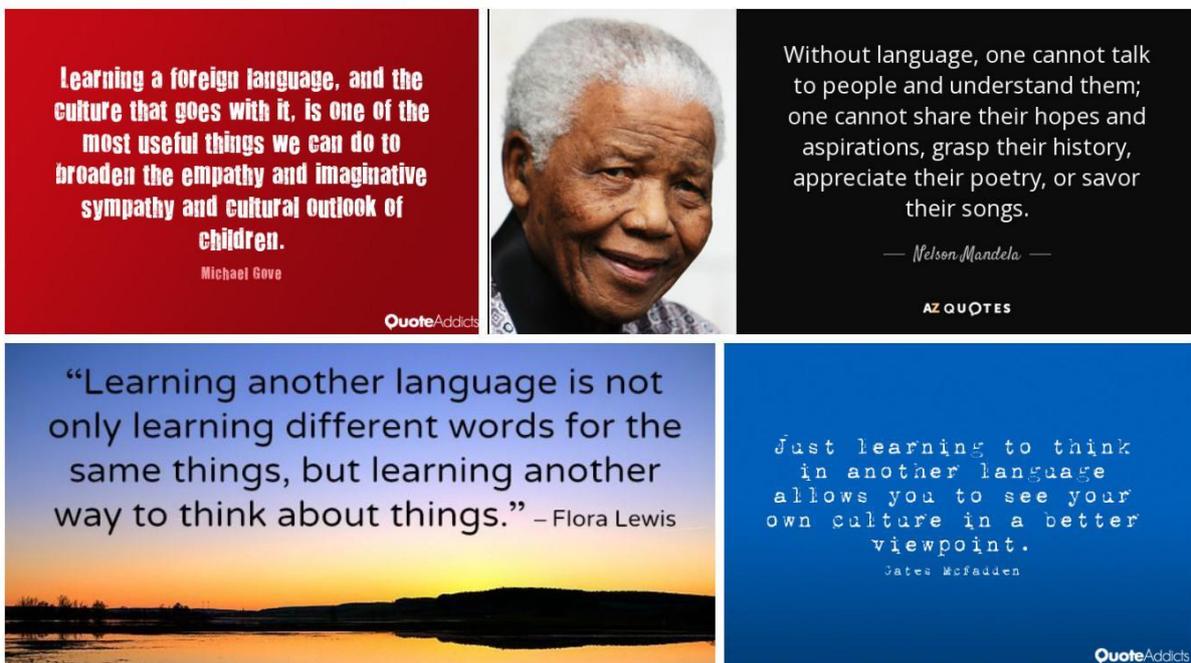




SFHS Language Policy



(Taken By the Wind, 2016; Quote Addicts, 2015; AZ Quotes, n.d.; All Tradis, n.d.)

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Table of Contents

Mission Statements.....	2
Chapter 1. Language Philosophy.....	3
Chapter 2. The Acquisition of Languages.....	4
Chapter 3. Language Profile at SFHS.....	5
3.1 Medium of Instruction.....	5
3.2 SFHS Community and Context.....	5
3.3 International Baccalaureate – Diploma Program	5
3.4 CISCE	6
3.5 Student Profile.....	6
3.6 Language of Communication.....	7
Chapter 4. Language Policy at SFHS.....	7
4.1 Admission and Follow-Up.....	7
4.2 Students with Special Educational Needs.....	8
4.3 Use and Development of Languages Across the School.....	9
4.4 Use of Mother Tongue.....	9
4.5 Subject Specialist Teachers.....	9
4.6 Assessment.....	9
4.7 Library.....	10
4.8 Language Support for Teachers.....	11
4.9 Responsibilities.....	11
Bibliography.....	14

Mission Statements

Strawberry Fields High School

Education for us is a process which takes along students, educators and parents on an inviting journey exploring the worlds of intellectual, emotional and spiritual learning. It helps children discover their gifts and talents, helping them connect better to the world around them. It inspires and equips them to be responsible and compassionate world citizens.

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IB)

The International Baccalaureate Organization 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 IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015).

Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE)

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations is committed to serving the nation's children, through high quality educational endeavours, empowering them to contribute towards a humane, just and pluralistic society, promoting introspective living, by creating exciting learning opportunities, with a commitment to excellence (Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations, 2013).

