



# **BLISS International School, Pune**

## **Language Policy**

**Version 1\_2019-20**

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## **BLISS Vision**

To be the school for learners, parents and educators who seek excellence in the field of education through intercultural understanding within an active, creative and respectful learning community.

## **BLISS Mission**

- We are committed to supporting a compassionate, diverse and inclusive cultural community of lifelong learners.
- We aim to encourage them & ourselves to be respectful, tolerant, caring & peaceful global citizens leading to a better world to live in.
- To empower the learners to be knowledgeable through concept-driven & inquiry-based learning with a rigorous assessment which enables them to become independent learners.

## **IB Mission statement**

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. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

# BLISS - Philosophy Of Education

## Learning Process at BLISS

In today's interconnected global world, one of the greatest gifts we can give to our students is to prepare them to thrive in the new world. We follow the motto – **“Raise a global child”** – with the conviction that every individual on earth is a unique star with immense potential and learning ability that can and should be nurtured. Our purpose of education is to prepare the children to step into tomorrow with confidence and competence and think globally.

The driving philosophy at BLISS is that with proper care and development, every child can grow up to be a respectable and responsible global citizen with a positive attitude towards personal growth as well as the well-being of all life on the planet.

At BLISS, teaching and learning practices are oriented towards stimulating intellectual curiosity, encouraging them to examine their own and alternative perspectives. The various curricular and co-curricular activities are designed such that every student gets an opportunity to learn, develop and voice their point of view while accepting others' opinions. We also believe children need to learn about themselves and the value of “knowing thyself” is fundamental to healthy self-respect and self esteem as well as respect for other individuals.

As a community, it is essential that the children understand the value of

- Healthy relationships and social behavior
- Resilience- fundamental to overcoming difficulties, facing challenges
- Meaningfulness and flexible pacing
- Respect for other cultures and individuals

Our school's viewpoint on student behavior is to reward positive behavior. A word of praise to a student who is displaying positive behavior and is doing what is expected of him / her, rather than reprimand someone for inappropriate behavior, this we think will encourage all students to behave in a positive manner. We strive to make the school a positive holistic learning environment of varied cultures and countries. Our Facilitators are guided to keep abreast with these philosophies and focus on developing students as lifelong learners.

# Embedding the attributes of Learner Profile

We at BLISS promote these attributes across the school community by instilling them in our school culture. We aim to do the following:

## As Inquirers

- Learn with enthusiasm
- Be independent
- Be a Lifelong learner

## As Knowledgeable

- Develop and use conceptual understanding
- Explore and engage issues of local and global significance

## As Thinkers

- Analysing and taking responsible action
- Exercise critical and creative thinking to analyse the problem

## As Communicators

- Express yourself confidently
- Collaborate effectively
- Listen carefully to the perspectives

## As Principled

- Empathize & respect others
- Make a positive difference to the environment

## As Open-Minded

- Willingness to grow from the experience.
- Seek and evaluate a range of points of view.
- Appreciate the values and traditions of others.

## As Caring

- Empathize & respect others
- Make a positive difference to the environment

## As Risk-Takers

- Approach uncertainty with prudence and perseverance
- Explore new ideas and strategies
- Be adaptable

## As Balanced

- Balancing intellectual, physical and emotional well being
- Recognise your interdependence with others

## As Reflective

- Identify your strength and weakness
- Consider your own ideas and experience thoughtfully

# Language learning at BLISS

## 5A. Overview of the language taught

At BLISS we are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. The school realises that language is fundamental for thinking and communicating, is also very important to learning, underpinning and permeating the whole curriculum. It is not only ‘learning a language’, but also learning about language and learning through language.

We believe language contributes to the development of international understanding and has a major role in the school. The school recognizes and supports language development and ensures that all students are provided with the environment and the necessary language support to enable them to participate in the academic programme as well as in the social life of the school. The relationship between mother tongue development and academic achievement, including acquisition of other languages is acknowledged. The school strives to ensure that each student feels proud of his/her own language and develops the ability to use more than one language.

Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C1, Practice 8). Hence, all stakeholders of the school are expected to understand the skills of speaking, listening, comprehending, presenting and writing which are required for oral and written communication. Aligning with the IB Learner Profile, Students will be trained to be open-minded communicators. We emphasise that our students understand and appreciate their own linguistic and cultural identities. They should respect different perspectives, values and traditions of others. We yearn to create a dynamic multilingual learning community.

