Aga Khan Academy Mombasa
Language Policy

"The beauty of Creation is a function of its variety. A fully homogenized world would be far less attractive and interesting. The roots we inherit from our history – linking us to a particular past – are a great source of strength and joy and inspiration. And a sound educational system should help nourish those roots. That is why the Aga Khan Academies, wherever they exist, will follow a dual-language curriculum. They will teach in English in order to connect to global society. And they will also teach in the appropriate local language. Here in Dhaka that means teaching in both English and Bangla. Because they will be fluently bilingual, our students will be prepared to unlock the rich treasure chests of history and culture, art and music, religious and philosophical thought, which are integral to one's identity and one's values and which and are such powerful elements here in Bangladesh."[1]

1.0 PURPOSE

A defining feature of the Academies programme is the approach taken to language learning. In emphasising the importance of bilingualism for both the cognitive and cultural benefits this brings to students, the Academies have set challenging goals for the language development of students within the programme. This language policy outlines the network's linguistic goals for its students and staff. It is customised by each Academy to show how these goals will be achieved in its own context.

2.0 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The Aga Khan Academies believe that:

- cultural and linguistic pluralism are essential for effective leadership in the 21st century;
- all languages are inherently valuable;
- developing bilingual or multilingual competence will allow students to communicate effectively in local and global contexts;
- being bilingual in English and a national language will give Academies graduates the linguistic skills to use their education to make a difference in their communities;
- bilingual education can be an effective way to ensure that students develop academic proficiency in two languages;
- all teachers are responsible for supporting students' linguistic development; and
- teachers need professional training to prepare them to support students' linguistic needs in the classroom.

3.0 POLICY

Link to AK Strand – Pluralism, culture
IB Learner Profile – Communicators, knowledgeable, open minded,

English at the Aga Khan Academies

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[1] Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of The Aga Khan Academy (Dhaka, Bangladesh) 20 May 2008

The Aga Khan Academies use English as the unifying language of the network, in order to facilitate communication and collaboration within and across Academies. All official administrative work within and across the Academies is documented in English. Policy documents and documents presenting educational planning (except for planning documents for other language courses) are written in English in order to be shared within and across Academies.

All staff will have a capacity to communicate in English as is necessary for their function. Teachers will show evidence of speaking, reading, and writing to at least C1 on the ECFR. Teachers who are not at this level will be supported by online learning tools to develop their Academic level of English.

Bilingualism across the Academies

The Academies are also committed to developing students who are bilingual in English and a national language. All staff at the Aga Khan Academies value and actively support the acquisition of and learning through multiple languages. In multilingual contexts the decision on the national language at the Academy is approved by the Director of Academies with attention to local, national and regional contexts. It is not taken in isolation by the individual Head of Academy. Each Academy develops its own language pathways to allow as many students as possible to graduate with CEFR level C1 in English and a minimum of CEFR level B2+ in the national or their other home language. Language pathways are determined by the Academy language profile.

In Mombasa we teach Kiswahili as the National Language of Kenya. We have a specialist Kiswahili translanguaging teacher who leads the Kiswahili language development in the Junior School. Both English and Kiswahili are visible and integrated in the Academy's physical and digital environments eg. signage, notices, student work, displays, assemblies, public events, website, social media). The Academy encourages the full involvement of all members of the community, including parents, in the school's bilingual programme. The Academy celebrates Mother Tongue Day, has an annual Kiswahili Day and when opportunities arise invites local writers and artists to perform and read in Kiswahili.

Language experience and background and rate of language acquisition varies greatly from individual to individual. Therefore, differentiation is an integral part of language teaching at AKA Mombasa as teachers scaffold their teaching to suit the individual needs of each learner.

