

LANGUAGE POLICY



SUMMERHILL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Summerhill Draft Language Policy

Policy Statement

The Summerhill language policy is a working document developed collaboratively by staff, administration, and members of the Summerhill community. The policy is aligned with the principles and practices of the IB, and outlines the guiding principles and practices for language learning at Summerhill International School. Language learning permeates the curriculum through authentic, inquiry-based experiences in a culturally rich and diverse learning community. Our policy is a statement of agreement—one to which the staff and the Summerhill community are asked to commit to so our school can achieve its mission of empowering children to become confident, global, compassionate and respectful young people while ensuring a nurturing environment that is safe and happy.

1. Language Philosophy

Summerhill shares these common beliefs about language teaching and learning:

- Language is central to all learning. It is through language that learners construct meaning, communicate ideas, and deepen their understanding of the world.
- Language is best learned in authentic contexts that are connected to children's daily lives through play and inquiry.
- All teachers are language teachers. As such, language learning is a shared responsibility of all teachers and educational assistants in partnership with parents and students.
- Maintaining home language(s) and developing additional languages strengthens identity, fosters cultural understanding and empathy, and promotes multilingualism and international-mindedness.
- Learning the language and culture of the host country strengthens a sense of belonging within the local community and intercultural understanding.

2. Language Profile

A) Languages in our community

English is the language of instruction at Summerhill International School and serves as the shared language of inclusion within our multilingual learning community.

Summerhill International School is linguistically and culturally diverse, with students, families, and staff representing a wide range of home languages from around the world. As the linguistic profile of the learning community continues to evolve over time, Summerhill International School recognizes and values all languages represented within the learning community.

B) School communication

English is the language of communication within the school. To help ensure clear, consistent, and timely communication, families are encouraged to communicate with the school in English whenever possible. If additional language support is used, the English-language version of any communication will be considered the official version in the event of any discrepancy or misunderstanding.

3. Admissions

As English is both the language of instruction and language of all official school communications, it is recommended for at least one parent to be able to communicate in English. Students who are complete beginners in English will be accepted. Please see our Admissions Policy for further information regarding types of communication with the school.

4. Language Practices

A) Multilingualism and home languages

In keeping with the IB philosophy, Summerhill International School recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right, and a valuable resource for learning. We believe that every learner's linguistic and cultural identity enriches our community and contributes to deeper understanding across languages and cultures.

We recognize that a strong foundation in a learner's home language(s) supports overall language development, including the acquisition of English. We encourage families to continue using and nurturing their home language(s) at home, helping children build understanding while maintaining connections to their culture and identity.

In partnership with families, we create authentic opportunities for learners and families to share their languages and cultures as part of the life of the school through learning experiences and community events.

B) English as an additional language

Students learning English as an additional language are fully integrated into the classroom and supported in developing the English language skills needed to build relationships, participate meaningfully in learning, and access the curriculum.

C) Pedagogy

Language learning is embedded throughout the curriculum and is a shared responsibility of all teachers. Children communicate and make meaning through multiple modalities, including oral language, drawing, play, movement, dramatic expression, and writing.

Teachers support language learning by:

- Creating safe, inclusive, and language-rich learning environments
- Using a range of teaching strategies, resources, and assessment practices to meet individual language learning needs
- Scaffolding learning to build on students' prior knowledge, experiences, and language repertoire
- Embedding language learning throughout the Programme of Inquiry and across all areas of learning
- Providing opportunities for students to communicate, collaborate, and express their thinking through multiple modalities
- Providing timely feedback to students and their families regarding language learning and development

5. Roles and responsibilities

It is recognized throughout the language policy that each member of the community holds responsibilities in the development and use of language and in the support of student learning.

To support the Summerhill International School language policy:

Students will

- Take an active role in language learning
- Be encouraged to participate in a wide range of language learning opportunities.
- Do their best to develop an additional language
- Have an opportunity to learn the language of the host country
- Be encouraged to use the language of instruction and inclusion

Teachers will

- Be aware of and agree to the Summerhill language policy
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- Model effective communication for students by consistently using the language of instruction and inclusion throughout the school day
- Help students find appropriate language resources
- Differentiate planning, teaching, and assessment to build on each student's language development and learning needs
- Provide timely and effective feedback about language development to the students and their parents
- Commit to ongoing professional learning to strengthen their knowledge and practices of language teaching and learning

Parents will

- Be aware of the Summerhill language policy and support it
- Encourage, provide and support opportunities for their child to maintain their home language
- Provide resources and support for all areas of language learning both at school and at home
- Monitor their child's progress and communicate concerns initially through the classroom teacher

Administration will

- Ensure all parents have access to the Summerhill policy and practices
- Provide adequate resources and staffing for the school's language programmes.
- Ensure consistency across all sections of the school in the delivery of language instruction, assessment and reporting
- Instigate a regular review of the language policy
- Ensure that teachers are supported with professional development opportunities to keep abreast of current practices in the teaching of English as an additional language

References

Primary Years Program: Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy

Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education

Acknowledgements

Aoba Japan International School

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