Learning a language is a complex and developmental process. Different students may be at different levels of language development in each class. To support the language learning process, a range of classroom activities are conducted. The school also provides many opportunities to meet the diversity of language needs by offering many avenues for further proficiency in the language. The school hosts activities such as debates, extempore, creative writing competitions, spell bee program and a very unique language value addition program which includes D.E.A.R time , show and tell, spell check, public speaking and vocabulary building scheduled weekly.

## 5B. Objective of the Language Policy

This language policy is a working document developed by all stakeholders from each programme. The policy is consistent with the set forth principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the programme designed to help our students attain these goals.

The language policy document endeavours to consolidate philosophy and beliefs at BLISS , regarding language and its implementation in language teaching. It also aims to outline systems and strategies to support the development of languages as well as uphold mother tongues in the school community. This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at BLISS which permeates the entire school language learning process through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

## **Program specific language Information**

### **6A. Language of Instruction:**

At BLISS , the medium of instruction is English across programmes. English is the language of both, communication within the school and communication with the stakeholders of the school. It has precedence in the school's language programme. It is also the preferred and acceptable language of communication in the school. English is used in school publications, on its website, on signage, in communication between school and parents, and between members of staff. We are committed to providing an inclusive and impartial learning environment.

### **6B. Languages offered in PYP:**

Language teaching and learning in PYP is informed by the latest IB publications. The language learning happens as per the developmental phases mentioned in 'PYP Language Scope and Sequence'.

The language of instruction (English) is integrated with the units of inquiry and/or organized into stand alone language units. Language learning at BLISS is spread across all disciplines and through the programme of inquiry. English is the primary language taught at the Primary years and also the language through which the students connect to the PYP curriculum. Learning languages in Primary Years extends beyond the classroom, and has close connections to the school library and to other classrooms. Teachers plan learning engagements in language with meaningful and enjoyable contexts and learners are able to make connections, apply their learning, and transfer their conceptual understanding to new situations. This progressive conceptual development, together with an enjoyment of the process, provides the foundation for lifelong learning. The school also acknowledges that learning to comprehend language through listening, reading and viewing and to express through speaking; writing and presenting go hand in hand and hence, promotes integrated language development. The three strands of communication: oral, written and visual are interwoven and interrelated and not taught in isolation.

Following languages are offered from Nursery to Grade 5

- First language :English
- Second language :Hindi
- Club Language :Marathi
- Foreign language :French/German



## 6C. Languages offered in MYP:

English is taught as Language and Literature and Hindi is taught as Language acquisition in the MYP. In the Middle Years Programme, students are expected to engage in the study of at least two languages. To facilitate this, the school offers Language and literature, English as a Support Language and Language Acquisition courses. The medium of instruction and interaction is English throughout, thereby supporting the development of language. The school has also put in place a vertical- horizontal planning for all language instructions. Also, all MYP Facilitators are language facilitators, thus every facilitator is responsible to help the students develop language skills. In the MYP, a vast variety of resources are used to meet the language needs. Resources include audio visual aids and books that prove adequate for the attainment of language skills. As the school acknowledges that learning to interpret language through listening, reading and viewing and to articulate the same through speaking, writing and presenting are closely knitted, macro skills are developed explicitly through a plethora of activities inside and outside the classroom.

- Oral Communication (listening & speaking) is supported through extempores, debates, poetry recitals, seminars, discussions, role-plays, interviews etc.
- Written Communication (Reading & Writing) is explored through fiction in a variety of genres – advertisements, biographies, autobiographies, short stories, dramas, brochures, magazine articles, novels, etc
- Visual Communication (Viewing & Presenting) is explored through documentaries, short films, commercials, performance art, dramatic interpretations, video clips, posters, pamphlets, etc.

## Language and Literature:

The school has designed a timetable that segregates 5 academic sessions in a week for Language and literature for each grade. Students get exposure to language through various literary works such as poetry, prose, mythology and drama. This includes world literature and a variety of cultures that facilitate the development of international mindedness. The Language and literature course is designed such that it helps the students to build content knowledge as well as enhance their conceptual understanding. The skills as described in the MYP subject guide and in the MYP unit development guide are also developed and enhanced through the language and literature curriculum. In addition, differentiated instructions are employed wherever possible to support and help with enrichment requirements.

