



Brummana High School

Whole School Language Policy

I. Language Policy Mission

Brummana High School is a multicultural and multilingual Quaker school in the heart of the Middle East where students enrol from the local community and neighbouring countries. Brummana High School (BHS) encourages all-round excellence in learning through the mastery of language to inspire students to become effective communicators, responsible citizens and life-long learners, while respecting cultural diversity and engaging in community service.

II. Purpose and Aim

The aim of this document is to nurture the understanding that language is a powerful tool in achieving effective self-expression and in global communication. The mastery of the English language and proficiency of the mother tongue fosters a strong cultural identity and helps to facilitate international understanding. BHS recognises that all teachers are essentially language teachers who impart academic knowledge in the most linguistically appropriate way.

III. Admission

A. Language profile

Students enrolled at BHS are mostly fluent in the English language which may be to some their mother tongue and to others their first foreign language. The school is endowed with a rich blend of forty-seven nationalities, represented in the student body that enrich the school's international identity with their culture and language variety.

B. The Admission Process

All students enrolling at BHS, from Grade 1 to Grade 12 are given placement tests in English, Arabic and Maths. Students applying to BHS from grades 3 to 10 have to complete the online GL Assessment which covers English, Maths, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. For English, students are also asked to write an essay in addition sitting the GL assessment. Regarding Arabic, students joining the International programme are interviewed by the head of Arabic Department so that they would be placed in the right levels.

V. Language Programme

A. Overview

The school offers three programmes: the Lebanese Programme, the International Programme following the Cambridge Curriculum, and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

English is taught as a first language in all programmes. In the **Lebanese programme**, Arabic is also taught as a first language and is the teaching language of three subjects in social studies (Geography, History, and Civics).

Students also study French which is considered a second language. Students take French in all programmes, and in addition to their IGCSEs, they sit the DELF examination which awards non-French candidates diplomas certified by the French Ministry of Education to prove their French language skills. Moreover, the school offers Spanish as a third language to some students in the International Programme.

B. Assessment

Language is assessed based on the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students' acquisition of language is assessed through a variety of formative assessments and unit-based summative and alternative assessments to provide teachers and students with information on language development and progress. In addition to official examinations which are conducted in the three aforementioned programmes, students in grades 3, 6, and 8 sit the ACER examination.

C. Professional Development

At BHS, every teacher is considered a language teacher. In order to best support our staff, the professional development programme helps teachers keep abreast of current teaching practices and also helps them continue to develop their knowledge and skill. Most workshops and academic material provided for teachers are in English.

VI. First Language & Mother Tongue

a. First Language

As mentioned before, English is the teaching language of most subjects and is the mother tongue of many students. English is taught at BHS since KG1 through sounds and basic vocabulary, and starting KG3, students follow the Cambridge Curriculum. This curriculum is taught from KG3 till Grade 8 (both Lebanese and International Programmes). Starting Grade 9, however, International Programme students study IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) over the period of two years, Grades 9 IP and 10 IP. Students choose in Grade 8 between IGCSE First Language English or IGCSE English Literature. At the end of Grade 10 IP, students sit their IGCSEs and either continue with the Cambridge Curriculum to do AS (English Language or English Literature) or take up the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The two AS courses introduce students to a plethora of topics and concepts which allow students to gain knowledge and become more involved in the English language. AS courses will be offered over the course of two years only, and as of 2021-2022, A Levels will be introduced. Hence, 2021-2022 will be the last year AS courses are completed, and AL courses are introduced instead to students who wish to continue studying the Cambridge Curriculum after finishing their IGCSEs.

Students who join the IBDP choose between English Language and Literature and English Literature. Both courses belong to group 1 in the Diploma Programme, therefore to Language A. They provide learners with the opportunity to become better readers and critical thinkers, as well as more professional researchers.

As for students in the Lebanese Programme, they study the topics and requirements in the Lebanese Curriculum, in addition to literary works that teachers select. At the end of Grade 9, students sit official examinations and, upon passing, are granted their Lebanese Brevet Certificate. In Grades 10, 11, and 12 LP, students complete the Lebanese Curriculum but continue to study English Literature which enriches their knowledge, writing and vocabulary.

The social sciences, natural sciences and other visual & performing art programmes are all offered in English, which allows students to gain a wider exposure to the English language. Their exposure is not only through lessons but through research and presentations that make them more confident speakers and writers.

b. Mother Tongue

Arabic is the mother tongue of the majority of students at BHS who are from the local Lebanese community and the neighbouring region. French is also regarded as a first language by some communities in the country, and is therefore used by many students as their mother tongue. Except for the Lebanese programme, BHS offers a multileveled selection of Arabic and French classes.

VII. Other Languages

Students in the International Programme can opt for either French or Arabic according to the levels that they can cope with. In IBDP, students can choose Ab initio or Language B, either in French or in Arabic. Students in the Lebanese Programme moving to IB after Grade 10 must study both English A and Arabic A, in accordance with the government's decree.

VIII. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and Support for Learning

a. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

The EFL Department helps students whose mother tongue is not English. Such students attend classes after assessing their levels and upon that specific levels that allow them to acquire the skills and progress at their own pace. Students in Secondary classes sit IGCSE exams, be it English as a First Language or English as a Second Language. Students who complete advanced English courses can join the mainstream programme.

In addition to English, the EFL department provides support to students who struggle in Maths and Sciences, especially that the language of instruction of these subjects is English. Sessions are provided as supplementary support periods or as full time sessions if students enroll in the EFL department as full-time students.

b. Support for Learning

The Support for Learning Department provides learners with a safe environment to reach their fullest potential. Although the department caters to learners' emotional and social needs, it also includes a special education programme that supports students with learning difficulties. Regarding language, students who are dyslexic or have ADD/ADHD will receive the necessary support in order to perform better and cope with the challenges they may face.

IX. Activities

Students at BHS join varied clubs which meet and do activities at school in what is called "Activity Period". Some clubs also meet after school to do more work and complete their planned events. While some clubs may be artistic or athletic, a lot of those clubs involve writing and debating which further enhance students' exploration of the English language. Three clubs that have been very intriguing to students are MUN, the Book Club, and the Debate Club. Such clubs have been very important to all students who practice the English language and are not hindered by any difficulty or weakness as they willingly join such clubs.

Regarding to MUN, students participate in debates with students from other schools (both locally and internationally), which entuses them to perfect their speeches and essays. Thus, students' use of the English language becomes more proficient and eloquent.

In addition to those clubs, students participate in the school's academic fair which encompasses all subjects. For years, students have shown their skills in writing poetry, essays, speeches, songs, and short stories in one or more language.

Apart from such school activities and events, students participate in competitions which allow them to show their linguistic and literary skills. Such competitions are organised by universities in Lebanon and by international organisations.

X. Parents and Community

Parents are an integral part of the BHS community. The school has an open door policy with parents and communicates with them through the weekly newsletter ("The Weekly Times"), the student magazine "Speakout", the school website, school's social media channels, and through the principal's regular emails. The language of communication is English.

XI. Review Process

As part of the BHS school improvement plan, the language policy will be reviewed every three years in view of the students' language needs based on their performance in both external and internal assessments.

XII. References

Brummana High School: Admissions and Academics. www.bhs.edu.lb

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