1. Learning Profiles: Teachers can administer surveys or assessments to identify each learner's learning style, strengths, weaknesses, interests, and preferences. This information can then be used to tailor lessons and activities to suit each learner's individual needs and preferences.
2. Flexible Grouping: Teachers can group learners based on their language proficiency, interests, or learning styles. This allows learners to work in smaller groups with peers who are at a similar level or have similar interests, which can increase engagement and motivation.
3. Multimodal Instruction: Teachers can use a variety of instructional strategies that cater to different learning styles, such as visual aids, auditory aids, and hands-on activities. This ensures that all learners have access to the material in a way that suits their preferred learning style.
4. Scaffolding: Teachers can provide additional support to learners who need it by breaking down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. This allows learners to build on their existing knowledge and skills while gradually increasing the complexity of the tasks.
5. Differentiated Assignments: Teachers can provide learners with different assignments based on their language proficiency, interests, or learning styles. For example, learners who are more proficient in the language may be given more challenging assignments, while learners who struggle with the language may be given simpler assignments.

These are just a few examples of differentiation strategies that language teachers can use to meet the individual needs of their learners. By tailoring their teaching to suit the needs and preferences of each learner, teachers can increase engagement, motivation, and ultimately, language acquisition.

Formative assessment is carried out on an ongoing basis with learning discussions held with each learner to set individualised targets. Summative assessments are carried out in all the skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) throughout the IB courses and external examinations at the end of Years 5, 10 and 12 also provide evidence of language acquisition levels to inform the pathways from one programme to another.

English Language Learning across the Academies

Some students join the Aga Khan Academies with limited English language proficiency. National and International Talent Identification students are not assessed on the basis of their English language skills and need support to develop the levels of academic English to access the curriculum. This may also be true of other admitted students.

Upon application to the AKA Mombasa a series of tests are conducted during the admissions process, these include a CEM test and an English Language test. See [Admissions Policy](#)
The HoD English teacher identifies learners requiring additional support and depending on their need learners::

- Follow an intensive programme for a short period of time delivered by our teachers.
- Receive support in Boarding out of school hours or
- Study independently supported by a mentor
- In some cases, we encourage a student to work with a language tutor outside of school hours

We monitor progress throughout the school for all learners and identify those students who need additional support based on their grades at the end of each Semester. Each year level has a Head of Year who works with subject teachers to identify support strategies and monitors the interventions. (See Inclusion Policy)

4.0 LANGUAGES IN THE IB PROGRAMMES

The Bilingual Programme in the PYP in Mombasa

The AKA Mombasa uses a flexible bilingual teaching incorporating English and Kiswahili (as the national language) in the Junior Schools.

- PYP units of inquiry and some stand-alone subjects are taught through the medium of both languages with attention to cross-curricular language development.
- The Academy aims to recruit staff who are fluent in the two languages of instruction.
- Teachers plan and collaborate in such a way to ensure sufficient input in both languages
- Students are encouraged to use both languages inside and outside the classroom

Grade 1

- Kiswahili is taught three lessons a week by the homeroom teacher.
- Semester 1 focuses on oral language and building confidence in the language. Students learn through songs, games, role play and other real-life experiences.
- Reading and writing are introduced in Semester 2

Grade 2

- Kiswahili is taught three lessons a week by the homeroom teacher.

- Students are introduced to simple grammar rules and other aspects of the language. Writing, reading, and comprehension are further developed.
- Kiswahili is integrated into the units of inquiry where students are encouraged to use Kiswahili during the learning process.

Grade 3
- We have one homeroom teacher who teaches in Kiswahili and the other in English.
- Kiswahili and English are taught using the '50-50' model with the students learning language, Maths and units of inquiry in Kiswahili or English on alternate days.
- There are three Kiswahili lessons in a week which focus on all aspects of language development.

