

ADVANCED FOR EDUCATION



**BRITISH ACADEMY
OF TUNIS**

PYP LANGUAGE POLICY

2023/2024

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BAT: British Academy of Tunis

BAT Mission

BAT is engaged in preparing inquisitive, well-informed, caring, and internationally well-educated students who would be aware of a cross-cultural environment and very much tolerant about it as future global citizens. We value intellectual curiosity as well as independent, critical, and creative thinking to promote learner's potential and maximize their growth. We train our learners to be compassionate, ethical, respectful of differing views, beliefs, and cultures, and responsible individuals who positively contribute to the well-being of global communities, concerned with making a difference in the world.

BAT Vision

Our vision at BAT is to foster a distinguished learning community committed to excellence, innovation, collaboration, life-learning, and tolerance. It also involves educating all students to the highest levels of academic achievement to enable them to reach and expand their potential and to prepare them to become productive and responsible students with strong ethics. We inspire our students to become creative, caring, and compassionate members of the world's global society.

BAT Values

British Academy of Tunis (BAT) believes effective teaching and learning both take place in a safe and structured educational environment. BAT practices a holistic approach to education where students, teachers, and families are unified in the educational best interests of all students. BAT's model for success incorporates the right for each student to become a reflective, well-informed, and open-minded inquirer

with strong principles. Our values involve attributes that represent a wide range of human capacities and responsibilities that surpass intellectual development and academic success. Our students are meant to be considerate, skilled communicators and potentially leading examples of future citizens of the world. All students and teachers at the British Academy are treated with respect regardless of gender, age, race, religion, or nationality. We are a community, and we achieve excellence together.

BAT principles

- A – **ability** nurtured, flourishes
- C – **curiosity** fostered, grows
- H – **honesty** is the best practice, and our policy relies on it
- I – **integrity**, led by example
- E – **excellence** takes unending work
- V – **veracity** is the foundation of education
- E – **encouragement** is provided by all of us together

Introduction

This document represents British Academy of Tunis's essential agreements on language learning, teaching, and assessing. All members of the PYP academic staff are committed to this policy and responsible for implementing, reviewing, and upgrading our language policy.

Philosophy Statement

Language is a prevailing tool essential for the expression of culture, civilization, and beliefs. It must be valued as a crucial part of a student's identity. Language is the foundation of learning. Recognizing and supporting our students' linguistic competencies is crucial to developing their full potential. The Learner

Profile, together with the five essential elements of the PYP program (knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and actions) are integral to teaching and learning Language. Language study is a key factor in developing international understanding, reinforcing cultural identity, enhancing personal growth, and promoting effective communication. All members of the school community are language teachers and language learners.

School Responsibilities

BAT is fully committed to:

- provide opportunities and support for all learners to become proficient in English
- provide opportunities for all learners to learn Arabic, the language of the host country
- provide the opportunity for all learners to learn an additional foreign language (French)
- provide information to parents, informing them about the language policy and school practices
- provide opportunities for parents to take an active role in their child's language development
- provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning through meaningful and targeted assessment practices
- support teachers through professional development to meet the ongoing language needs of the students.

BAT is well-engaged to assure that All students:

- are taught language by all staff and have opportunities to read, write, view, investigate, inquire, and present across the curriculum.
- are taught literacy skills in context.
- are encouraged to develop a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, respond to, appreciate, and construct texts.
- are encouraged to use self-correcting strategies.
- have access to, and are taught through, a variety of technological and information resources.
- are encouraged to express themselves, orally and in writing, in a variety of media and situations.
- are encouraged to share and develop their work in a social context.
- are encouraged to see language as a tool for thinking, inquiring, reflecting, and learning.
- are encouraged to maintain and value their mother tongue and to value that of others.

- are given the opportunity to become proficient in more than one language.
- are exposed to a broad range of literature reflecting a variety of cultures and perspectives.
- are encouraged to develop a love of language and literature.
- receive constructive and specific feedback from teachers and peers.
- are exposed to the modeling of rich language experiences.
- are given time to reflect on their learning and to apply techniques appropriately.

Admissions, Placement and Follow-up

- We assess applicants to BAT through multidimensional assessment procedures, which include testing for English proficiency, appraisal of records and current academic levels, student's literacy or language-readiness skills, and observation of emotional and social development.
- We place students in appropriate instructional settings based on the data of our assessment procedures.
- We conduct regular assessments of students' academic and language accomplishments and needs.
- We collect representative samples of students' work to document linguistic and academic growth in language.
- We communicate clearly with parents regarding students' accomplishments and needs as they progress through the grades.

Teaching and Planning Practices

BAT applies a wide variety of teaching styles and promotes various learning techniques to enable students to access the whole curriculum, cater to the variety of learning styles within each class, and ensure the progression and reinforcement of skills and concepts.