## Language Acquisition

Language Acquisition in MYP at BLISS offers **Hindi, French and German**. The aims of the teaching and learning of MYP language acquisition are to gain proficiency in an additional language while supporting maintenance of their mother tongue and cultural heritage and to develop a respect for, and understanding of diverse linguistic and cultural heritages to develop the student's communication skills necessary for further language learning. The language acquisition course offers insight into the cultural characteristics of the communities where the language is spoken, encourage an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of people from own and other cultures, leading to involvement and action in own and other communities.

## Placement

Placement is informed by knowledge of the student's language profile. The school asks for the language profile of the students at the time of admission. This helps language teachers and all teachers to know and understand the language background, the language experience and the language needs of the student. The Academic Team conducts a prior knowledge assessment test to determine the phase and/or the language courses the student will follow at the school.

## Phases

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. When planning the language acquisition curriculum, teachers will need to decide the most suitable phase in which to place individual students or a group of students, based on their prior knowledge assessment/achievement level of all criteria of the previous phase. The language acquisition continuum and the MYP language acquisition global proficiency table (referred from the updated subject guide) are two useful tools for grouping students in their appropriate language courses.

## Progression

Once students are grouped in phases, teachers will need to plan and articulate the course vertically to ensure units of work will enable students to:

- realize the aims of learning the target language
- reach the objectives for the phase
- achieve the proficiency levels required by the phase at the point of exit from the MYP

The progression to the next phase of learning will require a minimum achievement level 3 in all the four criteria of language acquisition.

## Pathways

- Given the child is new to both the offered languages, he/she is given the opportunity to explore and move from one Language Acquisition course to another within the first two weeks upon starting that course.

Language learning is a developmental process across all IB programmes. We follow the pathways continuum mentioned in the Language Acquisition guide issues by the IB.

*Possible IB continuum pathways*

Start of MYP 1	MYP		DP	CP
Schools may offer introductory MYP language acquisition courses (languages carousel courses) and consider the student's previous learning in the language during primary school education in order to determine placement. Refer to the written and taught curriculum requirements section in this guide.	<b>Emergent</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	Ab initio	If the CP student is taking a DP language acquisition course, refer to the placement recommendations shown in the DP column to the left.
		<b>Phase 2</b>	Ab initio (in rare cases) Language B SL	
	<b>Capable</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	Language B SL	
		<b>Phase 4</b>	Language B SL/HL	
	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Phase 5</b>	Language B SL /HL Language A: literature SL Language A: language and literature SL Literature and performance SL	If the CP student is not taking a DP language acquisition course, refer to the CP language development guide for recommendations.
		<b>Phase 6</b>	Language A: literature SL/HL Language A: language and literature SL/HL Literature and performance SL	

*Source :Language Acquisition Guide (2020-21)*

## 5D. Languages offered in DP:

At the Diploma Level we offer a Language and Literature Course for Group 1 in English and is compulsory for all DP candidates. This course is for those students who are either native speakers of English or have done this language course right from PYP and MYP to be at par with the native speakers. Learners are exposed to various genres, writers and cultures through the study of literature from distinct time periods and geographical locations, hence engaging them in world literature.

We also offer English as a Language B - Standard Level option under Group 2 Language Acquisition Course. This is to support those students who have done their school curriculum other than English language or for those students seeking admission from non-native speaking countries.

Additionally in Group 2, we offer Hindi at the Higher Level and Standard Level.

On a similar line of thought, we also offer French at the Standard Level for those who have studied French at the MYP Level and for students who are absolutely new to the language we offer French Ab initio/ German Ab initio.

However, the choice of language by a student depends on his / her proficiency in the language, preference, and requirements of the Diploma Programme options, which will be decided by the DP Coordinator in consultation with the candidate and parents during the DP induction program.

## Language Value Addition programmes at BLISS

In EYP: The students have D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) Time and Show and Tell session scheduled weekly .

In PYP: The students have D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) Time , Vocabulary Building and Public Speaking sessions once a week.

In MYP: The students have public speaking and vocabulary building sessions once a week.

