



## AAGE Language Policy 2014/2015

This language policy is a working document developed by the staff and administration of AAGE. 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 programme designed to help our students attain these goals.

This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at AAGE, 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 AAGE community are asked to commit to, so our school can achieve its mission.

### Definition and Philosophy

Language is a tool for communication, expressing our individual and cultural identity and developing throughout our lifetime. We respect and nurture all languages represented by our community at AAGE and believe that all teachers are language teachers.

**Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation.**

Noam Chomsky

At AAGE we believe strongly that language is central to all learning and crucial for the development of the internationally minded person. We aim to foster in students the ability to express themselves with clarity and confidence in at least two languages. We recognise and celebrate the importance of each student's mother tongue, as part of his or her identity and culture. We respect the language of our host country, Denmark and aim for all students to be able to function linguistically in the society in which they live. We strive to address the needs of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue by providing an integrated, well-implemented English as an Additional Language programme throughout the school.

## **Language of Instruction**

The language of instruction at AAGE is English. This applies across the curriculum at all levels both in PYP and MYP. The only exception to this is in Language Acquisition classes. We celebrate linguistic diversity on the playground but we encourage the use of English as our common language of communication in our multilingual environment in order to promote social inclusivity. This includes social times of the day such as in breaks, at lunch and in After School Activities. English is also the main language of communication within the whole school community and in communication outside the school, except in situations where the use of Danish is more appropriate.

## **Additional Languages**

All PYP students study Danish from PYP4 to PYP8. In MYP we offer French and Danish as Language B and students must study a Language B throughout all five years of the programme. Language B students in MYP are divided into phases from one to six, which are assessed by criterion referenced objectives. Students are placed in the appropriate phase when they enter the programme, with no more than two phases being taught in any one class. In addition there are extra language activities offered in the After School Activities programme, including French and Spanish for PYP students and French, German, Spanish and Japanese for MYP students. The Library has sections for our main languages, French and Danish, as well as smaller sections for our secondary languages, German and Spanish which we intend to offer as part of the curriculum as the school grows. There are also a large range of dictionaries and technological resources available for language learning.

## **Mother Tongue Development**

The development of mother tongue proficiencies is central to the whole development of cognitive skills in children. Well-developed mother tongue skills enhance general language skills. As language is part of one's identity, the recognition of one's mother tongue and the cultural traditions and customs associated with it increase a child's self-esteem and general sense of well-being. We encourage all teachers to recognise students' mother tongues and cultural traditions and customs in lessons and school life.

AAGE facilitates parent volunteers who wish to support students in PYP1-3 whose mother tongue is not English or Danish. Mother tongue maintenance is offered as an After School Activity and focuses upon verbal skills through conversation and story-telling. Parent volunteers are also welcome to participate in classroom celebrations that reflect the traditions of their cultures.

In PYP4-8 students whose mother tongue is not English or Danish have one lesson a week in language groups, talking, reading and writing in their native tongue with a teacher or volunteer. Current languages covered include Spanish, Slovenian, Russian, Hindi and Tamil.

In MYP students whose mother tongue is not English or Danish have one hour a

week at a designated time in language groups with a teacher or volunteer, working with age appropriate material from the teacher, the relevant embassy or available online. The library has a range of materials to support the mother tongue programme, including books, magazines and iPad apps.

## **English as an Additional Language**

Providing quality education in English for children from a variety of cultural backgrounds implies that AAGE is committed to the development of English language skills in all its students. Students who need to improve their language skills will receive support in order to assist them in their development of language skills, which will allow them to perform optimally in each class. English for Educational Purposes (EAP) is embedded in all eight subject areas in the MYP so that academic expression and the linguistic tools needed for formal presentations, as well as subject specific vocabulary, is imparted to students in order to prepare them for their future academic studies.

### **Early Years**

AAGE accepts students with varying levels of experience in English into the Early Years Programme. Students new to English receive in-class support from their class teachers and ASA staff.

### **PYP**

AAGE accepts students with all levels of experience in English into PYP. EAL learners receive in class support from their class teacher and from support teachers working alongside the class teacher in some lessons.

### **MYP**

Students who are less experienced in the English language are placed in English Language Acquisition classes. These classes follow the MYP Language Acquisition guide and students progress through the phases of language learning as described above in Additional Languages. When students reach Phase 5 according to the Language Acquisition Guide, they join the English Language and Literature classes.

## **Host Country Language**

We acknowledge and respect Danish as our host country language. All students from PYP4 to MYP5 at AAGE learn Danish as the language of the host country.

### **PYP**

In PYP, students are placed into Danish A or Danish B, with native or near native speakers in Danish A and beginner and intermediate level students in Danish B. The Danish government requires all students at school in Denmark to learn Danish from the age of 7 and native Danish speakers are required to be working towards the Danish language objectives for each grade level and will be assessed

with regard to these objectives. To this end, Danish A students in PYP have five lessons of Danish a week, while Danish B students have three lessons a week.

### **MYP**

In MYP the students are also currently split into two groups; native or near native speakers are placed in Danish Language and Literature classes, working both with the objectives in the MYP Language and Literature Guide, and with the Danish government objectives, while Danish B students are placed according to the MYP Language Acquisition phases and follow the MYP objectives. Students who reach Phase 5 proficiency, move into Danish Language and Literature classes.

### **Professional Development**

AAGE has an expectation that all teachers are language teachers and to this end, several Professional Development sessions in language instruction are offered during the school year. Some sessions focus on effective use of language in general teaching, while others are run by the EAL department, in order to give specific guidance to class and subject teachers on the needs of EAL learners. After School Activity staff also attend some of these EAL sessions. In addition, the EAL support and co-teaching model gives teachers help and guidance in how to teach EAL students effectively. All teachers at AAGE attend onsite, online and face-to-face IB workshops, many of which cover aspects of language teaching.

### **Language Conventions**

Spelling and written communication at AAGE will use British written conventions. However, within each class, teachers and students may use the written conventions for whichever version of international English to which they are accustomed, assuming they do so consistently.

The school font is Cambria size 12 for all written communication in digital format.

Students and teachers at AAGE use the APA conventions for referencing and citing sources.

### **Parental Involvement**

As an IB candidate school, parents are an integral part of our community of learners and their role in language learning is crucial, as they are also all language teachers from the first moments of their child's life and even before according to the latest research. The Parents council at AAGE is involved with raising money and buying resources in all languages for our library. Parents are also involved in teaching, volunteering and referring teachers for the mother tongue programme. Parents are also involved with the volunteer reading programme in PYP and helping with translation and interpretation where necessary. AAGE workshops for parents include topics such as, Third Culture Kids and Maintaining the Mother Tongue.

## References

Carder, Maurice Bilingualism in International Schools: a Model for Enriching Language Education. (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters 2007)

Language and Learning in the IB programmes (IBO September 2011)

Primary Years Programme: Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy. (IBO January 2006)

Learning in a language other than the mother tongue in IB programmes (IBO April 2008)

Middle Years Programme: Second language acquisition and Mother-tongue Development (IBO January 2004)