Sahwa students have to have English as either Group 1 or Group 2 language.
- It is recommended that student's Group 1 language is their Mother Tongue
- If students choose two languages from Group 1, they do not need to choose a Group 2 language (for ex. English Language and Literature and Arabic Literature
- Language teachers use MYP assessment results beside other assessment tools, to decide the best placement for the student in the Diploma program.
- Al Sahwa will also offer IB languages online for students who were to learn an additional language
- DP (Language acquisition) B level (Standard and Higher Level) Students are eligible if they have previously studied the language for at least two consecutive years for the Standard Level course, and four or more years for the Higher Level course. We advise students who have not achieved Phase 4 in MYP, to choose Language B

English as Language of Instruction and strategies to support the language development of our students

English is the language of instruction at Al Sahwa Schools, so competence in English is key to students' success in other subject areas. English lessons, in both Language and Literature and Language Acquisition courses, have a role to play in teaching and reinforcing language skills needed in other mainstream subjects. However, we believe that all teachers are also language teachers, and should be developing students' language skills, especially those required in their particular subject area, as well as adapting their materials and teaching style to take account of the needs of students who are not native speakers of English. Mother Tongue or other languages may be used to enhance learning and strengthen understanding. To promote literacy and support staff in their contributions to language development, We have introduced Literacy Mats and Literacy Marking Key across all subjects and as a reference point for students also. Al Sahwa School believes that success at IB DP can only be achieved if clear language practices are followed throughout the school. In this way all teachers will contribute to the language development of students.

Listening and Speaking

We want our students to ask and answer questions and contribute to discussions in a range of formal and informal situations.

Writing

Teachers will provide opportunities for students to write every day, exposing them to a variety of texts and extended writing tasks across all the curriculum

Reading

Classroom Reading: Teachers allow time to read in class. This includes reading to children, quiet independent reading and guided reading in small groups;

Support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction

Al Sahwa Schools provides support for students who struggle to communicate fluently or learn effectively in the languages of instruction (English and Arabic) through the Support for Learning department, as described in the [Inclusion Policy](#). The English and Arabic language learning programs are designed to support the development of the students' academic communication skills.

In the MYP, additional support is provided for English language learners in the curriculum. Students who are working on acquiring academic English proficiency in the MYP attend MYP English Acquisition courses. Placement in the MYP English Acquisition courses is determined through a comprehensive examination of student grades, achievement on assessments, and teacher recommendations. The focus of the course is to develop and improve the students' English language skills to ensure the necessary academic language for success in the mainstream courses.

During the admissions process, all students are assessed for English and Arabic proficiency. If a student is admitted to Al Sahwa Schools and additional language support is deemed necessary based on the admissions testing, they will be further assessed to decide placement and plan for effective language acquisition support.

At the time of writing this policy, Al Sahwa Schools is planning to align, standardise, and formalise continual assessment of English language proficiency throughout the student's academic career (see Appendix).

ICT Support for Language Learning

Technology provides numerous tools to support language learning, including translation tools, dictionaries, interactive platforms for language acquisition. Teachers and students are

encouraged to utilise tools as they make sense to build language skills and to make connections between mother tongue and academic language.

Support for Mother Tongue

Al Sahwa is an English medium school, but we acknowledge that maintaining mother tongue is beneficial to learning when working in a second or third language. It is important that we both at school and home provide support in finding the opportunity for students to access their first, or mother-tongue, languages. We know that the ability to acquire proficiency in an additional language is heavily dependent on the level of proficiency of a child's mother tongue. For this reason, we believe that all students' mother tongue language ability should be promoted and continually improved so that it may positively impact learning an additional language. The school celebrates the language in various ways, such as the Literacy week, International Mother Language Day, International Day, Poetry Reading. The school library contains resources, accessible to all members of the community, which promote Arabic stories, authors and the Arabic language.

Mother tongue support at Al Sahwa

- Every morning assembly is conducted in mother tongue
- All sign posts around the school, including the IB learner profile is translated in mother tongue
- All internal and external communication is translated in mother tongue
- It is mandatory for all students to study the Omani Social Studies and Islamic Studies, both of which are conducted in the mother tongue.

Practices relating to language teaching and learning

All school documents, including student reports, are written in English. Reporting for Arabic Language and Literature, Islamic Studies shares performance indicators in Arabic. Referencing and citation style APA referencing conventions are to be taught, learned and used throughout the school for all tasks. (The Al Sahwa Academic Honesty Policy) contains all details including examples highlighting expectations.

Policy Review

This Language Acquisition Policy will be reviewed annually as part of the internal review. Overall responsibility for the process rests with the Schools' Leadership Team. Teachers, parents and students will be surveyed to determine the effectiveness of the Schools' Language Acquisition Policy and, where necessary, the policy will be updated.

Date Created	Date Approved	Next review
January 2020		January 2021

Communicating the Language Policy

The Language Policy shall be available to the school community. It shall be posted on the school website and library and updated as it is revised.

Policy Alignment

Al Sahwa language philosophy and policy align with our school values and other policies as listed below.

- [IB Learner Profile](#)
- [Al Sahwa Core Values](#)
- [Al Sahwa Assessment Policy](#)
- [Al Sahwa Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Al Sahwa Admissions Policy](#).

This policy will be used in conjunction with the above policies and related IB documents.

Sources

"Language Acquisition Guide: For Use from September 2014/January 2015." International Baccalaureate Organization, Sept. 2017.

"Language Acquisition." International Baccalaureate, Jan. 2. 2018.

"Language and Literature Guide: For Use from September 2014/January 2015." International Baccalaureate Organization, Sept. 2017.

"Language and Literature." International Baccalaureate, Jan. 2. 2018.