The focus of Language value addition programme at BLISS across programmes:

- Phonetic awareness, letter knowledge.
- Fluent reading of text
- Developing interest in reading
- Building confidence in communication skills through public speaking sessions
- Comprehension and analysis of literary texts
- Written expression- Fluency in understanding of the use of language at different level
- Expansion of vocabulary
- Motivating and generating enthusiasm and appreciation for the language to become skilled readers and communicators.

## **English as a Support Language (ESL)**

BLISS caters to the needs of students whose first language is not English, through English as a Support Language (ESL) programme. The ESL Department supports the needs of students from vernacular backgrounds or students who have limited skills in English. For the students who are not familiar with English due to the lack of exposure, support is provided through the English as a Support Language (ESL) programme. Here students receive formal training until survival language skills in English are attained. Post training, the ESL teacher and the parents may decide that ESL support is not required and the child may then move into the core language class.

Students are assessed at the time of admission for their English proficiency. Also, in the beginning of the academic year, teachers assess the English Language skills of the existing students with prior knowledge tests. This includes reinforcement in grammar, vocabulary, writing and reading.

## **Support for Mother Tongue and Host Country Language**

We at BLISS believe that language plays a significant role in developing the intellectual and conceptual skills in children. Mother tongue is of utmost importance as it is a part of one's identity; it is one of the most essential tools used to preserve and convey culture and cultural ties. We appreciate and encourage parents to support their child as much as possible in this endeavour of preserving their mother tongue.

We believe that this helps our students to enhance their language skills while instilling a sense of importance about his/her culture. In order to maintain our cultural development and cognitive skills, it is essential to nurture our mother tongue. Our intellectual and social growth is enriched by learning additional languages, hence, boosting children's confidence and self-respect.

The school offers Hindi as a host country language from the age of 3 (Grade Nursery). Hindi is a language which is well known by Indian students. We teach Hindi as a second language from Nursery to Grade 5.

Special events such as Hindi Divas, International Mother Tongue Day etc are celebrated in order to promote languages. We plan events where we invite guest speakers who take a session in their mother tongue ,who also bring in cultural elements into their presentations, thus facilitating cultural awareness and enrichment in addition to one of its important offshoots – language. However, all this is not at the cost of losing one's proficiency in English, which needs to develop constantly and consistently.

## **Library-The Resource Centre**

Library at BLISS contributes to a positive learning space and an environment that helps students grow their love for reading; it is also a place for research. Our library is resourced with various fiction, non-fiction, picture books, chapter books, board books, pop-up-books, big books, multicultural books, world classics, autobiographies, multilingual books, reference books, encyclopaedias and media that are accessible to all students and staff at all times. The library is central to the language programme at our school.

The school considers the library to be an important asset to advance international mindedness as part of the IB programs. The library likewise gives resources for collaborative planning and educator proficient advancement. It is accessible to the students and educators to advance language learning such as: Listening CDs, Speaking Samples, Movies, Documentaries, Books - fiction and non-fiction, language books, Journals, Magazines etc. The library has a Mother Tongue Corner where books in different languages are kept to support learning their mother tongue.



## **Role of Facilitators in developing language**

Every facilitator at BLISS is a language teacher. The PYP, MYP and DP consider language from the perspective of the language of instruction, additional languages and mother tongue. Learning languages promotes cognitive growth and helps facilitate international understanding and Linguistic Cultural Opportunities. The school offers a wide spectrum of opportunities to ensure exposure to various languages and cultures through music, art, festivals, assemblies, celebrating International days etc.

## **Role of Parents in developing language**

The involvement of parents is important in our School. They are able to expose students to different languages through visits to the library and classrooms and during days such as International Mother Tongue Day. Presentation and Communication skills in different languages are showcased to parents and other members of the community through projects.

Parents play a significant role in a student's language development. The school involves parents to develop the language profile of the child. Parents are given the option at the time of admission to choose the one of the foreign languages that the student will learn. Parents are also encouraged to help the school build up resources for mother-tongue development. Parents who are proficient in their mother tongue are involved in generating interest

## Integrating Language policy with other school policies

This policy is a working document and is actively linked with the other policies of the school which include assessment, admission, inclusion and academic integrity policy.

### 14A. Assessment policy:

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning at BLISS . Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s). Using a range of tools and strategies, teachers are able to determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes towards language.

Assessments are reported to parents using the language of Instruction(English). Students receive written report cards for their language learning. Parents are also invited to attend parent-teacher, three-way and student-led conferences to gauge their progress in language development.