Grade 4 and 5
- These classes use the CLIL/ translanguaging model with the students learning their units of inquiry in both languages with a 40-60 balance in the learning of the units. (40% Kiswahili and 60% English)
- There are 4 translanguaging lessons per class with the translanguaging teacher and the homeroom teacher co-teaching. Students use Kiswahili and English as the language of communication and explore the unit content and concepts in both languages.
- There are separate Kiswahili language classes with a focus on language learning including the language rules, grammar, reading and writing

Assessment
- All students take 3 writing assessments in the year to track their progress. The assessments include a writing prompt and a common assessment rubric- the 6+1 traits rubric. (We are developing a reading and oral language assessment)

AKA Mombasa Language Pathways in MYP

All students complete English throughout their time in the MYP. English Language and Literature is offered in all years of the programme and English Language Acquisition is offered where necessary to support students' language learning.

In Grades 6-8 students continue learning Kiswahili at an appropriate level, whilst adding French to the curriculum. Students joining the Academy from Tajikistan, as part of the International Talent Identification programme, will learn English, Kiswahili and Russian Language and Literature.

In Grades 9-10 students continue with two language courses from the three that they followed in Grades 6-8. Students will either complete an externally marked MYP eAssessment or be internally assessed to the same standard.

Grade	English		Kiswahili			French	Russian		
6-8	Language 1		Language 3						
9 and 10	English Language and Literature	English Language Acquisition Phases 3-5	Kiswahili Language and Literature	Kiswahili Language Acquisition Phase 3-4	Kiswahili Language Acquisition Phase 1-2	French Language Acquisition Phase 1-2	Russian Language and Literature	Russian Language Acquisition Phase 5-6	Russian language Acquisition Phase 3-4

English Language and Literature	English Language and Literature	Kiswahili Language and Literature	Kiswahili Language Acquisition A – Phase 5-6	Kiswahili Language Acquisition Phase 3-4	French Language Acquisition Phase 3-4	Russian Language and Literature	Russian Language and Literature	Russian Language Acquisition Phase 5-6

When students join the MYP they are given a pre-test to identify an appropriate language pathway. Students are guided by the language teachers to select the pathway appropriate to their fluency. Performance is reviewed and students may be advised to change course based on performance.

Integration of language learning in the subject groups

Every subject teacher in the academy is responsible for promoting students' writing and speaking skills through consistent practice and feedback. The learning of the MYP subject groups' specific vocabulary and terminologies is intentionally facilitated by the subject group teachers. Subject teachers are also encouraged to collaborate with language teachers to reinforce the learning of the languages from time to time.

Integration of language learning with interdisciplinary planning

While planning for the interdisciplinary units in the MYP, both Language A and B are taken into consideration. At least one unit will have Language A as a co-subject and another one with Language B as one of the subjects). The MYP personal project is one of the many other opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and the students at the academy are encouraged to take on projects that address the needs of their local communities. This gives students a platform to use their local languages to plan and collaborate within their localities for the implementation of the personal project.

Diploma Programme

As a minimum requirement we expect all students in the Academy to be able to take SL English Language and Literature course within the Diploma programme, and to take a second language course that will provide an appropriate level of challenge for the student's capabilities. Given the mission of the Academies, and the emphasis on bilingualism, it is not appropriate for students to opt for a lower level of language learning to improve their final IB score. (See Appendix for Language Pathways in DP)

Group 1 Languages offered:
- French and Kiswahili Literature at Standard and Higher level
- Russian (Tajik students only)

Group 2 Languages offered:
- French Language B at both Standard and Higher level
- Kiswahili Language B at both Standard and Higher level
- Kiswahili Ab Initio SL.

Requirements for:
Group 1 Language A
The student needs to have the group 1 Language as a near native language. Some learners may have studied in another country where the language of instruction was not English and be near native even though it is not their mother tongue.

Group 2 Language B
To study a Group 2 at Higher level the student should have attained a level 5 in MYP.

Ab Initio
Ab Initio level, in accordance with the IB guidelines, requires that the course should present a challenge for the learner.

Self Supported Languages

If a student is interested in developing their mother tongue, they will be encouraged to study this as a School supported Self-taught subject in Group 2. Arrangements to support other languages for students who have transferred schools and wish to continue their Language 2 studies for example in Spanish can also be made.

