

Asmara International Community School

Language Policy

Related document

Further details regarding the language requirements for students to be admitted, please see the AICS Admissions Policy.

Philosophy

In keeping with AICS' Mission statement to "welcome students from internationally minded and diverse backgrounds who are willing to learn the knowledge, skills, and values to be inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who will be empowered to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world, and to make a difference in it", the Language Policy seeks to ensure that our student body is able to access and benefit from our program of studies, all of which are taught in English.

Strong language skills are essential for communication, learning and the development of the whole student. At AICS we encourage students to learn language, through language, and about language in a supportive environment. Students are encouraged to explore concepts, solve problems, share discoveries and explain their ideas.

All teachers, as well as other educational staff at AICS are language teachers and have a responsibility in facilitating communication (Guidelines for development a school language policy, International Baccalaureate, 2018)

Language requirements:

AICS is an international school with a majority of Tigrinya speaking students, however English is the language of AICS and its community, as it is the language of instruction and social interaction. In the Elementary School students follow the curriculum of Everyday Maths, Journeys and The International Primary Curriculum (IPC), all of which are taught in English. At the secondary level (grades 7-12) students must have a sufficient command of the English language to be able to succeed in the school's rigorous different programmes including the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC), International General Certification in Secondary Education (IGCSE), and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBPD). Students that graduate from AICS achieve a level of fluency in English that will enable them to go on to English-medium higher education.

Last reviewed by Senior leadership, August 2018

A student may not be admitted to AICS if they are deemed to not have the English language skills necessary for their programme of studies. See the Admission policy for more details.

Support for English Language

Opportunities are offered to AICS students whose mother tongue is not English to become more proficient in both spoken and written English. If a student's English level is not currently sufficient to ensure academic success, the student may be enrolled in English as a Second or other language (ESOL) class. This is something which would be communicated with parents but the decision would reside with the schools teachers and administrators.

Kindergarten:

The Elementary School uses an inclusion model for PK2-Kindergarten.

Grades 1 – 6:

The Elementary School uses an inclusion model for ESOL along with a pull-out model. Instead of taking French as a Second School Language, students instead receive ESOL tutorial in small groups.

Grades 7-12:

There is an emphasis on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) throughout the school including a heavy focus for all students on essay writing, academic vocabulary and reading fluency. In tutor groups students learn a variety of techniques designed to promote academic success including; work on academic vocabulary and silent sustained reading with some selected students attending ESOL support during tutor time and/or self study time (grades 11 and 12 only).

Additional Languages

French and Tigrinya (as the predominant host country language) are studied at AICS, however the school is active in supporting other languages spoken within our community.

Administrators, teaching assistants and other members of the school community are supportive in ensuring all members of AICS community are included.

Grades K – 6: All students study French as a second school language every other day and Tigrinya (the predominant host country language) along-side normal daily English language lessons.

Grades 7 - 8: French is a core class and all students study French as a second language every day. Tigrinya is offered as an after school activity.

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Grades 9 - 10: French is a core class and all students study French at IGCSE level as a Second Language every day. Tigrinya is offered as an after school activity.

Grades 11 – 12: French is studied at the Standard Level of the Diploma Programme with students taking part in 120 hours over the 2 year period. If a student enters the DP with less than 2 years' experience of studying French then they will take part in Language B Ab- initio. Tigrinya is offered as an after school activity.

Support of Mother Tongue Languages

AICS recognizes that mother tongue is an integral part of any individual's identity. AICS believes it is important to promote, value and be proud of students mother tongues. This belief encourages the attributes identified in the IB learner profile, as well as promotes responsible action and international-mindedness.

The majority of student's mother tongue is Tigrinya at AICS. The school promotes this by ensuring key information, the schools newsletter and invitation to events is sent home in both English and Tigrinya. We also encourage all parents to work with their child to ensure a high level of fluency and literacy in Tigrinya, or other mother tongue language. There is also a Tigrinya section in the school library, daily Tigrinya newspapers in schools and parts of school event days dedicated to the Tigrinya language. The after school Tigrinya lessons are also promoted not just as a method for Eritrean students to improve their mother tongue language, but also for students of other nationalities to learn the language.

Working document

This language policy has been made with the inclusion of all teachers and administrators in school and is revised each year by school senior leadership team. It is considered a working document and will change with the needs of our community and support AICS can offer.

References

AICS Admissions Policy

AICS Inclusion/Special Educational Needs Policy

Guidelines for development a school language policy, International Baccalaureate, 2018

The Diploma Program: From Principles to Practice