

Ramallah Friends School Language Policy

Lower School (K - 5th Grade)

Our School

The Ramallah Friends School has been authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization to implement the Middle Years Program and the Diploma Program, and is a candidate school for the Primary Years Program (PYP).

We at the Ramallah Friends School understand that language is an important tool of communication between people which facilitates the process of expressing oneself, including one's ideas, feelings, beliefs, and culture. The Friends School strongly believes that the development of a child's language skills is vital for the child's intellectual, social and emotional growth and progress. The school is also committed to reinforce the use of the Arabic language as the child's first language and as the primary language for instruction, considering the important role of language in upholding and preserving the national identity of the Palestinian people.

English as an Additional Language at The Ramallah Friends School-Lower school

The Friends Primary School uses the Arabic language as the language of instruction. By mastering the mother tongue language, students develop skills to learn and master other languages, which in turn facilitates their exposure to other cultures, teach them acceptance and broaden their minds and opportunities to communicate with other citizens of the world.

Since its establishment in 1869, the Friends School has sought to offer the English language to its students. By grasping the English language, in addition to the Arabic language, students of the Friends School have been exposed to other cultures. Such language skills open up opportunities for students to enroll in top-ranking international universities, and later to contribute their expertise to the development of the country.

Today the school allocates about 24% of teaching time to the English language; about 50% of time includes other language-learning skills, providing students with as many resources as possible, such as books, educational stories and language-supporting computer programs.

Our curriculum has been created according to standards of both the Arabic language curriculum and the English language International Baccalaureate curriculum. By using these two systems, student development is monitored and skills and knowledge are evaluated at each grade level. These standards are also used to ensure the application of a clear methodology, to monitor the student's language growth and development throughout the different grade levels, and to specify the required assessment processes.

Language Beliefs and Practices at the Ramallah Friends- Lower School

Our vision and values concerning language aligns with those of the International Baccalaureate curriculum. For this reason the school educates teachers about the three aspects of language (learning the language, learning through the language, and learning about

the language) as well as the various aspects of language (oral, visual, and written) and about the role of language in teaching and learning. By adopting the professional training program, the school has worked to meet the standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate program, by way of official IB workshops, or internal workshops conducted in school for this purpose. Reviewing the “Language Scope and Sequence” document and aligning it with the Arabic language standards that the school applies introduces teachers to the language characteristics and different phases of students’ language development. Adopting the “Language Scope and Sequence” program helps ensure that these characteristics are considered when creating the teaching plan and within the evaluation process to reinforce the language learning practices, which are based on inquiry, research, and connecting listening and speaking skills.

These points are reflected clearly during the planning sessions for each grade level, the plans for research, and the participation of each specialized teacher. The teachers include all aspects of learning a language in the teaching process for each subject, in addition to teaching the academic subject, by using new vocabulary and terms and explaining their meaning in that language.

Addressing Different Learning Styles and Needs

The school believes that students have different styles of learning. Some students may have learning needs and challenges that the school must work towards meeting and providing them the same opportunities for success as any other student. This specific teaching process includes adaptations for students with learning needs, accommodations for these students, as well as modifications to ensure that each child receives the required education and the chance to reflect their learning.

The school’s Learning Support Program provides students with the needed support (material and human resources) inside and outside the classrooms in collaboration and partnership with classroom teachers and parents in order to address students’ different needs.

At the end of each trimester, and in collaboration with the teachers, the Learning Support Department reflects on and evaluates the different strategies and methodologies used during these support sessions to ensure their effectiveness in addressing the students’ needs.

The Alignment of Our Language Policy with the Language Beliefs of the International Baccalaureate Curriculum

The Ramallah Friends School agrees strongly with the philosophies of the International Baccalaureate Curriculum regarding the importance of language within the learning process **PYP based on the PYP standards and practices document*** and this is manifested by:

- Adapting the teaching, learning and evaluation process based on the PYP standards and practices document.
- Believing that every teacher is a language teacher, the school provided a workshop about the role of language within the teaching and learning practices for all teachers to attend.
- Including the participation of all school staff members in the preparation of the language policy.
- Integrating the practices of teaching a language within the POI.

- Identifying and teaching the different aspects of learning a language through reading the various documents related to the language within the International Baccalaureate Program, as well as evaluating the language practices in the school by active participation of all during the preliminary language policy meeting.
- Revising the language policy every two years to ensure that it fulfills and meets the ongoing progress and development of school life.
- Although the school is a national school, every year it receives applications for admission from students who are not native Arabic speakers. The school studies these applications carefully and assesses the needs of each student based on the age group and grade level. Acceptance is based on the school's ability to address the student's needs through collaboration between all parties: classroom teacher, Language Support Department, and parents. In some cases, parents are required to provide a qualified shadow teacher to assist these students and help them overcome the language barriers.

Language in the Curriculum

As a candidate School for Primary Years Program (PYP), we work on planning around the three strands of language; listening and speaking, reading and writing, viewing and presenting. Although these are addressed separately, they are interrelated in practice and address the diversity of student language needs.

Oral Language: Listening and Speaking

At the Ramallah Friends School we:

- Provide the opportunity for students to listen and respond to a wide range of texts, as well as the ideas and opinions of others, taking into consideration the different needs of students and their language growth and interests.
- Emphasize the importance of developing oral language skills in every learning and social situation in order to improve fluency, accuracy and expansion of vocabulary.
- Give students the opportunity to use language in a variety of ways to: ask and answer questions; relate and retell; persuade; talk about needs, feelings, ideas or opinions; and present their group work and individual work.

Written Language: Reading and Writing

At the Ramallah Friends School we:

- Encourage students to read and write for enjoyment, instruction, and information.
- Teach the mechanics of language (including spelling, grammar, and punctuation), strategies, and literary techniques through the reading and writing processes and assist students with text comprehension by teaching them to make interpretations.
- Enable our students to become proficient readers by modeling interactive reading.
- Expose students to a variety of literary styles, genres and structures so that they learn to recognize and appreciate them.
- Demonstrate writing techniques to the class by modeling and explaining, and showing how the writing process works, and providing students with sufficient opportunities

to develop, organize and communicate their ideas and information.

Visual Language: Viewing and Presenting

At the Ramallah Friends School we:

- Expose students to the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values, and beliefs in an age appropriate manner.
- Explain to students how to interpret visual images and to understand and use different media.
- Show students how to use appropriate technology to demonstrate their understanding.
- Encourage students to think critically to make knowledgeable choices in their personal experiences.

*** Programme standards and practices**

Section A: Philosophy: Standard A.7(Programme standards and practices page7)

Section C: Curriculum (Programme standards and practices pages 9–14)

Standard C1: Collaborative Planning/ 3. a. b.

Standard C2: Written Curriculum/ 4.a.b./ 9.a.

Standard C3: Teaching and Learning/ 7. 8.