5.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING

We aim to create the very best linguists by challenging students to think, act and speak like those working in the field would. We do this by equipping all our students with the knowledge and skills to thrive and succeed in language learning, encouraging and inspiring them with quality teaching, broadening their awareness of other countries and communities and providing opportunities for participation in a broad range of linguistic and cultural educational experiences. Our team of expert linguists take pride in their own rich heritage and in delivering a curriculum equally diverse and relevant in a modern world. The department is keen to offer MFL linked trips, partnerships with schools abroad and locally and enrichment activities to inspire and engage in the curriculum. Feedback on the learning journey from students is welcome for us to encourage participation and to maintain a continued relevance of the curriculum in a global context

Appendix
Academy Characteristics

Primary enrollment is between 130-150 students and Secondary around 450 - 470 which includes 260 senior students in the residences. The student body is reasonably stable as there are not significant number of students entering/exiting the program at interim points. The majority of Academy students are drawn from across East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania).

Students are from a range of socio- economic backgrounds as the school gives 50% of the students some financial assistance. Of those approximately 10% are fully funded on our Talent Identification Programme and come from marginalized communities in the Coast region of Kenya or from Tajikistan. The students admitted on the TID programme are not always from schools/regions where English is commonly spoken so they tend to be stronger in Kiswahili or Russian than English. They are given some support in English as an additional Language when they join but as they attend all lessons in English and live in the residences, they typically develop their English skills in an immersive environment very quickly.

Parents choose the Academy because of its mission and vision and because of the IB Programme which provides the educational excellence they seek so their children can access Higher Education overseas. The majority of our graduates study in Canada, the USA and the UK.

Parents value English as the language of instruction. The bilingual programme, is not a strong positive factor in the decision making for parents when they choose the Academy but the school runs workshops to help them understand that proficiency in a national language is an integral part of our vision and mission to develop pluralistic, internationally minded young people who have the skills to participate and make a difference in their communities.

Language Profile of the Junior School students Academic year 2022-2023 The majority of students in the Junior School join the Academy with a level of English which is strong enough to

access the curriculum through this language, although they may have other languages which are spoken at home. 47% have some exposure to Kiswahili at home.

| Grade	Kiswahili	English	Total
Grade 1	7	18	25
Grade 2	15	17	32
Grade 3	4	20	24
Grade 4	9	21	30
Grade 5	12	24	36
Total	47	100	147

Total Student population Language profile 2022-2023

Language	What was the language of instruction in the school you were before joining AKAM?	What language do you hear at home?	What language did you first learn to speak at home?
English	100	127	113
Swahili	23	79	31
Kikuyu	1	9	2
Gujarati	1	18	6
Luo	0	1	1
Kikamba	0	1	0
Hindi	1	8	5
Urdhu	1	7	3
Spanish	4	2	1
Russian	1	1	0
Dutch	1	1	1
French	7	3	2
Kurchi	1	16	6
Lutooro	0	2	0
Tigrinya	0	5	0
Kinyarwanda	0	2	1
Shugni	0	2	1
Runyankole	0	7	3
Luganda	1	7	0
Chonyi	0	2	0
Arabic	3	3	2
Malagasy	0	1	0
Ateso	0	1	0
Somali	0	2	0
Luhya	0	0	0
Norwgian	1	1	1
Telugu	1	1	1