Chapter 1. Language Philosophy

Our school community believes that:

1. Language development is a primary human need required for our desire to communicate, to make sense of the world around us and to understand ourselves.
2. The development of competency in languages is an integral part of fulfilling our school's mission statement.
3. The ability to communicate is a vital component of scholastic, personal and public life and for living in a globalized world.
4. Students should be provided with as many opportunities as possible to learn different languages and improve their competency in them.

As a school community we are keenly aware that:

1. Exposure to and confidence of using languages is a key component in helping our students become compassionate world citizens.
2. Most of the members of our community have an advantage of developing refined bilingual skills and even multilingual skills.

As a school community we aim to create a language learning environment:

1. That is positive towards learning languages.
2. That encourages all stakeholders to learn new languages.
3. That views all languages as being equally important.
4. That uses age appropriate contexts to teach languages.
5. That actively seeks new and innovative ways to create a better learning and teaching environment.

In SFHS the teaching and learning of languages aims to:

1. Develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
2. Provide students the opportunity to learn how to communicate effectively.
3. Enable students to express themselves creatively and imaginatively.
4. Develop skills in students to become critical readers of nonfiction, media texts, stories, poetry and drama.
5. Through the study of language(s), students learn to appreciate and understand different countries, cultures and communities.

Chapter 2. The Acquisition of Languages

At SFHS, we believe young children learn language(s) naturally and easily but that the entire process is a lengthy one to accomplish. Scientists now believe that young babies are born 'programmed' to learn a language and will instinctively learn a language without an adult specifically teaching them to (Linguistics Society, n.d.). Even though adults may specifically not 'teach' a child a language they do however play an important role by communicating with them. Listening to a language (on various mediums) is not sufficient to develop language skills in children; they do need to have opportunities to interact in it in meaningful ways to develop the required skills (Linguistics Society, n.d.). Thus, children will start to use language in the way adults and other children in their environment do. It is also important to note that children use language to develop their behaviour in their environment, hence, the development of language is happening when language is being used.

The process of learning another language reinforces the workings of the first language learnt, by observing similarities and differences. This enables the students to become more aware of rules and patterns that exist in languages that they are already fluent in, and use them while learning a new language and extending their knowledge of their previous language.

For language development it is therefore important that the programme of study of a language provides opportunities for students to gain this experience (Linguist List, n.d.; Linguistics Society, n.d.; The National Strategies, 2010) through:

- a topic approach which provides context for vocabulary development, reinforcing previous learning in other topics, a consolidation of learning and opportunity to be creative;
- a wide variety of teaching activities that allow students to experiment, develop and be creative in a supportive and nurturing environment e.g. role play, games, mime and action, songs, and storytelling;
- opportunity to learn formal rules and practices of grammar and sentence formation together with knowledge and appreciation of different genres and text uses;
- opportunity to experiment and be creative in various language activities by giving the students the option to explore first by rehearsing orally as a whole class, then in small groups, or in pairs;
- model the use of language by adults.

Chapter 3. Language Profile at SFHS

3.1 Medium of Instruction

SFHS is an English medium school and in Grades Kindergarten to Grade 10 it follows the ICSE syllabus. Students in Grades 11 and 12 have the option of following the ISC or IB Diploma Programme Syllabus, both these curricula are taught in English.

Self Study option and guidance is given to IBDP students whose medium of instruction i.e. the first language is not English.

3.2 SFHS Community and Context

Strawberry Fields High School is located in Chandigarh which is the capital city of the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana. The mother tongue of students is predominantly Hindi or Punjabi. Parents here prefer to send their children to English medium schools, as they feel this will enable them to partake in more opportunities and also provide them with the tools necessary to interact in a global world. Communication in all government offices and public spaces is also mostly in English.

3.3 International Baccalaureate - Diploma Programme

The Diploma Programme emphasizes the importance of the study of languages continually through its mission, aims, objectives and in the structure of its course programmes. Emphasizing the crucial role that teachers play in language acquisition, the IB considers all DP teachers to be language teachers (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015).

To fulfil the requirements of the DP, a student requires the study of at least two languages. Most students opt for the English A Language and Literature in Group 1 and make a choice for Group 2 from Hindi B, French Ab initio (if they have not studied French in Grades 9 and 10) or French B. We aim to provide additional choices for Group 2 as and when language teachers become available. Should a student express a particular desire to study a language that we do not offer, an online course option would be investigated together with parents, students and the school management.

