



## **Mar Qardakh International School**

### **Language Policy**

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| <b>Developed</b>      | <b>February 2014</b>  |
| <b>First review</b>   | <b>December 2024</b>  |
| <b>Current review</b> | <b>September 2026</b> |
| <b>Next review</b>    | <b>September 2030</b> |

## **School Mission Statement**

Our mission is to empower students for life in the 21st century through a holistic and internationally minded education that nurtures inquiry, academic excellence, spiritual formation, leadership, and service.

## **I. Philosophy**

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this document is to clarify the understanding of the language policy within the school setting. The policy applies to the whole school and is to be communicated to and understood by all teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Mar Qardakh International School seeks to empower the whole person by providing comprehensive educational methods and means for academic, social, spiritual, and personal development.

### **Philosophy and Aims**

At Mar Qardakh International School, we believe that language is a primary means of communication as well as a vehicle for promoting personal identity, cultural heritage, and overall learning. Language is a symbol of a culture and must be valued as a significant component of a student's identity and personality. The development of the mother tongue is crucial for maintaining the student's cultural identity and personality. We believe that the acquisition of language is a lifelong process and is a basic component of personal and intellectual growth. It comprises three related aspects: Learning language, learning through language, and learning about language. Gaining proficiency in one language can be reflected in other languages, and gaining proficiency in a language promotes students' abilities to acquire competencies in other curricular areas.

Furthermore, we hold that language learning promotes international awareness and multicultural understanding and communication, and is therefore an important part of the mission of an IB World School. Acquisition of language and study of literature develop critical thinking skills which are fundamental to developing an internationally-minded person. Language learning must be fostered in all aspects of the school curriculum: all teachers are language teachers. We affirm that teachers must strive to recognise the language needs of all students and work to serve these needs within and outside of the classroom.

At Mar Qardakh, our language programmes strive to empower students to learn and use language effectively, appropriately, accurately, and confidently. We develop students' oral and written communication abilities, and enable students to develop and use language skills in a variety of contexts and purposes. We promote the appreciation, understanding, and analysis of literature, and encourage students to explore language and literature as a means of understanding the differing perspectives of people from other cultures. We develop students' awareness of the role of language in all areas of the curriculum and in multiple ways of knowing. We seek to provide opportunities for enjoyment, creativity, and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of language and literature.

## **II. School Language Profile**

The majority of students at Mar Qardakh School have Neo-Aramaic language as their mother tongue, and English, Arabic, and/or Kurdish as additional language(s). The school community recognises and celebrates this linguistic diversity as a resource and a defining characteristic of the local context. It provides a rich foundation for developing students who are open-minded and internationally minded communicators.

## **III. Language of Instruction**

The language of instruction at Mar Qardakh is English. Although not all students have English as their mother tongue, this is the language that unites the entire student population and school community. Furthermore, the community that the school serves has expressed the need and importance of having English as the language of instruction. The English language is acknowledged as a global lingua franca and is associated with increased access to opportunities, information, and employment. Therefore, all courses, with the exception of additional language courses, are taught in English. We provide additional support for the students who do not have English as their mother tongue, as well as support for mother tongue maintenance and development (detailed below).

### **PYP**

PYP transdisciplinary learning is primarily taught in English. Students develop language through the programme of inquiry and through explicit language instruction. Language learning is integrated across the curriculum, and teachers use inquiry, modelling, differentiation and appropriate scaffolding to develop students' communication and literacy.

Students also learn languages in addition to the language of instruction in accordance with the school programme and applicable IB and local requirements.

## **MYP Language and Literature**

English continues to be the language of instruction for all subjects with the exception of additional languages. In addition, all students take English Language & Literature. The Language and Literature curriculum has been developed in continuity with the PYP language curriculum and therefore builds upon the skills and language proficiency students have already developed in PYP.