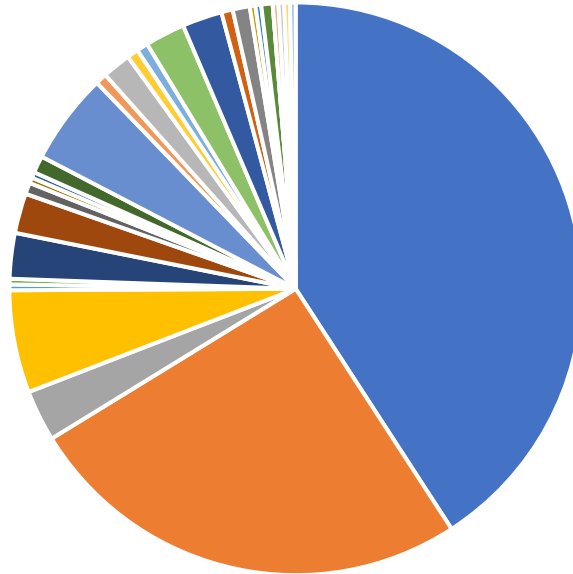|			
Tajik	1	1	0
German	1	1	0

What language did you first learn to speak at home?
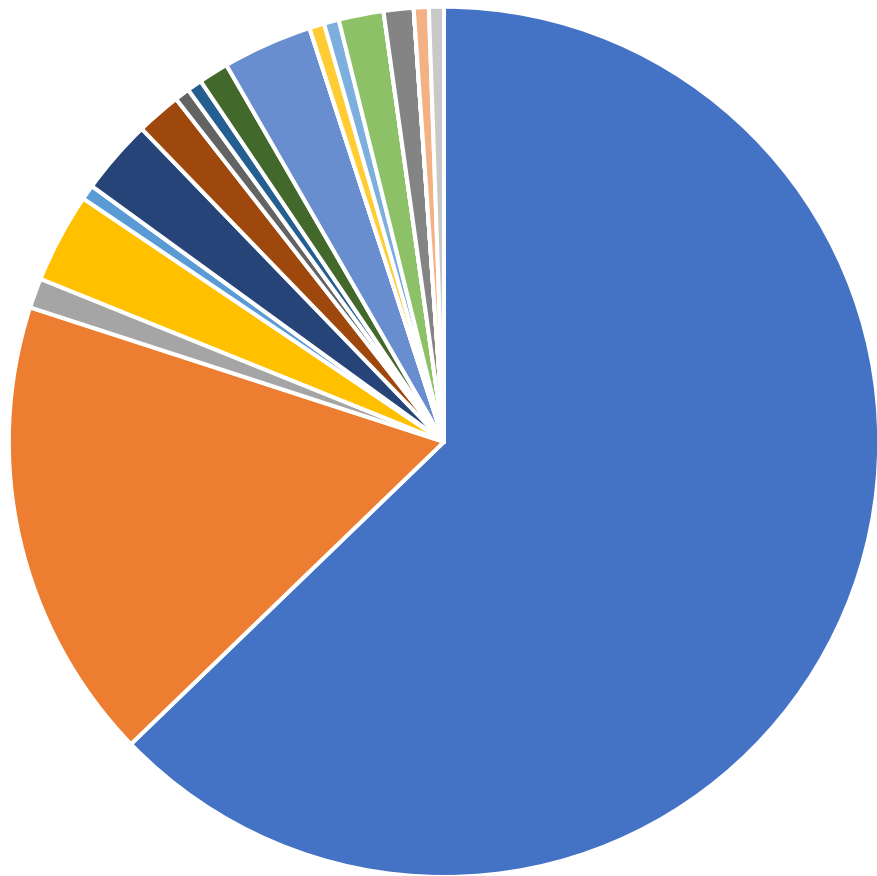
Legend:
- English
- Swahili
- Kikuyu
- Gujarati
- Luo
- Kikamba
- Hindi
- Urdhu
- Spanish
- Russian
- Dutch
- French
- Kurchi
- Lutooro
- Tigrinya
- Kinyarwanda
- Shugni
- Runyankole
- Luganda
- Chonyi
- Arabic
- Malagasy
- Ateso
- Somali
- Luhya
- Norwgian
- Telugu
- Tajik
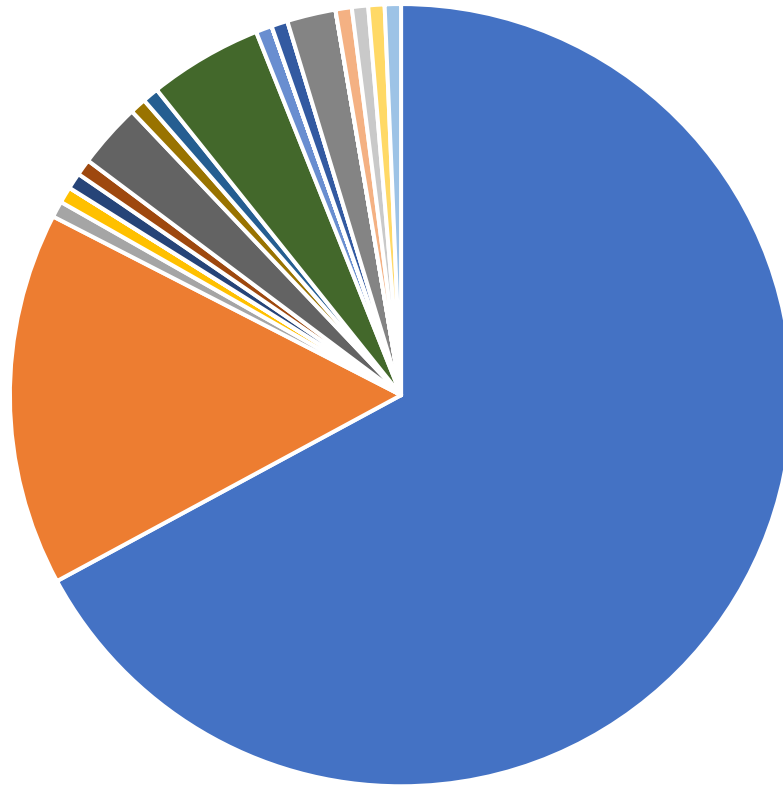- German

