



BELVEDERE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

LANGUAGE POLICY

2024-2025

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Hili, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates

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1. School Background

English and Arabic are two languages that the school promotes as languages of learning, with the majority of communication and instruction in English. These languages provide the cornerstone of our curriculum and support the construction of student knowledge and understanding.

Technology and various media are employed extensively in the teaching and learning of languages and provide opportunities for broader world perspectives and creativity.

At Belvedere International School, we are committed to a holistic approach to education, where every aspect of the child is developed. We create student centred learning opportunities that address the physical, social and emotional needs of each child regardless of ability level and learning mode. We empower students to embrace diversity; uniqueness and individual talent in a safe, respectful and supportive environment, thus ensuring our school mission is brought to life.

2. Mission Statement

“Celebrating Success”

To establish Al Ain’s premier British International School founded on 140 years of traditional academic excellence and committed to global relevance and contemporary UAE society.

To nurture confident, well-rounded, tolerant and forward-thinking individuals with ambitions to fulfill their potential in an innovative, open, creative and inclusive society. We will ensure that our students develop both the skills and the competencies aligned with the culture and strategic goals of the UAE.

To deliver successful educational achievements through committed and skilled teachers successfully delivering English National Curriculum, leading to our students meeting or exceeding individual expectations

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To foster a caring environment and a family atmosphere leading to personal student happiness and good relationships between all members of the school community, including parents, as part of UAE society.

3. Philosophy

Language learning is, perhaps, the base to all learning. Communication is at the core of all human interaction and is an instrument for facilitating international-mindedness and purposeful expression in the sharing of common experiences and diversity. We encourage an approach to language teaching and learning that provides opportunities for students to better appreciate the multicultural world in which they live.

We recognise that language is essential to learning and the process of inquiry. All teachers, therefore, are in practice language teachers with responsibilities for facilitating effective communication. Through our academic programme, we strive to empower an appreciation of the aesthetic and functional uses of language.

For an internationally minded society, it is crucial for students to develop understanding of their heritage and culture so that they may learn to appreciate those of others. The relationship between mother-tongue development and acquisition of other languages is acknowledged.

Therefore, a strong, effective and challenging language programme evolves contextually and is a means through which multi-disciplinary learning takes place. As communication in our world continues to change, we are committed to adapting language instruction to reflect the evolution of language in our modern world. We also believe that language is powerful and can have profound effects on others, both positively and negatively. We aim to develop in our students an awareness of their own responsibility towards language.

4. Language Learning at Belvedere International School

Instruction at Belvedere International School is primarily English based. Arabic is taught throughout the school at differentiated levels, which allows for more extensive language development in native and near native speakers of Arabic. A designated Arabic as an Additional Language (AAL) programme caters for the needs of expatriate students. All students are introduced to both languages from the Nursery upwards.



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Belvedere International School curriculum provides authentic contexts for students to develop and use language. Wherever possible, language is taught through the relevant content of the curriculum. It is believed that purposeful inquiry is the way that students learn best, regardless of whether language is taught within the context of the cross curricular themes or in a stand-alone manner. In our community of internationally minded, multilingual learners and teachers, it is imperative that we consider language orally, visually and in written forms whilst providing ample opportunities for student expression.

The school's approach to teaching and developing mastery of essential language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) incorporates the following practices:

Written Language - Reading- Classroom Reading

- Phonics is integrated from Pre-Prep. Struggling readers in Years 3-6 are supported through differentiated instruction.
- Reading takes place in all subject areas and genres (e.g. poetry, novels, plays, short stories, newspapers/magazines and information texts) as students learn to read with precision and a high level of accuracy and comprehension.
- Diverse resources support reading in order to cater for the needs of all learners (e.g. Oxford Reading Tree and related schemes, Arabic reading schemes, Comprehension texts and activities, and class sets of fiction and non-fiction texts).
- Guided reading, levelled group reading, reciprocal reading, shared reading, individual child/teacher reading and mixed ability reading groups contribute to the learning of reading within the school.

Home Reading

- Pupils are encouraged to progressively develop as readers by reading high-interest levelled readers (Oxford Reading Tree and related schemes) and Arabic levelled reading books by various publishers. We also encourage children to develop a passion for reading at home.

Reading Strategies and Development

- Teachers provide resources for reading and teach reading strategies including vocabulary building techniques, word walls, comprehension practice and skills (scanning, predicting, inferring, skimming) and text analysis.
- Library classes provide interest-based reading and the library houses mother-tongue resources and world literature. The school library is also accessible during break times and after school.



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- Pupils engage with the local community through planned activities
- Teachers are invited to participate in story reading within the school (on Youtube)
- Extra Curricular Activities support the development of reading through literary/book clubs

Writing

At Belvedere International School we expect, at some point during our student's' learning journey that they will develop the ability to clearly and effectively communicate ideas, thoughts, emotions, and aspirations in written form across genres using correct grammar and spelling.

Text Types

- Teachers purposefully model and teach a variety of forms of writing across the curriculum.
- Students use written language daily through multi-modal forms of writing (e.g. conventional paper-based writing to E-language). The school's BYOD and Chromebook programme enhances the development of our E-learners as digital natives, thus reflecting the school's overall mission of preparing students as leaders in an ever-changing global society.
- Students publish their writing regularly.
- Creative writing and personal expression are encouraged across the curriculum as a response to stimuli (visual or otherwise).

Grammar

The school recognises the ongoing debates about the teaching of grammar. At Belvedere International School grammar is taught holistically using a variety of resources. Grammar is also taught explicitly on a weekly basis.

