

EtonHouse[®]

Malaysia

International School • Kuala Lumpur

Inquire • Think • Learn

Shaping the future through education



Language Policy

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Language Philosophy

EtonHouse Malaysia believes that learning language is fundamental to learning, communication, and inquiry; these values help develop international mindedness. All teachers at EHM are language teachers, and promote language and literacy through inquiries that relate to all subject areas. In our constructivist classrooms, students develop their language while exploring concepts across all of the subjects taught.

At EHM, it is our responsibility to engage students while encouraging their growth across the IB Learner Profile attributes. Fostering these attributes works directly with students' individual strengths; each learner is able to become more internationally minded while developing their unique values and skills. Additionally, having diverse cultural backgrounds at EHM allows students to appreciate and learn about other cultures, beliefs and ideas through language.

EHM believes that students can:

- Learn language to a level required for success, through all classes offered at EHM
- Have equal access to the IB curriculum while engaging in language and activities that are suited for their individual needs
- Maintain and develop their Mother Tongue(s) with support from home and school
- Reach set standards and benchmarks in at least two languages, while working at a pace that is best suited for each individual learner
- Work toward multilingual competency, supported by EHM's unique linguistic and cultural make-up, in our host country, Malaysia.

Students are more engaged, and have more meaningful language learning experiences, when they feel supported by the community around them. EHM therefore works to engage our entire community in language acquisition and development. We encourage parents to hold an active role in language learning, and we provide support to enable them to be effective in this role.

Language Offerings, Expectations and Organization

Language is transdisciplinary and central to all learning. Through the exploration of language, students become communicators in our changing, multilingual world. EHM respects and honors how language reflects individual and cultural beliefs, attitudes and perspectives.

EHM therefore facilitates the learning of at least two languages through its inclusion of both English and Mandarin in the established curriculum and PoI.

Teaching of both languages is tailored to the learning needs of the students; students learn about and through EHM's curricular languages, their Mother Tongues and their additional languages.

In addition, the school facilitates after-school classes for additional languages. In deciding which languages to offer after school, the school works with families to determine levels of interest. As of March 2016, the school is offering Bahasa Malay (a host country language) and French.

Please see the separate section on Mother Tongue for further information about the teaching of additional languages.

Languages of Communication and Instruction

At EHM, English is the primary language of communication within the community. This includes all formal school communications, and the majority of interactions between teachers, students and parents.

English is the language of instruction for all classes with the exception of Mandarin classes. In Mandarin classes, teachers and students use a combination of English and Mandarin. Use of Mandarin, the target language, increases and becomes more complex as students progress in their proficiency.

All teachers directly teach language within all subject areas. In addition, students have English and Mandarin Language Arts classes to put a specific focus on writing, reading, speaking listening and media literacy in those languages.

At EHM, Mandarin is taught to all students, either as an Additional Language or as a Mother Tongue, according to the need of each student. Students in Nursery 1 and 2 learn Mandarin within the main classroom, in a bilingual model, from co-teachers fluent in both English and Mandarin. Students in Kindergarten and above receive timetabled lessons in Mandarin.

Language and the Program of Inquiry

“Almost all education is language education.”

Postman, N. (2011) *Conscientious Objections: Stirring Up Trouble About Language, Technology and Education*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

EtonHouse Malaysia recognises the importance of teaching language; all teachers at EHM are language teachers. With English being our medium, all classes at EHM are seen as

language courses in addition to their specific subject matter; all teachers are language teachers.

The EHM Programme of Inquiry is developed, maintained and edited throughout each school year to ensure it is well suited for the entire EHM community, including students across the range of language development stages. The PoI, with its six transdisciplinary themes, is worked on collaboratively by all EHM teachers and administrators to develop a balanced learning experience that features language involvement in each unit. In addition, a review of the PoI indicates that, as of March 2016, each year level has at least 2 units in which Language (either English or Mandarin or both) is a key driver of the transdisciplinary inquiry.