What language do you hear at home?

Legend:
- English
- Swahili
- Kikuyu
- Gujarati
- Luo
- Kikamba
- Hindi
- Urdhu
- Spanish
- Russian
- Dutch
- French
- Kurchi
- Lutooro
- Tigrinya
- Kinyarwanda
- Shugni
- Runyankole
- Luganda
- Chonyi
- Arabic
- Malagasy
- Ateso
- Somali
- Luhya
- Norwgian
- Telugu
- Tajik
- German

What was the language of instruction in the school you were before joining AKAM?

Legend:
- English
- Swahili
- Kikuyu
- Gujarati
- Luo
- Kikamba
- Hindi
- Urdhu
- Spanish
- Russian
- Dutch
- French
- Kurchi
- Lutooro
- Tigrinya
- Kinyarwanda
- Shugni
- Runyankole
- Luganda
- Chonyi
- Arabic
- Malagasy
- Ateso
- Somali
- Luhya
- Norwgian
- Telugu
- Tajik
- German

Very little change from the overall Students Language Profile 2021-2022

First Language – The language spoken at home	Percentage %
Dutch	0.4
English	**37**
Hindi	4.5
Kiswahili	**26.5**
Guajarati	7.2
Kutchi	4.0
Runyankole	2.7
Spanish	0.4
Telugu	0.4
Shughni	0.9
Urdu	3.1

Kikuyu	1.3
Luo	0.9
Arabic	0.4
Tigrinya	2.2
Norwegian	0.4
Luganda	2.2
Amharic	0.4
Chonyi	0.9
Somali	1.3
Ateso	0.4
Kikamba	0.4
Kinyarwanda	0.4
Lutooro	0.4
Tamil	0.4

Home Languages Background

The majority of our learners come from schools in which English is the language of instruction. Although Kiswahili is widely spoken in Kenya and Tanzania and is the official language for the East African Community, the use of Kiswahili at home is not as prevalent as one would expect. For most of our middle class families who come from urban areas, especially those of mixed marriages (ethnic groups) English is the dominant language at home.