Spelling

A school-wide approach to spelling using diversified spelling strategies and schemes is used to ensure that all students have knowledge of high frequency words.



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Handwriting

Pupils develop the skills and mechanics of correct handwriting (pencil grip, letter formation, fluency, speed and style) in order to become effective communicators. Arabic handwriting is taught using two styles: one more appropriate to younger learners and one for upper primary; however, calligraphy as a skill is further developed within the Activities programme.

Oral Language

Listening and Speaking

At Belvedere International School, we encourage students to express themselves confidently, listen respectfully, consider intelligently and respond appropriately. We value the significance of effective and diverse communication. Our aim is to confidently support oral language in English and Arabic/mother-tongues. We strive to provide our students with language tools, strategies and experiences to develop those skills that enable them to express information, feelings, thoughts and ideas in ways that show themselves to be principled and caring listeners.

- Students participate and practise their oral and listening skills individually, in pairs, in groups and as a whole class.
- Teachers ask challenging questions and model oral language characterised by clarity and fluency.
- Students prepare presentations, deliver them and listen and interact with others as they present for a variety of purposes (entertainment, information, persuasion and direction).

Visual Language

Viewing and Presenting within an internationally-minded context it is essential that our students come to appreciate the influences and nuances of media. For this purpose, we aim to create opportunities for our students to view and critically analyse media appropriate to their age and experiences.

- Students are presented with various media carrying a range of messages from persuasion, through aesthetic appreciation, to enticement of action etc. By viewing media from multiple perspectives, pupils are encouraged to re-evaluate their own value systems and those of others.



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- Students are consistently asked to critically appraise presented media and engage in a process of analysis of underlying messages.

5. Additional Language Support

The teaching of Arabic Language in Belvedere International School follows the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education in the UAE. Arabic Language is an obligatory subject for all students regardless of nationality.

Students are admitted to the school if they are appropriately competent in either Arabic or English. Whilst we understand that our curriculum is, for the most part, delivered in English, we also philosophically embrace the human capability to develop a language in such a way that it does become a language of life and learning. Therefore, language support, be that in the form of scaffolding or extension, is something that we aim to provide as much as possible.

Belvedere International School's aim to develop bilingualism in students for whom Arabic is either a native language or a heritage language is viewed realistically when it comes to the timeframe for achievement. We realise that a language learning process is a long-term project and, therefore, accept that some students will achieve bilingualism at different stages in their language learning journeys and will attain it at varying levels of competency.

As such, according to the Ministry of Education regulations, students are defined by reference to their passport as being native or a non-native Arabic speaker.

A student who is a native Arabic speaker will take Arabic A

A student who is a non-native Arabic speaker will take Arabic B

English is not currently streamed at Belvedere International School and instruction is differentiated within the classroom only. Essential to our language support is also a belief in balance and discipline; our students are expected to apply themselves in the area of language acquisition and seek their own opportunities to take risks and use language creatively. In order to help them do this, we differentiate and tailor instruction wherever possible.

6. Mother tongue development

Belvedere International School has as a priority the development and maintenance of the mother- tongue for all learners, wherever possible. At Belvedere International School, we



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support the development of mother- tongue languages, as we believe that competence in one's own language provides a platform upon which all learning can be constructed. All members of our school community are responsible for supporting such development of mother tongues in order to ensure that the learning process encompasses a variety of perspectives.

By encouraging the active use of mother tongues at home, school and in the community, children are better able to appreciate their own cultural origins and take action as internationally minded, global citizens.

We provide opportunities to highlight and support mother tongue languages through displays, assemblies, visitors from the community and parents in the classroom. We also aim to build our library resources to celebrate the multiplicity of languages, literature and cultures represented within the school.

7. Value for Host Country

Belvedere International School values its host country, the United Arab Emirates; its language, its cultural identity and its legacy. The school is committed to promoting bilingualism in UAE nationals and Arab students, whilst developing the language skills of AAL learners in such a way that allows them to deepen their respect for the community in which they are living. By offering Arabic, be that in the form of native/near-native language programmes or as an AAL, we embrace the culture of inclusion and diversity that the UAE proudly upholds.

An important part of our vision is the seeking of opportunities to make links with the local community and its resources (e.g. classroom guests and visits, field trips, businesses and organisations, schools and universities and government agencies). Belvedere International School values the local community through its efforts toward bilingualism in school brochures, daily communications, reporting, the promotion of local celebrations, school assemblies and parent workshops covering various aspects of language teaching.

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8. Language Assessment

Language development is an ongoing process and oral (listening and speaking), written (reading and writing) and visual (viewing and presenting) strands are evaluated using both formative and summative assessments and a range of assessment methods and tools (Ref. Assessment policy).

9. Professional Development

In order to ensure the language policy becomes a working document, the school recognises that administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff require professional development in language learning and teaching. Teachers and other members of our school community are encouraged to take a pro-active role in their own professional development and to develop their own professional learning networks. The school also employs a comprehensive policy for staff training and development that is facilitated through in-school training, visits to other schools, local workshops and peer-to-peer sharing of best practice.

10. Language Policy Reflection and Review

It is the responsibility of all teachers to be involved in the reflection and review of the school's language policy and to ensure that this policy is put into practice. The school's language policy will be reviewed on an annual basis taking into account new ideas and research gathered from our community of learners (teachers, students, parents and others). Upon review, the policy will be linked to the school's Assessment, Admissions and SEN policies.

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