Language Expectations

EHM has separate goals for students' eventual achievement within its two curricular languages.

English, as the main language of instruction, is intended to become a fully-developed language for all students. We support the development of full fluency throughout our instructional program, and expect that almost all students will graduate from EHM with functional fluency or better, allowing them to continue their education in English-medium environments. We work towards these expectations with all students, while recognizing that developing fluency takes time, up to seven years, even in a supportive, immersive, instructional setting.

Mandarin is taught as an additional language to 96% of EHM students; 4% study Mandarin as a mother tongue. The school differentiates Mandarin instruction to meet the broad range of linguistic abilities, and recognizes that expectations for achievement are necessarily quite diverse. The parent community was asked in March 2016 about their goals for their children's use of Mandarin in adulthood. They indicated their expectations as follows:

- 50%: Basic user: My child should be able to manage basic activities in Mandarin, such as grocery shopping and asking directions.
- 34%: Intermediate user: My child should be able to manage a variety of tasks in Mandarin, such as reading a simple magazine article and writing an e-mail to a friend.
- 16%: Proficient user: My child should be able to manage complex tasks in Mandarin, such as attending university or holding a job.

The school expectation is for most students to ultimately reach the Intermediate level, though this is likely to require additional study beyond PYP. EHM has a small group of

students with a greater degree of fluency in Mandarin; these students are supported, through differentiated teaching, to reach higher levels of proficiency.

Practices: Planning and Teaching

The more students use language in meaningful situations, the more rapidly they progress. The school therefore creates learning environments where children feel comfortable, accepted and happy, and simultaneously challenged and ready to take risks. In language learning, mistakes and misunderstandings are accepted as essential to growth.

As a PYP school, EHM places high importance on the interrelated skills of language: listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy. In developing UoI, teaching teams collaboratively plan teaching, learning and assessment experiences which strategically develop these skills. These experiences also allow students to demonstrate their language learning concurrently with demonstrating their conceptual learning in terms of the Central Idea for each unit.

EHM students speak a wide variety of Mother Tongues, with 27 in total as of March 2016. Through their Mother Tongues, the students form a unique 'language resource pool' which may be tapped into at any time. Children as well as teachers can therefore support each other's endeavours to learn about and through different languages.

Choice and Planning of Language Courses

Students in Nursery learn in a bilingual environment with teachers fluent in both Mandarin and English. Kindergarten students learn in a transitional environment with flexible grouping according to changing needs; Mandarin lessons are timetabled for Kindergarten.

Beginning in Year 1, students are grouped into 2 instructional levels for Mandarin: Basic and Intermediate/Proficient. (Students at the Intermediate/Proficient level are often Mother Tongue speakers, with a level of fluency commensurate with their age.) Each group is taught separately. Placement of students into the appropriate Mandarin level is based primarily on language proficiency. In cases where the student's proficiency is not clearly within one level or the other, the Mandarin teachers consider the student's Mother Tongue, linguistic background and development, and parents' preferences.

Mandarin courses are connected with the homeroom Program of Inquiry (PoI), in order to provide a transdisciplinary connection between subjects and help develop a deep conceptual understanding. In units where Mandarin is taught in a transdisciplinary manner, the Mandarin teachers form part of the planning team, tasked with developing and reflecting on PoI unit planners. In units where the Mandarin team is unable to make a strong

connection with the Central Idea, the Mandarin team plans stand-alone units following PYP philosophy.

Mandarin planning and instruction also incorporates AERO standards for World Languages.

Students all study English within the established PoI as well as within designated Language Arts lessons. As much as possible, the Language Arts lessons are taught in a transdisciplinary manner following the Central Idea for each UoI.

English planning and instruction also incorporates AERO standards for Language Arts.

For more information, please see the separate sections on support for language learners.

Equity of Access

EtonHouse Malaysia has an ever-growing community of families, teachers and support staff from many different cultural backgrounds, featuring very different Language Profiles. EHM understands the different support necessary while addressing and catering to the individual needs of students and families, including those for whom English is not a Mother Tongue.

