

Himalayan WhiteHouse School

LANGUAGE POLICY



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1. MISSION AND VISION

Vision

Himalayan WhiteHouse School aims to develop globally aware citizens who are lifelong learners and leaders.

Mission

Himalayan WhiteHouse School is committed to the harmonious holistic development of every child for excellence in academics, character, leadership, service as action, and global citizenship. We believe that children should be internationally minded, empathetic, responsible and lifelong learners who will not only set examples for themselves but also contribute to society with grit and resilience.

The HWS mission statement is the foundation for our language policy. As language forms the basis for all learning, this policy is critical for helping the school to achieve its mission. The language policy aspires to fulfill each aspect of the mission statement as follows:

Excellence in academics, character, leadership

The language policy recognizes the transfer of cognitive skills from the mother tongue to English and vice versa and the acquisition of additional languages. This process encourages the acquisition of higher order thinking skills and development of multiple perspectives. The policy also recognizes the importance of all teachers differentiating instruction for students at different levels of language acquisition.

Global Citizenship

While English is the language of instruction, the language policy allows for students to inquire in the mother tongue and aspires to multilingualism. The school is committed to providing as much diversity of effective language instruction as possible.

Be internationally minded, empathetic, responsible and lifelong learners

The language policy validates the equal status of all languages. The school promotes an understanding of the host country's culture and language by offering Nepali as a Language and Literature subject to all students throughout the MYP, in accordance with local government regulations. Additionally, the school provides the Individuals and Societies course in the MYP in Nepali, in line with local government requirements.

The Language Acquisition subject in the MYP is designed to foster students' proficiency in additional languages, supporting their linguistic and cognitive development. As students progress through the MYP, they deepen their

language skills through a structured approach that emphasizes communication, cultural understanding, and the use of language in various contexts. At HWS, the Language Acquisition offers Chinese (Simplified Mandarin) and Spanish in the PYP, with Chinese and Spanish Language Clubs available for interested students in the MYP to further enrich their language learning experience.

The mother tongue program in each section of the school reinforces literacy and cultural identity and reflects the multilingual society we live in. The modern foreign languages program develops understanding and respect for other cultures.

2. PURPOSE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

This language policy is a working document developed by staff and administration from each school program (IB PYP & MYP). The policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the program designed to help our students attain these goals. This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at HWS which permeates the entire school curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment. Our policy is a statement of agreement—one to which the staff and the HWS community are inherently committed to, so that we can collectively achieve its mission.

The pedagogical leadership team, in collaboration with teachers, oversees the implementation and continuous improvement of the language policy. They work together to integrate language support across subjects, ensuring alignment with IB language expectations. Teachers are responsible for differentiating language instruction to meet diverse needs, fostering multilingualism within their classrooms, and supporting students' language development through consistent engagement. Parents are encouraged to reinforce language learning at home, particularly supporting mother tongue development and additional language practice.

3. PHILOSOPHY

Language is a crucial connecting factor across the curriculum at Himalayan WhiteHouse School. Language is vital to all learning, communicating, and being an active member of a global community. It is a social construct that is influenced by the type, nature, and frequency of one's social interactions in the community. Language is acquired, not learned, according to Himalayan WhiteHouse School. We believe that language is acquired through first listening to and comprehending it, then speaking it, reading it, and lastly writing it. All three are inextricably linked. One helps the other. They are ineffective on their

own. Interaction, not action, is how children learn to communicate. They learn to communicate by conversing with someone who responds. Language plays a vital role in the construction of meaning. Integration of knowledge, skills and strategies of the language enables students to solve problems and think critically and creatively. Himalayan WhiteHouse School ensures that all students are provided with the environment and the necessary language support to enable them to participate fully in the academic program and in the social life of the school.

Language study can also help people become more aware of and comprehend other cultures. As a result, all children have the opportunity to study more than one language in a setting that values and celebrates cultural variety. Throughout the program, the language of teaching (English) and Nepal's national language (Nepali) are merged and nurtured.

We believe that a language-rich environment, which includes books, environmental print, internet resources, teachers, and students, is the greatest way to facilitate language acquisition. Teachers serve as role models for students in terms of language use and learning, and they promote a good attitude toward language and literature.

Formal and informal assessments are required for all languages taught at HWS. These tests are used to measure students' learning engagement and development to plan effective instruction.

HWS integrates local and global cultural themes into language instruction through partnerships with community organizations, inviting local experts for guest talks, and organizing events that celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity. These initiatives foster a deep appreciation for different cultures and perspectives, reinforcing the IB mission of intercultural understanding.