At BAT, teachers are expected to:

- Present Language through meaningful and authentic contexts
- Use a wide variety of teaching and assessment strategies
- Provide a balanced language program as laid out in the PYP scope and sequence document
- Structure teaching and learning situations so that students have opportunities for success
- Plan in collaboration with homeroom teachers and specialist teachers to maintain consistency
- Provide challenges to students by giving them opportunities to reach their full potential
- Acknowledge differences in developmental stages, learning styles, and previous language experiences
- Encourage parental involvement
- Publish student work

- Use questions as a tool for learning to promote inquiry
- Use a wide variety of materials to enable every student to access the planned learning experience and to achieve the planned teaching and learning objectives
- Give students the opportunity to work in a variety of ways – whole class, groups (of differing sizes and composition), as pairs, and individually, according to their needs, the nature of the activity, and the learning objectives
- Build students' confidence and self-esteem and enable them to become effective language users by:
 - sharing teaching and learning objectives and clarifying expected outcomes in a way that students can understand
 - teaching students to self-monitor
 - encouraging students to learn from and support one another and to realize that they do not all have to be at the same level or arrive at the same point at the same time
 - giving positive and constructive oral and/or written feedback
 - creating an environment where all students can make progress at their own pace

At BAT, activities are planned in a way where students:

- integrate prior and new knowledge
- acquire and use a range of learning skills
- solve problems individually and in groups
- reflect on their successes and challenges
- evaluate conflicting evidence and think critically
- accept that learning can involve uncertainty and difficulty
- develop their knowledge and understanding of the English Language through purposeful use in listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing
- Learn to speak, read, and write English developmentally, progressing across a continuum of skills in each area
- endeavor to express themselves confidently in English in a variety of situations
- be given the opportunity to take part in other language instruction as is deemed necessary for globally mobile students
- respect each other as valued members of the school community regardless of their first language
- develop an appreciation of literature and a variety of texts
- establish links between subjects, cultures, and other areas of experience
- use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, and self-expression

Students are expected to speak English in all classes except Arabic and French classes.

Practices for implementing reading, writing, oral, and visual skills

To promote inquiry-based language learning within the context of the PYP, our school recognizes the importance of incorporating the teaching and learning of language through the transdisciplinary program of inquiry. The mastery of the essential language skills - reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing - is a vital part of a student's overall development.

Reading practices

- Reading will take place in all subject areas, and students will read across the curriculum whenever appropriate.
- A variety of practices will be used when planning for instruction, including, but not limited to, guided reading groups, differentiated reading instruction, word lists, graphic organizers, and the use of leveled reading material.
- Students will be encouraged to read for information, read for pleasure, read aloud expressively, and discuss, analyze, compare, and contrast the texts they read.
- Students will be exposed to a variety of genres, including multicultural literature, poetry, plays, short stories, newspapers, magazines, and informational texts.
- Students will learn how to understand, interpret, and respond to the 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 information that is both explicit and implicit in a text.
- Teachers will promote and incorporate supplementary reading incentives and support programs.
- Vocabulary-building techniques will be used across the curriculum whenever appropriate, e.g., word walls, word of the day, spelling programs, and idioms, metaphors, and similes.

Oral language practices

- Teachers will model correct language use in conversation while being sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds and mother tongues.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to develop and utilize oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations. This will be done through oral presentations, assemblies, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, listening stations, and performing arts.
- Teachers will plan activities that expose students to conventions of oral language and help them respond appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

Writing practices

- Students' natural desire to communicate through writing will be fostered by giving **real** purpose to their writing and by exposing them to varied, challenging, and meaningful writing opportunities.
- There will be consistency in promoting the writing process (planning, drafting, editing, proofreading, revising, and publishing) throughout the grade levels.
- Students will be encouraged to focus on meaning first rather than accuracy and to enjoy the writing process.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through different genres.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to acquire, develop, and use language specific to relevant subject areas.
- Constructive feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults will support the development of writing.
- Teachers will model and provide instruction in the correct use of language conventions, including spelling, grammar, rules of punctuation, and handwriting.
- We will incorporate a variety of spelling strategies, including spelling conventions and patterns, high-frequency words, and unit-related vocabulary.

Viewing and presenting practices

- Students will have the opportunity to create visual presentations and use multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Opportunities will be provided for students to view high-quality performances in a variety of media.

Arabic Language Teaching

Arabic is the official language of the host country. Thus, Arabic teaching at BAT has a special significance. In this academic year, 2023/2024, different Arabic Language Proficiency Levels have been depicted among BAT students. Students have been placed in the corresponding language proficiency level (phase) regardless of their grade levels. Some speak Arabic as a mother tongue, and others do not. Students then learn Arabic according to their proficiency level. Through the teaching of Arabic and links to Tunisian and Arab culture across the curriculum, students develop an appreciation of the host country's culture as well as an **awareness of different perspectives**.

All students follow an enriched version of the appropriate Arabic Language syllabus. Arabic Language teachers are employed in the school to cater to the continued development of Arabic. The school will ensure that sufficient full-time, qualified teachers are employed to support teaching Arabic in the school and develop curriculum resources.