EHM has an established system to identify and maintain a language profile for each student, beginning with an initial entry interview. This entails asking parents about Mother Tongues and additional languages, forming an understanding of language proficiency in all languages each student has learned. Understanding a student's ability in their Mother Tongue(s) allows EHM to properly assess students and ensure their success. Following an initial interview, a formal English assessment is completed for students who are not fluent speakers of English.

"In early stages [reading in the Mother Tongue] can profoundly accelerate the development of reading ability in the second language."

Krashen, S. (2004) *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*. Heinemann. Portsmouth.

EtonHouse Malaysia differentiates materials for the needs of our varying levels and languages to provide full inclusion of access to the IB programme. It is our firm stance that students of any Mother Tongue are entitled to the same quality of education. EHM prepares its material and programmes so that all students can access the same content at a degree best suited to their language needs. Teachers individually tailor tasks specific to focus areas for different students. Completing meaningful assessments and reflections are two key elements of the IB and PYP. Teaching teams therefore plan assessment and reflection tasks to ensure that all students can access the task and demonstrate their knowledge. If a student's language capability still hinders a child from accessing the planned task, teachers adapt accordingly to allow the student to convey their understanding through a suitable

medium. Students may be encouraged to draw what they have learned, select words from a bank, or dictate their thoughts to a peer or teacher.

Educational needs are collaboratively assessed and prepared for by teachers and administration at each year level. This is prepared in conjunction with the Units of Inquiry, the Programme of Inquiry, and the Language Profiles available for each student.

“...Although the surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency, etc.) of different languages are clearly separate, there is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency that is common across languages. This common underlying proficiency makes possible the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy-related proficiency from one language to another.”

Cummins, J. (2005) Teaching for Cross-Language Transfer in Dual Language Education: Possibilities and Pitfalls.

Additionally, further support is offered to students who do not have English as a Mother Tongue or spoken language in their Language Profile. Their needs are assessed by the English as an Additional Language Specialist, who then tailors a support schedule and differentiated work in collaboration with the relevant Year Level team. This may include scaffolding or altering the material to achieve the same conceptual understanding. Students are supported, according to their individual needs, through supplemental Language Arts lessons, fundamental English support, and in-class support. Since learners enter EHM at different stages, some students may have BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills), yet remain unaware of conventions or letter formation. Students receive support in their required areas to ensure that they are able to build upon their individual foundation of English. In-class support is the most common form of support for EAL learners to receive. This includes small-group or personal support while working in the class. EAL students are developing the same concepts and working on similar materials as fluent speakers.

Identifying Language Needs: School and Parent Roles

Identifying the language needs of each student is essential in helping parents and teachers enable their learners to succeed. EtonHouse Malaysia assesses the language needs of all students when they first join our school, and also as part of a continual, working program.

During admission interviews, EHM’s Head of School assesses each child’s individual needs in language; the EAL teacher and/or Mandarin teachers are consulted if needed. Identifying language needs relies heavily on reading, writing, speaking, listening, media literacy, and non-verbal communication. EHM gathers information from each child’s parents about Mother Tongue(s), languages spoken at home, and experience in English immersion

environments. Individual findings are recorded and compiled as part of each student's Language Profile.

Also during the admissions process, EHM's Head of School or designee shares information with parents about the school's language program, and what parents may expect. This includes information about English, Mandarin and Mother Tongues, and what level of proficiency students might reach in each, over the short, medium and long terms.

As part of a continual process, students' English and Mandarin language proficiency and usage are assessed formally and informally. For English, termly reading assessments are completed using PM resources, beginning in Year 1. These assessments offer a depiction of reading proficiency, speaking and listening skills, writing proficiency, and nonverbal or contextual clues.

Promoting Consistency of Practice

EHM's curricular languages are English and Mandarin. English is the primary language of instruction, and the more-developed language for almost all EHM students. Mandarin is an additional language for 96% of students, as of April 2016, with most students working to develop skills at the Basic User level. English is an additional language for 63% of EHM students, and most students are Proficient Users (relative to their age), or close to it.