Appendix

Summary of WIDA and English Language Curriculum Proposal

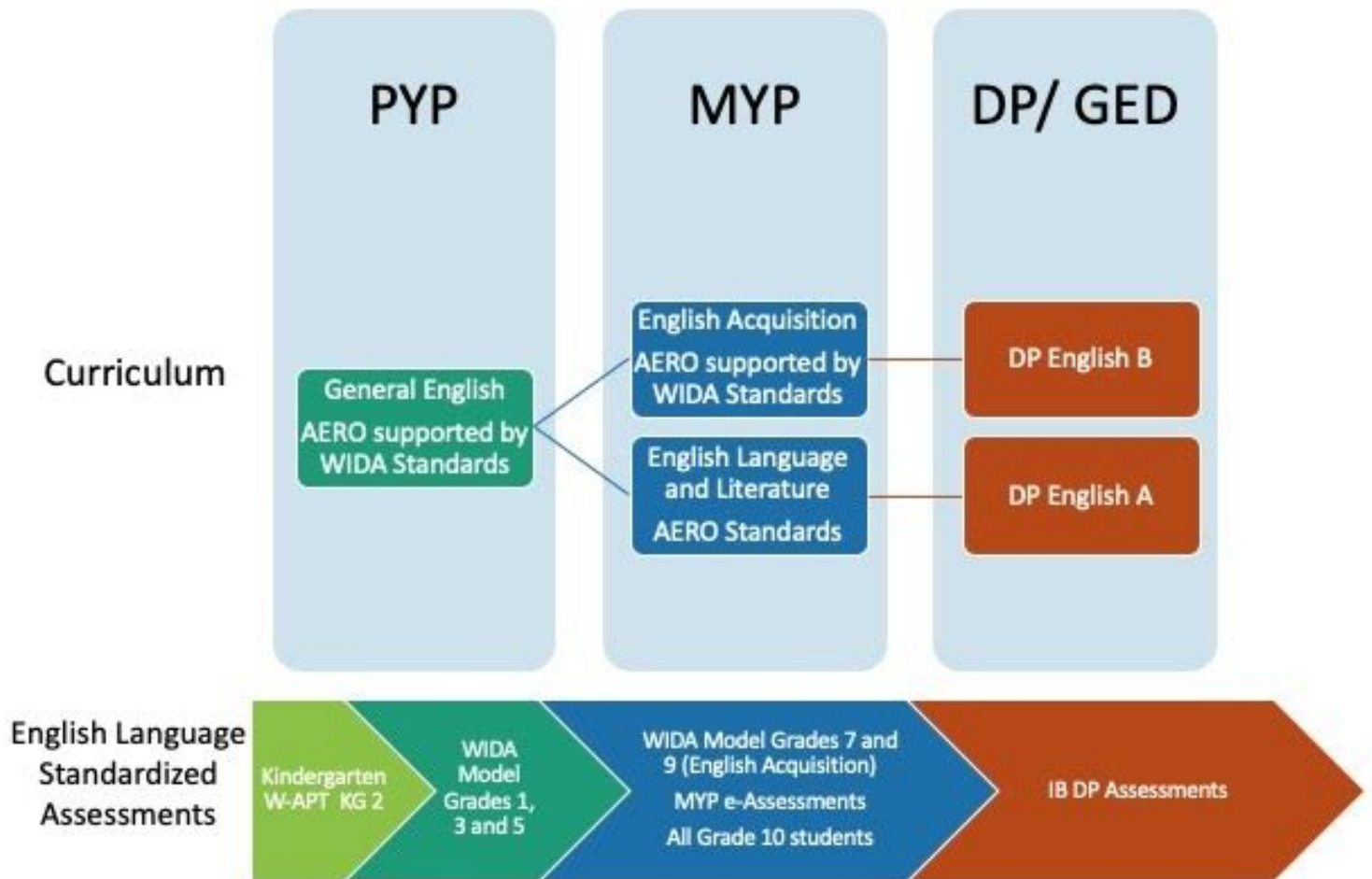
Language is more than a set of standards to teach, it is the foundation of all communication, learning, and thinking. When students have the ability to use a written and spoken language with fluency, they can better access the other curricular areas, such as mathematics and science. As Al Sahwa Schools makes its transition to an IB world school, the development of student access to and use of academic English underpins our students' success. In order to ensure that Al Sahwa Schools is providing the "high quality international education" described in the school's mission statement.

The vast majority of Al Shawa Schools' students are English language learners, which means they learn English as they learn curriculum content in English. As Al Sahwa Schools reviews their English curriculum, it is essential that we ensure our curriculum is designed for English language learners in an international context. Moreover, Al Sahwa Schools educators must implement research-based practices that support effective English language learning.

After investigation into research-based language learning practices and the curriculum options available to Al Sahwa Schools, we propose that Al Sahwa Schools adopts the AERO English Language Arts Program, informed by the WIDA standards, assessment tools, and practices to restructure and redesign the KG1- Grade 10 English language curriculum, and will effectively lead into the IB DP.

Progression of Proposed English Curriculum and Assessments

By adopting AERO English Language Arts with WIDA standards, and using WIDA assessments, Al Sahwa Schools will have regular and reliable data on student achievement that helps educators monitor student progress throughout a student's academic career. We will be able to effectively target student support and know if students are ready for the challenges that each new stage in their education brings. Such continual data with clear alignment to the curriculum also allows school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional program (see the figure on the next page).



The proposed progression figure above shows how the English language curriculum and assessments will progress from KG to Grade 12 at Al Sahwa Schools.

This proposal was submitted in September 2020 and is under review to plan for staggered implementation as of October 2020.