Foreign Language (French)

We are well aware at BAT that students need to develop a range of languages and learn about different cultures for personal and educational growth. This will provide students with a multitude of opportunities to develop the attributes in the learner profile and become effective, multilingual communicators and members of the global community. French is offered to all students during the school day. French language teachers support the school's reading, writing, viewing, presenting, and oral language practices, the IB learner profile, the PYP attitudes, and the program of inquiry whenever and wherever appropriate. Students have been placed in the corresponding language proficiency level (phase) regardless of their grade levels. Students then learn French according to their proficiency level and receive instruction using an interactive, immersion approach to foreign language learning. The school ensures that sufficient qualified teachers are employed to teach French throughout the school. The school library will include literature and resources in various languages representative of the school population. The development of curriculum resources will be budgeted for.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The term EAL is used to refer to students for whom **English is an Additional Language**. Students of all linguistic backgrounds are considered for admission to BAT. However, the admissions process seeks to determine whether learners are sufficiently proficient in English to access the curriculum in an English-medium learning environment successfully. Upon admission, a language profile for incoming students is developed, and an established system is used to identify those who may need English language support. The school undertakes to provide support for students who have not reached a level of English proficiency that allows them to fully access the curriculum. Currently, English Language support occurs during classes or after school when some teachers volunteer to help students with English Language Proficiency defects. Thus, support is now provided using both in-class and after-school models. However, starting from the next academic year, 2023/2024, an EAL support Department will be created (**if needed**) and include at least two teachers who will fully be in charge of improving and upgrading students' linguistic abilities. The goal of EAL support is to have the support primarily conducted in class. This is to enable students the maximum opportunities to use language in meaningful contexts, particularly in their interactions with fellow students, and to ensure that EAL students are not excluded from valuable lessons. As different students have different levels of language proficiency, the language needs of all students in each class will be considered in joint planning by the EAL teachers and homeroom teachers.

The English proficiency of all new students will be assessed prior to entry. On admission, an initial assessment will be conducted to determine a student's English proficiency. Recommendations will be made to the Head of School regarding placement in appropriate programs. All academic staff will be notified of a student's English proficiency upon entry. Teachers can refer students to the EAL program. The kind of

support the homeroom teacher and the EAL teacher will decide the students' needs.

Beginner EAL students will initially follow an immersion program that involves intensive EAL. Students in the EAL program will be regularly monitored and assessed. EAL classes will provide new students with a supportive, protected environment where they can try out their language skills and develop confidence in their abilities. EAL students are part of the regular class, and teachers should be aware of their needs and modify or differentiate lessons and assessments accordingly. In this way, EAL students will not only achieve competency in meeting academic goals, but they will also be able to participate in school culture and become fully integrated members of our community.

Assessments and reports will be coordinated and determined by the EAL and homeroom teachers. The school will ensure that qualified EAL teachers are hired to assist English language learners.

Special Needs Students

In keeping with the mission statement, BAT has adopted an inclusive learning support model. This means that students with individual needs are supported within mainstream classes, and all students are given full access to the curriculum.

Teachers respond to the students' diverse learning needs and styles in their care by using a variety of differentiation strategies to deliver the program. These strategies may include the use of learning technologies, simplifying texts, supplementing information, providing checklists, using alternative assessment forms, and making assessment arrangements.

In cases where students' barriers to learning preclude the development of age-appropriate literacy skills and additional support is required, mainstream class teachers may refer the student to the appropriate team. Shadow teachers and assistants are available for students who might need assistance in the classroom. Assistants are either hired or recommended by the student's parents. The school sometimes provides shadow teachers and assistance if advised by the school psychologist or if the parents ask for it. Currently, only one student is.

Once referred to the Inclusion Support Team, students may be supported through parallel teaching, co-teaching, and small group conferencing, and if circumstances require, there may be some more intensive individual support provided. It is expected that BAT and parents work in partnership to help develop students' literacy skills.

Gifted Students

Students who have been identified as gifted receive differentiated instruction in class. Teachers use

strategies that further encourage vocabulary development, reading and writing across the curriculum, and exposure to various forms of literature and informational texts. Homeroom teachers work with other specialists in order to ensure the continuity of the delivery.

Learning Center & Library

The librarian works closely with teachers, students, parents - parents are welcome to visit the library to borrow/check books-, and the school administration to ensure the availability of curricular and support materials that are necessary for the development of languages. She/He holds workshops for teachers and students so that they can effectively access the many available online resources. The library should have print and non-print books, CDs, posters, and recorded books in a variety of languages. Resources are available to teachers, students, and parents.

All students have access to the library and other ICT facilities.

Policy Review

The PYP Language Policy is reviewed twice a year. It is reviewed once with the teaching staff, administrators, and program coordinator during professional development before the start of the school year and then again during the middle of the second term by a committee of teachers, program coordinators, and parents. Feedback and input from all stakeholders guide the revision of the policy to best meet the needs of our school community. This language policy is also reviewed through its governance structure once every five years during the charter renewal cycle