4. LANGUAGE POPULATION IN HWS

HWS students, teachers and families are predominantly Nepali citizens (99%) who use Nepali as lingua-franca. Although Nepali is the national language and the society's lingua-franca is Nepali, English is widely used by the general public resulting in code switching between the two languages. The one percent of the international body also uses English as an official language of communication. However, we recognize that there are a number of ethnic groups in Nepal which have their own mother tongue apart from Nepali and English.

HWS, to support multiculturalism and diversity, conducts a language survey each year to determine which languages are spoken within the students, parents, and teacher community.

Student Language Profile

Name of the student: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Grade: _____

Nationality: _____

First language: _____

Languages used at home: _____ , _____ , _____

English is the Language of Instruction (LOI). This is your preferred language.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Can you read and write your preferred language?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Your proficiency in the preferred language:

_____ [Need Assistance, Good, Very Good, Fluent, Excellent]

Language of instruction (English):

English is the language of instruction/ Lingua Franca at Himalayan WhiteHouse School. It is the major connecting element across the curriculum, as the language provides a vehicle for inquiry. In PYP, the POI provides an authentic context for learners to develop and use language. The English language is introduced in the Early Years carries on up to high school. The scope of the English language is guided by the national curriculum requirements of Nepal, the IB PYP language scope and sequence document, and the framework for creating a language policy in the IB PYP and MYP.

There is a need to develop student's use of language, appreciation of language, awareness of the nature of language, of the many influences on language, and of the variety in and between languages and dialects. Children

use English language within and across subject areas and are encouraged to converse in English language, both inside and outside the classroom. Using language in formal as well as informal settings provides children with ample opportunities to learn the language, learn about the language and learn through the language.

Literature is an integral part of the curriculum. Books are carefully selected to reinforce the units of inquiry and the development of language skills, as well as to appreciate the richness of language and develop love for literature. Books allow students to learn how to understand, interpret and respond to ideas, attitudes and feelings expressed in various texts; to think critically about what they read; and to be able to make predictions and inferences based on the information that is both explicit and implicit in the text.

Language learning extends beyond the classroom. The teachers and students both use the media center and the library to enrich their language learning as well as learning in other subject areas.

The learning process simultaneously involves learning language as learners listen to and use language with others in their everyday lives; learning about language as learners grow in their understanding of how language works; and learning through language as learners use language as a tool to listen, think, discuss and reflect on information, ideas and issues. These three aspects are best thought of as linked processes.

Additionally, teachers provide hands-on experiences such as skits, songs, poem recitation, presentations, debates, storytelling and listening, group discussions, and opportunities to communicate with each other to develop oral language. Developing written language is enhanced through involving students in writing activities across all subjects. Students will produce written products for a variety of purposes. These products can be informative, persuasive, poetic, reflective, or in the form of story or dialogue.

National language (Nepali):

The national curriculum mandates all Nepali schools to teach the national language, Nepali from Pre-school to grade-10 as English language. Nepali is understood and spoken by all the Nepali citizens. Nepali language classes are conducted every day as the Nepali Language and Literature to ensure that the students have a deep understanding of the language and literature. Nepali Language and Literature, like English, is a vital part of the curriculum. Carefully

selected books promote language development, critical thinking, and a love for reading. Students engage in interpreting, analyzing, and responding to texts while making predictions and inferences. Learning extends beyond the classroom, utilizing library resources to deepen understanding across subjects. The process involves learning through interactions, understanding language structure, and using it for communication and reflection. Teachers foster oral skills through activities like skits, songs, debates, and storytelling, while writing activities across subjects develop diverse written expression, including informative, persuasive, and creative forms.

Nepali is used as a medium of instruction for teaching the Individuals and Societies subject in the MYP, alongside facilitating it in English, adhering to the national curriculum guidelines. Nepali language program supports and extends the IB units.

5. Language Acquisition and Additional Language in HWS

The IB's philosophy of introducing the study of additional language in the MYP as language acquisition helps students learn about language and culture while understanding the different ways people live, think, and see the world. Language acquisition allows students to connect with other communities and reflect on their own culture. This helps develop critical thinking, intercultural awareness, and a sense of responsibility as global citizens. It also supports personal growth, strengthens cultural identity, and builds important lifelong learning skills. By learning new languages, students gain the ability to communicate effectively in different global contexts and develop a deeper understanding of other cultures.

"The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes multilingualism and intercultural understanding, both of which are central to the IB's mission. All IB program require the students to study, or study in, more than one language because we believe that communicating in more than one language provides excellent opportunities to develop intercultural understanding and respect."