Students are regularly assessed using the expectations from the school's language scope and sequence. Achievement of different learning outcomes will be recorded and passed on throughout their schooling to facilitate each student's learning. At the beginning of tasks, criteria is shared or created by the students so that learning goals are clear.

### 14B. Admission Policy-

Teaching and learning of languages is integrated with all subject areas. However, **English** is the **Language of instruction**. Assessments for new admissions are conducted in English to ensure that a student can access the curriculum delivered in English. At the time of admission, the language profile of the student is procured by the admission team and is communicated to the academics team. We view the ongoing language development of our students as the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students.

EYP/PYP - Students of these programmes learn three languages- English, Hindi and French/German.

MYP- Students of this programme learn two languages- English, Hindi/German /French .

#### **14C. Academic Integrity:**

We aim at building students' critical and analytical skills and therefore it is mandatory for the students to support their articles, written assignments and essays with references and bibliography. All teachers may help students with the subject specific language support as they all are language teachers. All assignments submitted for grade marks have to be authentic and students' original work. Keeping in mind the school's policy on Academic Integrity, students are encouraged to adopt the Modern Language Association (MLA 8) format of bibliographic citations for the languages chosen and in all disciplines. This must be observed in all written assignments, examinations and activities, in addition to its conventions on oral citations, unless otherwise specified by a subject facilitator. The expectations of the conventions are shared by the Facilitators and the School librarian.

#### **14D. Inclusion Policy:**

The medium of instruction is in English language even for students with special education needs. However as a school and at the discretion of the Inclusion Coordinator/ Program Coordinator and Dean of Academics, in case of PYP, second and third language exemption may be provided depending on the child's ability to cope. This particular exemption has been highlighted in the Inclusion Policy as well.

## **Communicating the policy**

This policy is available for viewing on the school website. All stakeholders are free to send in suggestions for the policy to [ecomunications@bkfBLISS.org](mailto:ecomunications@bkfBLISS.org).

## **Reviewing the policy**

The school shall review the policy once a year to keep up with changes in the requirements of students and the perceived effectiveness of the policy. This policy shall be reviewed prior to the start of each new academic session where the steering committee of this policy comes together and takes reflection upon the last academic year and suggests and makes changes for the benefit of all the stakeholders.

The Academic integrity policy committee comprises of Facilitators, Coordinators across programmes, Dean of Academics & Directors. It is the responsibility of the committee to oversee the procedures needed to develop and implement the respective policy of the school, communicate the same to all stakeholders and ensure that the process of compilation and review is collaborative and involving. The decision taken by the trust/society would be final and binding upon all. All the relevant IB publications and developments are taken into consideration.

## Frequently asked questions

**Q:How many languages do you offer at BLISS International School?**

A:We at BLISS International School give our students exposure to three languages. English is taught as the mainstream language and is compulsory for all the students. We teach Hindi as a second language, being the native language of the country. To give exposure to the foreign languages we offer a choice between French and German as a third language.

**Q:How often do you review the policy?**

A:We review our policy once in an academic session to keep up with changes in the requirements of students and the perceived effectiveness of the policy.

**Q:Can a student change her/his second language in between the session?**

A:No, the student can not change the third language in between the academic sessions. He/she will be given exposure to both languages at the start of the academic session. With the joint suggestion of parent and child the student can go for any of the foreign languages.

**Q:Can a student change the third language in the next academic session?**

A:No,the student can not change the third language in the next academic session as language learning is a slow process and we need more time to strengthen the base of the language . If students change their language frequently, it won't be possible to see growth in language learning.

**Q:How do you cater to the need for a child who doesn't know English?**

A:For the students who are not familiar with English due to the lack of exposure, support is provided through the English as a Support Language (ESL) programme. Here students receive formal training until survival language skills in English are attained. Post training, the ESL teacher and the parents may decide that ESL support is not required and the child may then move into mainstream language class.

**Q:Is the host country language compulsory as a second language for the students of other nationalities?**

A: No, it is not compulsory to learn the host country language for students of other nationalities as a second language. The sessions can be utilised for learning English (support language or as a second language).

**Q:How do you decide the phase of language proficiency for language acquisition?**

A: We decide the phase of language proficiency for language acquisition through prior knowledge assessment.

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