Well-resourced special-request and school-supported self-taught options in group 1 to maintain the mother-tongue development will be considered.

However, in the event of a student wishing to pursue their 'mother tongue' in Group 1 which is not English then the 'school-supported self-taught' option (SSST) in Language A: Literature SL will be considered in conjunction with the student and their parents/guardian. It is aimed that this option will be provided during the school timetable, but this will be reviewed regularly and if required further support will be provided. The Language A English Educator, who is well versed with the Language A course, will be the administrator. Most likely the language to be studied will not be the native language of the administrator, and hence a mother-tongue supervisor will be sought preferably from the community or online to assist the student and administrator over the two-year course.

3.4 CISCE

The CISCE lays considerable emphasis on students being exposed to languages and acquiring a secure command over them. To secure pass certificates in the external examinations of Grades 10 and 12, students must pass examinations in English Language and Literature. It also requires that students are taught Hindi as a second language from Kindergarten onwards, and a third language from Grade 5 onwards (in SFHS students are given a choice between French or Punjabi). From KG to Grade 8, students receive 5 periods of 35 minutes each week of Hindi language lessons. In Grades 5 to 8, students receive 3 periods of 35 minutes each week of the third language lessons. In Grades 9 and 10, English Language and Literature is compulsory and a second language (French, Hindi or Punjabi), and in Grades 11 and 12 English Language and Literature is compulsory.

3.5 Student Profile

Most of the students entering Kindergarten have been exposed to the English Language for approximately 3 years in preschool. When they arrive in SFHS most students are able to understand and speak English (although the level is considerably dependent on the language spoken at home), identify the different letters of the English alphabet and have started learning to read using a blend of phonics and 'sight' words. Twenty-five percent of students entering Kindergarten are from Economic Weaker Section of Society (EWS) category; these students generally have not had pre-kindergarten education and have had very limited or no exposure to the English Language. Their mother tongue is Hindi / Punjabi / French.

We also attract admissions of expatriate students who are returning to India after having studied abroad previously, due to the teaching and learning style we follow. Most of these students have a secure knowledge of the English Language but usually have low proficiency in Hindi.

3.6 Language of Communication

The school uses English as its official language for the purpose of communicating and managing the school. We are aware that the school community is multilingual and for functioning purposes uses more than one language. Communication with parents is in English, however, teachers are aware that some parents are comfortable in communicating in another common language and will do so at their preference and comfort level. The support staff typically uses Hindi or Punjabi as means of communication in their daily interactions.

The school has plans to provide support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction (English).

- The school supports learning of host country language and culture for new admission and for those who are not proficient in language learning.
- The school accesses community resources to support language development like public libraries, guest speakers, field trips, amongst others

Chapter 4. Language Policy at SFHS

4.1 Admission and Follow up

Junior School

At the time of admission in Kindergarten / Grades 1 and above, we discuss with the parents the level of achievement in English and Hindi and formulate a better understanding after a few weeks of the student attending school and develop an individual plan to develop better understanding in the required language. Extra support is provided by the class and/or Hindi language teacher.

Middle School

At the time of admission, we discuss with the parents the level of achievement in Hindi and develop an individual plan. Students from Grade 5 onwards have the option of choosing between French or Punjabi for their third language. For admission in Grade 6, 7 and 8, an assessment is made of the third language and appropriate support is provided by subject educators. If a student joining Grade 8 has not done a third language and / or hasn't studied Hindi (usually because they have studied abroad) and is planning

to pursue the ICSE course, then an exemption is sought from ICSE board. Students are encouraged to pursue second and / or third language, however language teachers are limited in Chandigarh.

High School

At the time of admission in Grade 9 or 10, the student's previous study record through Middle School is checked so as to advise the appropriate second language selection. SFHS, presently offers Hindi, Punjabi or French as a second language option to students. For Grades 11 and 12 it is essential for a student to have studied English up till Grade 10 level; there is no requirement for a compulsory second language.