What is an IB education? (2013, updated 2017)

Nepal is a country full of diversity, with more than 120 languages and many different cultures. The people of Nepal are proud of their traditions and heritage, but they also respect and value other cultures just as much as their own. This reflects the idea from the IB mission statement that "other people, with their differences, can also be right."

In Nepal, when children start school, most of them learn Nepali as their second language, as it is the national language. English is also taught as a third language in most schools. This shows that the concept of learning multiple languages, or language acquisition, is already a natural part of education in Nepal.

At Himalayan WhiteHouse School, MYP students from Grade-6 to Grade-9 are also offered Chinese (Simplified Mandarin) as part of their language learning. This gives students an opportunity to explore a new language and culture, helping them develop communication skills and a broader understanding of the world.

Additional Languages offered in the PYP and MYP:

In the PYP:

- Chinese (Simplified Mandarin) is offered to all students.
- Spanish is offered from Grade 3 to Grade 5 students.

In the MYP:

- Spanish is available as a club for students interested in pursuing the language.
- Additionally, in Year 3, to meet the Local Municipality needs for protection and preservation of regional language, the school conducts classes for students from Grade 8 (MYP 3) in 'Nepal Bhasa' (Newari)

Mother tongue:

The students of Himalayan WhiteHouse School predominantly speak either Nepali or English at home. Less than one percent of the student population has a mother tongue other than Nepali or English. To identify a student's mother tongue, the school gathers information from parents during the admission process and through a detailed language survey. This survey includes questions about the languages spoken at home, the primary language used in daily communication, and the student's exposure to additional languages. Teachers also observe language use during classroom interactions and may consult with parents to gain a deeper understanding of the student's linguistic background.

To celebrate linguistic diversity, the school holds an annual Mother Tongue Day, where students and parents showcase their cultural heritage through language-related activities such as storytelling, poetry, and performances in various mother tongues. The Newar community, the indigenous people of Kathmandu Valley, is celebrated for its rich culture, artistic heritage, and spiritual traditions. They have preserved iconic architecture, such as the Durbar Squares and

pagoda-style temples, showcasing exceptional craftsmanship. Newars blend Hindu and Buddhist practices, reflected in vibrant festivals like Indra Jatra and Gai Jatra. Their cuisine, music, and dance further exemplify their cultural richness. With a history of urban planning and sustainable living, the Newars have contributed significantly to Nepal's historical legacy. As custodians of the valley's living heritage, they play a vital role in maintaining Nepal's cultural and architectural identity. That might be reason for Kathmandu municipality Education Board mandates school to teach Nepal Bhasa (Newari) language in grade-8.

Additionally, the school will design and distribute a survey to gather data on the mother tongues spoken by students, staff, and families within the school community. This can include both students' first languages and the languages spoken at home. It will collect information on the linguistic diversity of the students, including the languages that may not be formally taught but are commonly spoken within households. The school will analyze the results to compile a comprehensive list of MT languages represented within the school. The link of the survey form is:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1OkHMPPp7mJx752dZWogwdH0rFUoPhfzBejgY8xBKP8/edit>

Language involves learning in both the affective and cognitive domains. Through language, students understand the feelings and thoughts of people from contexts different from their own, and learn to express their emotions in various creative forms. They also learn to communicate their ideas effectively. Language provides a vehicle for inquiry and exploration. Teachers and students engage with language, appreciating its functional and aesthetic aspects.

Objective of the mother tongue program:

- To encourage multilingual attitude within and beyond the community.
- To create a comfort zone for students to communicate.
- To build the ability to vocalize and the ability to translate.
- To help students obtain/maintain fluency in their native language.
- To support development of literacy in a student's mother tongue.
- To celebrate and value student's socio-cultural significance.
- To help students grow as responsible citizens and confident individuals.
- To protect and preserve regional languages and in-turn the culture and its traditions.

Support for Language development and language learners:

Students requiring additional support for language development will be provided support within the student's general education classroom. The library period may be used to provide extra support depending on the needs of the

student. Students with Specific Learning Needs (SLN) will receive support from the Learning Support Team as per guidelines laid down in the School's Inclusion Policy.

The librarian collaborates regularly with the teachers to support students' needs. Students have access to a large collection of books such as leveled books, hi-lo books including others to help develop literacy. Activities such as battle of the books, guided reading, reading in pairs, writer's workshop, performing skit and drama, reciting poems in different programs like; Literacy Week, Bhanu Jayanti, reading with teacher help increase reading fluency, comprehension and confidence.