Many of our learners have at least two languages that they speak which include languages from the different Kenyan ethnic communities. They come from approximately 18 different countries with a wide variety of home languages spoken.

Hindi, Gudjarati and Urdu are the languages most commonly spoken (15% combined) after Kiswahili (26.5%) and English (37%)

Although students join the Academy in different year levels this does not greatly impact on the language profile of the student population.

In Year 8/9 we tend to admit many students from Uganda whose language is either English, Lunganda or and from DRC French. Kiswahili is not widely in these countries so students join as ab initio speakers.

Language background of teachers

The majority of teachers at the Academy are Kenyan and are fluent speakers of English. They speak Kiswahili or their ethnic language but are not fluent using Kiswahili as an academic language. A few teachers who are Indian or Indian Kenyans mostly speak Gudjurati which are is spoken by our students although again this is a language used for conversation and is not one in which they studied.

We employ a Tajik teacher to teach the ITID students Russian and Tajik culture. Russian is not the National Language of Tajikistan so this presents its own challenges for delivery of the Group 1 Russian course.

Training

All teachers and teaching assistants have a Bachelors' or Masters in Education or a first degree plus a post graduate teaching qualification. All teachers attend IB Workshops regularly (approx. every 3/4 years or when there is a syllabus change).

Resources for Language
The library is a key to the success of language learning and development. The Aga Khan Academy Mombasa library curates resources in English, Kiswahili, French and Russian languages and at different reading levels. The school subscribes to a variety of databases and software which enables the students to research information in as many languages as possible.

PYP, MYP and DP Language Pathways at AKA Mombasa

AKA Mombasa Language Committee
Head of Academy- Alison Hampshire
Alex Holland – Academic Development Manager
Junior School Principal- Annia Dear
Senior School Principal- Francis Kariuki
PYP Coordinator- Titus Mutami
MYP Coordinator- Johnson Monari
DP Coordinator and Kiswahili teacher- Julius Menza
Head of Modern Foreign Languages- Micheal Ojuma,
Kepha Oberi Kiswahili Translanguaging teacher
Esther Kariuki- Kiswahili teacher

	Language 1 – Language and Literature	Language 2 – Language Acquisition (or parallel Language and Literature if strong enough)	Other Home Languages
	This will be students' stronger language of the two used for instruction in the school. For the majority of students this will be **English**.	This will be students' weaker language of the two used for instruction in the school. For the majority of students this will be **Kiswahili**.	Students are supported in maintaining and developing their fluency in these languages through: - Sessions to support parents in maintaining and developing home languages - Opportunities to use home languages in the curriculum, through activities which involve working with or interviewing family members - In-class activities using support from DP students who speak these languages. - Library resources to support these languages which can be borrowed by families to develop literacy.
Grades 1-2	Students begin with early literacy development in their Language and Literature language. Early units in Grade 1 are taught in English.	Students focus on building oral fluency in their Language Acquisition language. Once their early literacy in Language 1 is secure and they have developed confidence in Language 2, students will begin learning to read and write in this language (usually Kiswahili). Units in term 3 are designed to incorporate more Kiswahili as a language of instruction.	
Grades 3-5	Language and Literature development is continued. Units are taught through the medium of English and Kiswahili	Language Acquisition continues in Kiswahili with stand-alone lessons targeting language that will be used in units of inquiry. The majority of students should be ready to transition into Phase 3 in Language Acquisition MYP1	