Due to the different needs and goals for these two languages, there are necessarily some differences in teaching practices. Nonetheless, the school promotes consistency of practice through dedicated common planning time, common expectations for an inquiry-based approach, common expectations for curricular documentation, and common Professional Development around language teaching and all professional areas.

In common planning time, all teachers for a specific year level meet each week to plan the Unit of Inquiry; this includes Mandarin and classroom teachers as well as other single-subject teachers. In this planning time, teachers consider all aspects of the Unit of Inquiry, from the Central Idea through instructional and assessment methods. In 2015-16, the focus has been primarily on developing solid Units of Inquiry, and ensuring a transdisciplinary approach for all involved subjects. In 2016-17 and following, with the basics of the Units already in place, teams will be able to work more on in-depth planning of day-to-day instruction within each Unit; most daily planning thus far has been done individually rather than in teams. This change is expected to increase consistency of practice for both languages.

In August 2016, EHM will be providing an in-house workshop for all teachers and teaching assistants, organized through the IB, on The Role of Language. This workshop will further develop all teachers' practices related to teaching language within the PYP, and will support

the increased use of common methods for planning, instruction and assessment related to language, across all subject areas.

Parental and Community Support

Parents and the community support language within the EHM community by:

- Reading to their children in their Mother Tongue; evidence shows that learners with strong Mother Tongue literacy will be able to develop additional languages more easily
- Encouraging at-home activities, such as Reading Eggs, sight word practice and personal reading or writing
- Donating Mother Tongue books and resources to build a comprehensive, supportive library
- Offering advice and feedback on extracurricular resources (tutors, language teachers or clubs, online platforms, bookstores, etc.) to help EHM support language development for all interested groups.

Library and Media Resources

EtonHouse Malaysia has established its media and library resources to effectively integrate with the EHM community while facilitating planning, teaching and learning in school and at home. EHM offers a library of books, some of which link to the Units of Inquiry, while others allow for more open-ended exploration. All year levels at EHM periodically visit the library to browse, access and borrow literature to develop language through personal or academic purposes. EHM recognizes that the library is in need of further development, to ensure a wide range of resources in terms of subject matter, reading level, and languages. The Leadership Team works with teachers to plan for needed additions over time; this is a long-term project.

EHM offers Reading Eggs, Reading Eggspress and Mathletics as digital resources. EHM supports students' literacy through these programs, which are tailored to fit the specific needs of each student. Teachers suggest activities and can assign specific books to support the Unit of Inquiry, or differentiated to students' needs and interests. Students are also encouraged to use these programs for free reading, and to use the language games to challenge themselves and support their personal language development.

Teachers also use digital resources to support instruction, beyond the specific programs mentioned above. Classes have access to laptops, which allows teachers to incorporate a variety of online materials into instruction, tailored to the specific needs of the student, language and/or UoI. EtonHouse Malaysia's E-Learning Facilitator (ELF), a new position in 2015-16, works to ensure effective and thorough integration of all digital resources. A

variety of platforms are used while supporting students' growth in fundamental computer usage. Over time, it is expected that the ELF position will gradually build EHM's use of digital resources for planning and learning.

Preference for Language Form

EHM does not have a preference for any specific form of English or Mandarin (eg British or American English). Students and teachers are welcome to use any standard, recognized form. Teachers and students should maintain internal consistency within each formal document, speech or presentation.

Referencing Protocols

As a PYP school, EHM students do not generally use official referencing protocols, such as MLA or APA. As students learn to give credit to sources, they are taught and expected to do so in a simple way, such as by providing the author's name, title of book, and/or website address. By the end of Year 6, students are expected to do this independently. Should EHM expand into Year 7 and beyond, more formal referencing will be taught.

EHM teachers and employees may use any standard referencing protocol, maintaining internal consistency within each formal document, speech or presentation.