Language development is assessed through formative and summative assessments, using tools such as observational checklists, language proficiency scales, and self-assessment reflections. Progress tracking also includes portfolio reviews and feedback sessions to evaluate linguistic and academic progress, allowing teachers to adjust instruction to meet individual student needs. This approach aligns with IB's commitment to reflective, student-centered learning.

6. According to Standards and Practices

Himalayan WhiteHouse School (HWS) is committed to fostering intercultural understanding and communication by implementing a comprehensive language policy that promotes the learning of multiple languages. This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it aligns with the IB's multilingual philosophy and supports the diverse language needs of our student body. **(Culture 4)**

Culture 4.1: Alignment with IB Language Policy Guidelines

HWS implements and reviews its language policy according to the IB language policy guidelines. The school ensures that all teaching and learning practices reflect these guidelines, creating an environment where language acquisition is central to academic success and personal growth **(0301-04-0100)**. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis to remain aligned with the evolving educational needs of our learners.

Culture 4.2: Multilingualism as a Right and Resource

HWS acknowledges that **multilingualism is a right** and an essential resource for learning. We recognize that every student brings a unique linguistic background, and our language programs are designed to nurture this diversity. Multilingualism helps develop empathy, cultural understanding, and adaptability, equipping students to thrive in a globalized world **(0301-04-0200)**.

- **Medium of Instruction:** English is the primary language of instruction across all subjects.

- **Nepali:** Nepali is mandatory for all students across all grades, promoting cultural identity and local language proficiency.
- **Language Acquisition: Chinese** (Mandarin) is introduced as an additional language from **Grade 1** onwards.
- **Additional Languages:**
 - **Spanish** is introduced as an additional language from **Grade 3** to **Grade 5** in PYP and as the additional language to MYP students who want to continue learning Spanish language in the Performance Club.
 - **Nepal Bhasa** is taught as local language in Year-3/grade-8 in the Kathmandu district as Kathmandu Municipality Education Board mandates school to teach Nepal Bhasa (Newari) language in grade-8.

Culture 4.3: Physical and Virtual Resources for Language Development

HWS employs a wide variety of **physical and virtual resources** to support language learning, interactive digital platforms, textbooks, and audio-visual aids. These resources are selected to suit the different proficiency levels and needs of students, helping them develop language skills both inside and outside the classroom (**0301-04-0300**). The school continuously updates its resources to ensure that they are aligned with best practices in language education. The library offers a variety of materials that expand students' exposure to language in diverse formats, encouraging self-directed learning. The school continually seeks ways to enhance its resources, aligning with IB's emphasis on integrating technology in language education.

Culture 4.4: Rights and Responsibilities within the School Community

The language policy clearly defines the **rights and responsibilities** of students, teachers, and parents. Students have the right to a rich language learning experience and are responsible for engaging actively in their language education. Teachers are responsible for providing differentiated instruction, catering to the diverse language needs of students, and creating an inclusive learning environment. Parents are encouraged to support their children's language development by reinforcing learning at home, especially in maintaining their mother tongue (**0301-04-0400**).

PYP 1: Additional Language Learning from Age Seven

In accordance with IB standards, HWS ensures that all students learn an additional language starting from **Grade 1**. Chinese is introduced in Grade 1, and Spanish is introduced in Grade 3, allowing students to develop multiple language skills from an early age. These programs are structured to develop not only language proficiency but also intercultural awareness and communication skills (**0301-04**).

7. Links to Policies

Admission policy

The Admission Policy ensures that all students, regardless of their linguistic background, have access to the school's language programs. The Language Policy aligns with this by offering a range of language acquisition opportunities, such as Chinese (Simplified Mandarin), Spanish, Nepali, and other mother tongue spoken in Nepal to support the diverse linguistic needs of the student body. By considering students' linguistic profiles during the admission process, the school can tailor language support to promote effective language development and foster multilingualism in the MYP.

Inclusion policy

The Inclusion Policy emphasizes the school's commitment to ensuring that all students, including those with varying language abilities and needs, are supported in their learning environment. The Language Policy supports this by offering differentiated language instruction, allowing students to progress at their own pace in languages such as Nepali, Chinese, and Spanish. Additionally, the school may provide support for students with additional language needs through specialized programs or resources, ensuring that every student can participate fully in the academic and social aspects of school life.