## **IV. Additional Languages**

MQIS offers Kurdish in accordance with governmental requirements. Arabic is offered as an additional language and, in the MYP, as a Language Acquisition course. The school values sustained development in more than one language and provides language pathways appropriate to its programme, students and local context. We believe that multilingualism promotes international mindedness, forms valuable perspectives, and fosters exposure to different cultures, all resulting in opportunities for students to be open-minded, caring, and principled communicators.

### **PYP Additional-Language Learning**

Arabic is taught as an additional language in the PYP through stand-alone learning and, where meaningful, connections to the programme of inquiry and transdisciplinary learning. Kurdish is provided in accordance with governmental requirements.

PYP language learning is developmentally appropriate and supports communication, cultural understanding and confidence in using more than one language. The additional language learning in the PYP lays the foundation for the skills and knowledge we expect our students to have in the MYP.

### **MYP Language Acquisition**

Mar Qardakh School offers Arabic as its Language Acquisition course in the MYP. This decision stems from a firm belief in the language's relevance and cultural importance in the region. It helps better equip students with the means to serve, contribute to, and lead their community. All units are taught and assessed in alignment with the MYP Language Acquisition criteria.

## **V. MYP Placement and Progression**

Placement in an MYP Language Acquisition phase is based on evidence of the student's current language proficiency and prior learning. Evidence may include:

- previous school records and prior language-learning experience;

- samples of student work;
- teacher observations and classroom performance; and
- other relevant evidence that helps determine the most appropriate learning pathway.

For students transferring from PYP to MYP, or entering MQIS from another school, the relevant language teacher and MYP Coordinator review the available evidence and determine the appropriate phase. A placement test may be used as part of this process.

Student progress is reviewed regularly. Movement between phases is based on demonstrated development and readiness rather than automatic promotion at the end of an academic year. The Language Acquisition teacher works with the MYP Coordinator when reviewing phase placement. Students and parents are informed when a significant change in placement is made.

## **VI. Language Exhibitions and Interdisciplinary Language Experiences**

MQIS values language learning inside and outside the classroom. The fact that language is one subject that exists in all subjects opens doors to many interdisciplinary experiences. The school encourages and fosters yearly language exhibitions where students practice, synthesize, and display their language learning to their community. These opportunities are usually multilingual and help students make connections, embrace culture, and celebrate diversity.

## **VII. Language Development and Support**

Students could struggle in language learning when it is not their mother tongue, when they join from different schools, or for other reasons. For students who face these challenges, the school provides support to overcome potential barriers that might keep the students from properly engaging with the learning process

### **Support may include:**

- targeted individual or small-group language support;
- differentiated and level-appropriate texts and learning materials;
- visual aids, modelling, sentence frames, vocabulary support and other scaffolds;
- purposeful opportunities for students to use another language to clarify meaning and build understanding;
- individualized support, where appropriate, in collaboration with the school's inclusion / learning-support personnel.

Teachers monitor students' language development through classroom evidence and school assessment processes. Where formal proficiency assessments are used, results are considered together with teacher feedback, prior school information and student work to determine appropriate support.

## **VIII. Home Languages, Identity and Cultural Heritage**

MQIS values the languages students use at home and in their communities, including Neo-Aramaic (Sureth), Arabic and Kurdish. Students are encouraged to maintain and develop these languages because language is closely connected to identity, family, culture and belonging.

Where appropriate, students may draw on their home languages to develop understanding, make connections, conduct inquiry, discuss ideas or access learning before communicating their understanding in the language required by the task.

The school encourages families to support reading, conversation, storytelling and other meaningful language experiences at home. School events, learning experiences and resources may also provide opportunities to recognize and celebrate the linguistic heritage of the community.

## **IX. Physical and Virtual Resources for Language Development**

MQIS identifies and develops a range of physical and virtual resources to support language learning.

Depending on programme and student need, these may include:

- school and classroom libraries, including age-appropriate texts at different reading levels;
- multilingual books, dictionaries, reference materials and language-learning resources;
- visual, audio and audiovisual materials;
- digital reading, research and language-learning resources approved by the school;
- teacher-created differentiated materials and scaffolds; and
- access to teachers, language-support staff and the teacher-librarian for literacy, research and language development.