IB Diploma Program

At the Diploma level the school offers English as a Group 1 subject under which English A Language and Literature is offered at HL or SL level. In group 2 along with Hindi B at the standard or higher level, French B is available at standard or higher level along with Ab Initio level. We at SFHS aim at students to achieve proficiency not only in English but in other languages as well. Language acquisition helps the students to become proficient in reading, writing, listening, speaking and understanding the language. We believe students learn best if they are provided with the opportunities to engage in learning within meaningful contexts and self-assessment through reflection. Levels are decided on the basis of the course of study in the previous class. If a student has no previous background in a given language, then the student may study that language at an Ab initio or SL.

4.2 Students with Special Educational Needs

SFHS has a number of policies in place to make the learning of languages accessible to students with special educational needs. The SEN Department conducts regular counselling sessions to provide additional assistance to students who are experiencing difficulties in languages. The Department also consults regularly with psychologists and specialists to determine how the curriculum can be adapted to better suit the needs of our students.

In alignment with the CISCE and IBO guidelines, SFHS can provide exemption from the requirement of a third language, an amanuensis and/or a reader. For more information, please refer to the SFHS Document, *Policies for Promoting an All-Inclusive Learning Community*.

4.3 Use and Development of Language Across the School

At SFHS the method of learning languages is a gentle process where children are made comfortable to express themselves in the language, they are comfortable with, together with positive encouragement to use the one that is being taught. The school atmosphere encourages the development of the view that all languages are equal. In all school events all languages are given opportunities to be used and appreciated. It is ensured that there is an inclusion and equity of access to the IB programme to all learners, including those who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue and even to students with special learning needs.

4.4 The Use of Mother Tongue

In order to stay informed and connected with their cultural identity and heritage, all students at SFHS are encouraged, as they have the right, to develop their mother tongue. There is also a recognition that a strong level of competency in the mother tongue or first language of students can be an important ingredient in their success as learners of additional languages. The school recognizes the importance of Hindi and Punjabi languages, and the culture they bring with them, as indigenous to the state in which the school is located. This is appreciated and promoted through curricular, co-curricular activities, and outreach programs. The school celebrates its linguistic diversity by conducting language week, , annual literary events (like Wordsmiths, Rhapsodia, Shiladhaar), assemblies during the academic year in which students present skits, poems, short stories, etc. to highlight the linguistic culture of the school. The school provides opportunities for maintaining mother tongues by having books in the library of different mother tongue, conducting mother tongue clubs, etc.

4.5 Subject Specialist Teachers

- In both Kindergarten and Class 1, English and Hindi are taught by the class teacher. In order to create a more holistic and nurturing environment, most subjects are taught by the class teacher.
- From Class 1 onwards, students are taught by a specialist Hindi teacher.
- French and Punjabi are taught by specialist language teachers.

4.6 Assessment

- We continually assess students work to monitor progress in terms of key learning objectives. These are reported twice a year.

- In the primary school anecdotal records, teacher assessment on assignment and gradual introduction of short tests are used.
- In the middle and high school, anecdotal records, teacher assessment on assignments, tests and examination on comprehension, grammar, project work, extended writing and appreciation of text are used.
- The ICSE and ISC language curriculum also includes Aural and Oral assessments in English, Hindi, Punjabi and French.
- The Diploma Program (DP) level, assessment is rigorous, criterion based and consistent. It differentiates according to the student ability. Distinct learning outcomes envisioned through the study of languages over a period of two years, in keeping with the particular requirements of the aims and objectives of languages taught form the basis of assessment. Both formative and summative assessment, is fundamental to learning and teaching and therefore fully integrated into the programme. Assessments are based on IB criteria which test the required skills in languages. There are a total of four terms. Each term will comprise of 8-10 formative assessments & 2 formal cyclic tests per subject. In Term 4 there will be 8-10 formative assessments and only 1 cyclic test per subject. The students receive regular feedback on the progress in language learning. We understand that Diploma students come from varied backgrounds and they will gain ground at different paces. All written modules of the final examination are assessed externally, while the Oral component is assessed internally by the language teachers, and then moderated externally by the IB.
- **Free independent creative work** in all parts of the school is taken very seriously to see how language development is progressing.

4.7 Library

All students from KG upwards are encouraged to read by allocating regular weekly visits to the school library.

Over the years, we have tried to formulate a well-balanced library that caters to all age ranges and; a large variety of topics. Earnest effort is made to acquire books, audios and videos of all languages taught in school. Quality of literature and print is an important point of consideration when books are being procured for the library. As a school, we are open to suggestions from all educators regarding the procurement of new books for the library. The school is also an active member of the British Council Library.