Practices: Monitoring and Improving

Monitoring Efficacy

To support students with specific language-learning needs, EHM provides the following:

- differentiation within every classroom, planned by the teaching team
- a bilingual model in Nursery and Kindergarten, with full time Mandarin and English co-teachers who tailor instruction according to students' needs
- EAL support through a push-in model, with limited pull-out for specific needs
- flexibly-grouped Mandarin classes in Kindergarten, with separate teachers for each group
- leveled Mandarin classes beginning in Year 1, with separate teachers for the different levels
- individual accommodations and adaptations for students with other identified needs, such as dyslexia or language delay.

In order to monitor the efficacy of these supports, EHM looks at both individuals and groups of students.

The EAL, classroom and Mandarin teachers (with single-subject teachers as needed) monitor the language development of individual students, and make adjustments to instruction to

improve their learning. These teachers can also expand the conversation by submitting a “Request for Observation”, which involves the Leadership Team in observing a specific child and collaboratively determining the best way to provide support; supports might be simple or more complex depending on the needs of the child.

The Leadership Team monitors the efficacy of supports for groups of students, by looking at the overall progress of each class. For language, this includes monitoring growth in reading levels, student placement within the Mandarin levelled classes, student progression through and out of EAL support, and student achievement as documented through Report Cards. The Leadership Team takes appropriate action to support identified areas of challenge, such as providing Professional Development in specific areas, mentoring individual teachers, and/or supporting teaching teams in planning instruction to target specific language areas.

Professional Development

As part of its commitment to students’ language development, EHM recognizes that all teachers, teaching assistants and administrators, in particular, need on-going professional development (PD) related to the teaching and learning of language. EHM provides for this continued learning using a multifaceted approach. All teachers are familiarized with the EHM Language Policy in planned PD sessions, taking place during induction and/or during faculty learning time, as part of the Wednesday PD series. Beyond familiarization with the Language Policy, such sessions can also be planned to share and develop new learnings, for application in EHM contexts. The EAL specialist works with all teachers to support further growth in their understanding of language development and research-supported teaching practices. Scholarly resources on language learning may be recommended by the Leadership Team, EAL teacher or EHM colleagues, and some print resources are available for lending by the Leadership Team. There are a variety of external PD opportunities related to language development; faculty members may be selected to attend these if they match the identified needs of the school. Faculty who attend such events are generally expected to work with the Leadership Team to consolidate their learning and plan appropriate ways to integrate new ideas into EHM practice.

Other school faculty, including but not limited to the Parent Liaison, need to be familiar with the Language Policy, how EHM implements it, and typical questions that students and families may have about the teaching and learning of languages. To target these specific needs, the Leadership Team works directly with relevant staff.

Mother Tongue

Forty-one percent of EHM students have either English or Mandarin as one of their Mother Tongues (all Mother Tongue data as of March 2016); for these students, Mother Tongue learning is supported through the established EHM curriculum and PoI.

In addition to English and Mandarin, EHM students speak a broad spectrum of Mother Tongues; there are 27 Mother Tongues in total. Only 2 Mother Tongues are spoken by more than 10% of the student population: English (37%) and Japanese (18%). Seventeen of the Mother Tongues are spoken by only 1, 2 or 3 students each. Due to the wide spread of Mother Tongues, the small populations for almost all Mother Tongues, and the diversity of ages, fluency and parental expectations, it is not possible for EHM to provide explicit Mother Tongue instruction for all students. Therefore, for students with Mother Tongues other than English and Mandarin, EHM provides philosophical and logistical support. Philosophical support comes through the recognition that Mother Tongue development is important, and through communicating this idea with all families.

At the time of admission, Mother Tongue development is discussed with all families, and EHM makes clear that it is ready and willing to provide logistical support. In addition, the Parent Handbook, shared with all families, contains information about Mother Tongue support and the EHM language program.