Resources are reviewed according to student needs, curriculum requirements, accessibility, age appropriateness and the languages represented in the school community.

## **X. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **10.1 School Leadership**

- Ensure that the language policy is implemented, communicated and reviewed regularly.
- Provide appropriate staffing, professional learning, resources and structures for language development.

- Promote a school culture that values multilingualism, inclusion and intercultural understanding.

### **10.2 PYP, MYP, and Language Coordinators**

- Support consistent implementation of the policy within their programmes.
- Work with teachers to ensure programme language requirements and student language needs are addressed.
- Support placement, progression and documentation processes where relevant.

### **10.3 Teachers**

- Recognize that all teachers share responsibility for language development.
- Model effective academic and subject-specific language.
- Differentiate and scaffold learning according to students' language profiles and needs.
- Provide opportunities to develop communication, literacy and subject-specific vocabulary.
- Value students' linguistic backgrounds and use multilingual strategies appropriately to support learning.

### **10.4 Language Teachers and Language-Support Staff**

- Assess and monitor language development using appropriate evidence.
- Plan instruction according to student proficiency, programme expectations and learning needs.
- Maintain relevant records and communicate progress or placement changes to appropriate staff, students and families.
- Collaborate with coordinators, classroom/subject teachers and inclusion personnel.
- Ensure that teaching is concept-driven, inquiry-based, and informed by assessment.

### **10.5 Teacher-Librarian**

- Support literacy, inquiry, research, and access to print and digital language resources.
- Help teachers and students identify age-appropriate, culturally responsive, and linguistically accessible resources.
- Host and foster activities that encourage students to engage with the languages taught at the school

### **10.6 Students**

- Participate actively in developing the language of instruction and additional languages.
- Respect the languages, identities and cultures of others.
- Use available language support responsibly and seek help when needed.
- Strive to model the IB learner profile attributes through the language program.

### **10.7 Parents and Families**

- Provide accurate information about the student's language background and previous learning.
- Support language development through meaningful communication and literacy at home.

- Work with the school when language support or placement decisions are discussed.

## **XI. Professional Learning and Collaborative Practice**

MQIS supports teachers in developing effective approaches to multilingual learning, differentiation, scaffolding, literacy and subject-specific language. Professional learning may take place through school-based training, collaborative planning, coordinator guidance, IB professional development and other relevant learning opportunities.

Teachers are expected to collaborate across subjects and programmes so that language-development practices are coherent and support student transitions, particularly from PYP to MYP.

## **XII. Communication and Implementation**

The language policy is made available to relevant members of the school community and is introduced or revisited through appropriate staff, student and parent communication. Coordinators and school leaders support teachers in applying the policy in classroom practice.

Implementation is evidenced through curriculum planning, language placement and support records, student work, assessment information, professional learning, library/resources provision and communication with families.

## **XIII. Review and Evaluation**

The school reviews this policy regularly to ensure that it reflects current IB expectations, local requirements, the school's language profile and actual practice. The review process may draw on student language data, teacher feedback, coordinator observations, family feedback, curriculum review, support records and programme evaluation findings.

The Head of School and IB Coordinators oversee the review. Significant revisions are communicated to the school community and approved through the school's established governance process.

## **XIV. References**

- International Baccalaureate Organization. Programme standards and practices (2020). Current framework used by authorized IB World Schools for programme evaluation.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. MYP Language Acquisition. Updated 19 February 2026.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. MYP Language and Literature. Updated 19 February 2026.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. MYP curriculum. Updated 19 February 2026.

- Relevant current IB programme guides and school-access resources available through My IB / Programme Resource Centre.

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**Approved by:**

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Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda

Mar Qardakh International School Governor

Date:     /     /

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Hala Warda

Head of School

Date:     /     /