Assessment policy

The Assessment Policy outlines the principles and practices for evaluating students' progress, including their language development. The Language Policy links to this by ensuring that language acquisition is assessed in line with the IB MYP framework, using appropriate and varied assessment methods to evaluate students' proficiency in the languages they are learning. This includes assessing both the language skills and cultural understanding necessary for becoming multilingual learners, as outlined in the school's language objectives.

Academic Integrity policy

The Academic Integrity Policy promotes integrity and ethical behavior in all aspects of learning, including language use. The Language Policy supports this by emphasizing the importance of original work in all languages taught at the school. Students are encouraged to develop their language skills while adhering to the principles of academic honesty, ensuring that all language assignments, whether in English, Nepali, Nepal Bhasa, Chinese (Simplified Mandarin), or Spanish, are completed with integrity. The policy also addresses issues such as plagiarism, proper citation in multiple languages, and respectful use of linguistic resources, reinforcing the school's commitment to honest academic practices across all languages.

8. LANGUAGE CONTINUUM

Age Range	Stage	Characteristics	Facilitation	Teacher Prompts
3 – 5 years	Preproduction This is the silent period. English language learners may have up to 500 words in their receptive vocabulary, but they are not yet speaking. Some students will, however, repeat everything you say.	The student Has minimal comprehension. Does not verbalize. Nods "Yes" and "No." Draws and points.	The teacher deals with the student individually outside the classroom.	Show me ... Circle the ... Where is ... ? Who has ... ?
5-7 years	Early Production This stage may last up to six months and students will develop a receptive and active vocabulary of about 1000 words. During this stage, students can usually speak in one- or two-word phrases.	The student Has limited comprehension Produces one- or two-word responses. Uses key words and familiar phrases. Uses present-tense verbs.	The teacher deals with the student individually outside the classroom.	Yes/no questions Either/or questions Who ... ? What ... ? How many ... ?
8 – 10 Years	Speech Emergence Students have developed a vocabulary of about 2,000 words and can communicate with simple	The student Has good comprehension. Can produce simple sentences. Makes grammar and pronunciation errors.	The teacher gives special attention within the classroom by taking help of a co-teacher.	Why ... ? How ... ? Explain ... Questions requiring phrase or short-sentence answers.

	phrases and sentences.	Frequently misunderstands jokes.		
11 – 13 Years	Intermediate Fluency English language learners at the intermediate fluency stage have a vocabulary of 3000 active words. They are beginning to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing and are willing to express opinions and share their thoughts. They will ask questions to clarify what they are learning in class.	The student Has excellent comprehension. Makes few grammatical errors.	The student starts acting independently within the classroom under the supervision of a teacher.	What would happen if ... ? Why do you think ... ? Questions requiring more than a sentence response
14 – 16 Years	Advanced Fluency Students achieve cognitive academic language proficiency in a second language. Students at this	The student has a near-native level of speech.	The student is independent learner in the class along with the others and prepared to participate in every activity	Decide if ... Retell ...

	stage will be near-native in their ability to perform in content area learning.			
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Plan for Implementation and Review

The entire school community, including the pedagogical leadership team and the PYP and MYP Coordinators, collectively accepts the responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of the language policy. The team of Himalayan WhiteHouse School should advocate this approach which will be successful in helping students gain full proficiency in the mother tongue, the national language Nepali, and specifically English as the medium of instruction while communicating in classrooms. Teachers and administrators will communicate language policy to the parents. The Information Technology Coordinator will ensure electronic posting on the school website. The Leadership team will regularly evaluate implementation of language policy as evidenced by classroom observations and school presentations.

HWS is committed to continuous professional development in language education. Teachers receive regular training in differentiated instruction, strategies for supporting multilingual learners, and IB language standards. Workshops on cultural sensitivity and technology integration further empower teachers to create inclusive, linguistically rich environments that align with IB principles.

The language policy is reviewed annually, incorporating feedback from students, parents, and teachers. This feedback loop enables the school to refine language practices continually, ensuring they are responsive to the evolving needs of the community and remain aligned with IB's reflective approach.

This Language Policy was revised and drafted by the Language Committee, with contributions from Abhishek Rai, Cherry Tuladhar, Smriti Roka, Sushila

Pokhrel, Prabhakar Upadhyaya, Suhel Ratna Shakya, Rejina Rokka, and Ratna Devi Maharjan.

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Programme standards and practices

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Language acquisition guide (for use from
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https://resources.ibo.org/data/language-acquisition-guide-for-use-from-september-2020januar_05b86245-5b9a-440b-b210-dfd63676de85/language-acquisition-guide-for-use-from-september-2020januar-en_4db2026a-7b6a-48e3-834a-393fd4f5e4ed.pdf