EHM offers logistical support for Mother Tongue development by:

- helping families find appropriate Mother Tongue teachers
 - through use of its contacts in the educational community
 - by suggesting venues in which families can place an ad
 - by interviewing prospective teachers found by families, at the family's request
 - by maintaining a file of local resources for language learning, such as appropriate teachers, relevant institutions, etc
- orienting teachers to the IB philosophy
- providing classroom space for after-school classes
- providing technological equipment for after-school classes
- supporting the occasional need for students to miss school at EHM in order to participate in special Mother Tongue experiences, such as examinations, cultural experiences, visiting speakers, etc.

The cost of Mother Tongue classes is borne by the parents.

EHM also values the inclusion of Mother Tongue in the regular classroom. Teachers are encouraged to allow students to use their Mother Tongues to support their learning. This includes a variety of practices, including but not limited to

- supporting quick translations via language peers or dictionaries
- discussing language interference (similarities and differences) between the Mother Tongue and the language of instruction
- actively promoting the use of the Mother Tongue, at home and in school, to support and enhance learning
- including Mother Tongue vocabulary on class Word Walls
- encouraging parents and students to discuss or read in the Mother Tongue about class topics, to facilitate transfer of knowledge to the target language
- partnering students with their language peers, to allow for discussion and planning in both the Mother Tongue and the language of instruction; partnering should be flexible and temporary, based on the needs of the specific children and the specific learning situation; students should not automatically nor permanently be partnered
- when a student has difficulty expressing himself or herself in the language of instruction, asking if they know the word in their Mother Tongue, and working from there on a translation
- using Mother Tongue materials to access content and practice skills.

Such practices support effective long-term transfer of conceptual understanding from one language to another, while simultaneously supporting language development.

EHM is also working to develop additional Mother Tongue resources for its library. The main strategy for this is through donations by families, and is therefore a long-term project.

Host Country and Community Needs

Promoting the Host Country Languages

Malaysia, as a multicultural society with a complex linguistic history, utilizes multiple languages in official and personal contexts. EHM includes 2 of the most common languages, English and Mandarin, within its teaching and learning program for all students. These 2 languages are promoted through the EHM curriculum, through representation in the school library, and through daily interactions between students, teachers, families and members of staff.

Bahasa Malaysia is also a common language within Malaysia. EHM promotes this language by offering optional after-school lessons for both Mother Tongue and additional language students, and by encouraging students and community members to communicate in Bahasa

Malaysia as needed, such as for morning greetings with security and maintenance personnel.

EHM also uses tri-lingual signage within the school. The Mandarin teachers have lead responsibility for developing and maintaining the signage; they work with colleagues to ensure English and Bahasa Malaysia phrasing is accurate.

Community Needs

Malaysia offers a wide variety of school options, including a wide range of languages of instruction. Families may choose from any of the common Malaysian languages, and/or from external Mother Tongues; they may seek a school which focuses on 1 language, or on more than 1. The EHM school community has indicated, by investigating and ultimately choosing EHM, that it places priority on EHM's curricular languages.

The EHM community also has a variety of other language needs, most typically in developing Mother Tongue(s) other than English or Mandarin. Please see the section on Mother Tongue for more information on this area.

Legal Requirements

EHM is legally registered and recognized by Malaysia's Ministry of Education, Private Education Division, as an International School. Under this designation, EHM is free to choose which language(s) to offer within the curriculum. There are no additional legal requirements related to language.

Policy Development

This policy was developed between January and May, 2016. The initial work was done by a team representative of

- Teachers: Early Years and Primary
- Language Specialists: Mandarin, English and Language Acquisition
- Parents
- School Leadership.

This team's draft policy was shared simultaneously with

- The full parent community
- All EHM teachers
- The full EHM Senior Leadership Team
- EHM's PYP Consultant.

All parties were invited to share their feedback. The development team then considered that feedback and adjusted the policy as needed. The adjusted policy was then approved for use by the EHM Senior Management Team.

This policy will undergo review beginning in Fall 2018, unless a sudden change in student demographics requires an earlier review.