

LANGUAGE POLICY

At The Heritage School, we believe language is a vital tool for learning, communicating and being an active member of a global society. Our Language Policy communicates to all stakeholders the teaching-learning philosophy, processes, and practices along with a balanced approach towards learning of the languages acknowledging the range of abilities and diversities within the school community.

❖ Guiding Principles

Every learning experience is a literacy experience. We think through language. We speak and listen through language. We read through language, and we write through language. Every aspect of our lives is governed by language.

It follows, therefore, that language teaching and learning are key components to the development of our students. We also believe in the idea of inclusivity in culture and language, including the importance of providing opportunities to learn mother tongue/ local language within the curriculum.

We believe that language acquisition is best supported by a language rich environment, that teachers are role models for using and learning language, and that they can foster a positive attitude to language and literature.

The language of instruction used to deliver the curriculum at The Heritage School is English, one of the official languages of India. The language of the region is Hindi and in fact Hindi is also the **mother tongue or first language** of many of our students and staff, though other mother tongues also include Assamese, Bengali, Naga, Tamil, Gujarati, Malayalam, and Marathi, among others. The *mother tongue language* is the one that is most strongly linked to the culture with which an individual identifies as his or her culture of origin, and often is the language used in the home. The *first language* is the one in which the individual is most proficient.

We recognize 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. *Extensive brain research has also proven that fluency in two or more languages has a positive impact on cognitive development. Researchers have found that learning languages leads directly to the "growth" of the hippocampus - the deep structure of the brain responsible for the development of new knowledge, orientation in space and the consolidation of short-term memory into long-term memory.* Additional benefits, including cultural understanding and the ability to communicate in an increasingly interconnected world, make a compelling case for language instruction. Therefore, in addition to offering instruction in English and Hindi, The Heritage School introduces a third language in Middle School—either Sanskrit or French.

The primary medium of instruction is English, keeping in mind the importance of English as the most widely used language in education and in global communication. Teachers should encourage students to speak English in class but should be aware that students may benefit from help from another student in their mother tongue in which they are not only linguistically more competent but can also think more easily.

❖ Differentiation, Remediation and Enrichment

- ❖ Most importantly, we recognize that students acquire language skills at different rates and through a variety of methods which must be employed regularly.
- ❖ This means that reading instruction must be always differentiated, using diagnostic tools to determine individual reading level, strengths and weaknesses.



- ❖ Enrichment and remediation must be continuous and ongoing, so that gaps and weaknesses are addressed at the earliest possible opportunity through ongoing assessments and appropriate interventions.
- ❖ This also means that if any student has an identified learning disability in language acquisition, the focus of language development for him or her will be English. Class periods set aside for the study of additional languages, including Hindi, will be used for additional instruction and remediation in English.