	Language 1 – English Language and Literature / Language Acquisition		Language 2 – Kiswahili Language and Literature / Language Acquisition		Other Home Languages	Language 3 – French Language Acquisition / Russian Language and Literature or Language Acquisition
Grades 6-8	The majority of students will join English L&L courses.	Students who are not ready for English Language and Literature will be given English Language Acquisition support. Depending on numbers this may happen through the timetabled curriculum, or as additional support. Students will transition into English L&L by the end of Grade 8	Students who have reached the necessary level of mastery (Phase 5-6 and above) will join Kiswahili Language and Literature. These may be students who have completed the PYP at AKA Mombasa or students who join the school from the national system.	LA Group A - Students who have completed the PYP at the AKA Mombasa, or new students with the necessary language skills will join Language Acquisition in Phase 3. LA Group B Students who join the Academy without the necessary language skills to join Phase 3 will be placed in Language Acquisition Phase 1-2	Students are supported in maintaining and developing their fluency in these languages through: • Sessions to support parents in maintaining and developing home languages • Selected opportunities to incorporate their home languages in the curriculum • Library resources to support these languages which can be borrowed by families to develop literacy.	Students will begin learning French in Phase 1-2. Students who join the Academy as part of the International Talent ID programme will maintain and develop their Russian Language at an appropriate level. The decision to focus on Language and Literature or Language Acquisition will be made based on the needs of the group.

	Language 1 – English Language and Literature	Language 2 – Language and Literature / Language Acquisition	Other Home Languages
Grades 9-10			

	English Language and Literature	Kiswahili Language and Literature	Kiswahili Language Acquisition	French Language Acquisition	Tajik	Other Home Languages
	All students will complete the MYP eAssessment in English Language and Literature	Kiswahili Language and Literature students will complete the IB eAssessment in Swahili Language and Literature.	Kiswahili Language Acquisition students will complete an internally assessed course, achieving a minimum of Phase 4 and ideally Phase 5-6.	French Language Acquisition students will complete the IB eAssessment in French Language Acquisition, achieving a minimum of Phase 4.	Tajik students will complete an internally assessed course in either Language Acquisition Phase 5-6 OR Language and Literature, depending on the needs of the group.	Students are supported in maintaining and developing their fluency in these languages through: • Sessions to support parents in maintaining and developing home languages • Selected opportunities to incorporate their home languages in the curriculum • Library resources to support these languages which can be borrowed by families to develop literacy.

	Language 1 – English Language and Literature	Language 2 – Literature / Language and Literature / Language Acquisition				Other Home Languages
	All students will complete DP in English Language and Literature at either Higher or Standard Level	Kiswahili L&L	Kiswahili LA	French LA	Russian L&L/LA	Kiswahili AB	SL Literature
Grades 11-12	All students will complete DP in English Language and Literature at either Higher or Standard Level	MYP Kiswahili Language and Literature students will complete the DP Swahili Literature course at HL or SL	MYP Kiswahili Language Acquisition students who have completed Phase 4 or 5 have the option to join DP Swahili Language Acquisition HL or SL courses.	French Language Acquisition students have the option to join French Language Acquisition courses at SL or HL.	Tajik students will complete either a DP SL Language Acquisition or DP SL Language and Literature, depending on the needs of the group.	Students who have no prior experience of learning Kiswahili can opt to take Swahili *ab initio* at SL.	Students with the required level of fluency can opt to take their Home Language as a School-Supported Self-Taught Literature course at SL, instead of one of the

		MYP Kiswahili Language Acquisition students who have completed Phase 6 have the option to join DP Swahili Literature SL courses.	MYP Kiswahili Language Acquisition students who have completed Phase 6 have the option to join DP Swahili Language Acquisition HL courses.				Language 2 options.
		Developed on 31/1/2022 by the Language Committee					

(Common European Language Framwework: C1 is the equivalent of a score of 7 in a SL Language and Literature course, or a 6/7 in a HL Language and Literature course within the IBDP (the old 'Language A' courses)[2]. B2+ is the equivalent of a 7 at SL or a 6 at HL in a Language Acquisition course within the IBDP (the old 'Language B' courses)[3].

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[2] The equivalencies for Literature courses are slightly different.
[3] Benchmarking selected International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme language courses to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. IB (2016)