The school fraternity has free access to all the resources available in the library and the students are encouraged to make optimum use of the available resources. They are made aware of the importance of these works through their individual assignments, given by the teachers now and then, as in order to come up with responses for the assignments, they must make the most of the assistance provided by these resources. This practice inculcates the habit of academic honesty, which is highly important not only to the IB but also to the school as it results in genuine work that is personal to each student meaning that it acts as a tool for evaluating the competence of a student's learning. The librarian plays a key role in providing books, resources that enable language learning. The Librarian collaborates with language and subject teachers and gives guidance and assistance on resources available, the books to order, etc.

The librarian guides students with the level of books to be issued to students depending on their ability, interest and style.

4.8 Language Support for Teachers

As all teachers are language teachers, it is important for the school to ensure they are confident and technically sound. Teachers are keenly observed to ensure they provide opportunities of good model use of language in all aspects of school life.

Every teacher is associated with a coordinator to whom s/he can turn to for individual development needs. The coordinator is responsible for observing development requirements and putting into place opportunities to develop languages.

Workshops are organised by the school management to develop language needs if a significant group is present.

In the Diploma Program the IB language educators are given opportunities to attend on line and face to face workshop sessions. The educators also attend job alike sessions like SAIBSA and collaborate with other institutions.

4.9 Responsibilities

Educator Responsibilities

- Nurture the use and expression of different languages within the classroom.
- Be sensitive and receptive to the existence of distinct cultures within the classroom.

- Connect information learned in the new language to more familiar contexts.
- Encourage the knowledge of extended vocabularies, both specialized and general, in different languages.
- Use language that is respectful and compassionate towards all parents and students.
- Mentor students to articulately express their thoughts and ideas, in the language that students are comfortable with while maintaining academic honesty and integrity.
- Realize that the learning of languages is not limited to the classroom, but is a continuous process.
- Realize that the development of language not only in language classes, but also in other academic subjects and school life.
- Endorse the equal value of all languages.
- Proactively enhance the development of their language skills.
- Proactively provide feedback about the development of language to Coordinators, Dean IBDP or Principal during the year and through the review feedback form.
- Teachers are aware of the Language policy and language profile of the learning group.
- Teachers are able to give examples of how the school's language policy influences their collaborative planning horizontally and vertically.
- Teachers recognize that, as language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication and understanding that language is a mode for learning, assessing and understanding.

Coordinator Responsibilities

- Nurture the use and expression of different languages within the larger school environment.
- Set an example for the educators by using respectful and compassionate language for communication.
- Be a resource for the educators, to assist with developmental difficulties of the students.
- Organize workshops to develop language needs if there is a significant need.
- Be sensitive, receptive and accommodative towards different types of cultural and language learning needs.
- Realize that the learning of languages is not limited to the classroom, but is a continuous process.
- Observe professional development requirements in educators and provide necessary support.
- Realize that the development of language not only in language classes, but also in other academic subjects and school life.

- Endorse the equal value of all languages.
- Facilitate the review process and proactively engage staff in providing feedback through conversation throughout the academic year.
- Administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff are given professional development training in the fields of language learning and teaching.

Parent Responsibilities

- Encourage the reading of a wide spectrum of print and electronic sources in English and the student's preferred second and/or third language.
- Actively participate in the student's learning of language.
- Realize that the learning of languages is not limited to the classroom, but is a continuous process.
- Realize that the development of language not only in language classes, but also in other academic subjects and school life.
- Endorse the equal value of all languages.

Students Responsibilities

- Be open-minded to the acquisition of new languages.
- Commit to enhancing their vocabulary in English, a second and/or third language by reading a variety of print and electronic sources.
- Complete language assignments in a timely manner.
- Understand the cultural nuances of the language being learned.
- Realize that the learning of languages is not limited to the classroom, but is a continuous process.
- Realize that the development of language not only in language classes, but also in other academic subjects and school life
- Learning at least one language in addition to mother tongue.

Policy Distribution & Review

The SFHS Language Policy is a working document and will be constantly modified to reflect institutional and curriculum change. The document will be available on the school portal to all staff, students and parents in a downloadable and printable format.

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