



satyam, shivam, sundaram

MODERN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS KOLKATA

LANGUAGE POLICY

Philosophy:

Modern High School for Girls (MHS) is a school, which blends tradition and modernity. It combines Indian and other cultures in a balanced mix. Its well-integrated student population comprises children from different communities and socio-economic backgrounds. MHS respects the uniqueness of every individual and tries to provide a stress-free yet stimulating learning environment.

Mission:

Commitment to excellence

To maintain its stamp of excellence while progressing continuously as an institution. To provide a stress-free yet stimulating environment which offers everyone in the school community opportunities to develop her full potential as a unique individual and to learn to be a team player.

Vision:

Truth, compassion and beauty

To empower students to initiate or participate in activities local and global, which promote peace and happiness – locally and globally - in the spirit of *satyam, shivam, sundaram*.

The Philosophy of language learning at MHS for Girls

Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom (Ritchhart)

Language at Modern High School for Girls is the most significant connecting element across the school curriculum within and outside its trans-disciplinary programme of inquiry, permeating as it does through the entire range of enquiry and subject areas, from the Primary school itself. The school is a Primary to Class XII multi-lingual school. The Modern Academy for Continuing Education (MACE), is a part of the Education trust of which Modern High School for Girls is a part. This centre is designed for post High School learning. Here too language learning is encouraged and language courses in French and Marwari (the language spoken by a vast number of our students).

At MHS for Girls, the three strands of communication---oral, written and visual—are not taught in isolation but promoted through integrated language development. As students' progress, teachers encourage and motivate them to see language as a means of self-expression. Language is used as a means of exploration of oneself and others, as context driven and involving at all levels of discourse a personal stance, from simple communication to the core of academic language. MHS for Girls fosters in students the ability to think and express themselves with clarity and confidence, in a minimum of 2 languages from Upper KG upwards. In the Middle and Secondary sections of the school, students may choose to study a third language. Through their pedagogical responsibility in facilitating language acquisition and promoting communication skills, every teacher within the school is regarded as a language teacher.

English is the medium of instruction and taught as the target language. It serves as the school's official language for operations, communication and management. However, the school being multi-lingual, members function in their daily activities in more than one language, thereby encouraging inter-cultural awareness, different perspectives and an understanding as well as appreciation of our diverse world. All school-wide written communication with stake-holders is in English though the admin department and the support staff also use the local State language (Bengali) and the National language (Hindi) in their daily interactions with members of the school community.

The language policy validates the equal status of 6 (English, Bengali, Hindi, German, Sanskrit and the newly introduced Chinese) languages offered to every student, however, apart from English, the rest are taken as a second or third language. The concept at heart is to offer as much linguistic diversity as is possible. For this, the school invests in qualified, professional language teachers for the language of instruction, host language

as well as other languages. All teachers recognize the transfer of cognitive skills from the mother tongue to English and vice versa. The policy also identifies the significance of teachers differentiating instruction for students at different levels of language acquisition. Emphasis on grammatical structures, verbal skills and vocabulary as well as the exposure to varied challenging opportunities to express themselves, help students in becoming effective multi-lingual communicators from the Primary stage itself.

The language policy outlines the shared responsibility of all teachers, students and parents in cultivating language. To this purpose, the school library maintains a wide and excellent collection of tri-lingual books and students are encouraged to borrow books in all three languages (English/Bengali/Hindi) on a regular basis. The German room contains a good selection of books in German.

Teachers and students are consulted and books are added to the library on a regular basis. The school works with Scholastic inc, and book exhibitions are held to promote reading among the students. In addition, the school works with the Oxford Book Company and Story- both are well known publishers and book distributors in Kolkata. The school has access to a wide range of databases through its use of the British Council Libraries' e-resources portal. The e-resources section provides the students and staff access to e-books, journals and several databases. The school holds a Corporate membership with the British Council library and the American Centre library. Books that may be needed for research can be availed of through these libraries.

In addition, students are encouraged to read for information and for pleasure outside the classroom. Beyond their daily linguistic interactions, students are offered a multitude of opportunities to gain exposure to different languages and cultures through real-life experiences. They engage in a host of activities to exhibit meaningful forms of expressing themselves through oral presentations, assemblies, seminars, art, music festivals, debates, drama, elocution, speeches, poetry reading as well as songs. Cultural clubs and inter-school events provide the mainstay of afternoon activities daily. The Hindi and Bengali students celebrate language learning in a variety of ways- Hindi Diwas, Premchand Jayanti, Swami Vivekanada's birthday, Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations among many others. Also, students at MHS for Girls participate in the Kolkata Literary Fest, Sri Aurobindo Jayanti essay writing competition in Bengali. The German students participate in the Treffpunkt and PASCH Language camps. In short, the students at MHS for Girls are involved in a myriad of activities in the languages offered at the school. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, construct meaning and develop theories as they investigate the charms of varied languages.

Since language learning begins at the very elementary stage in school, every effort is made to allow for enjoyment of learning a language. Students are read to, read with and made to read aloud for their own as well as for others' enjoyment. A variety of strategies is used to inculcate love for learning the language as well as comprehending what is being read and written. Creativity at all levels is encouraged and appreciated and care is taken to ensure that creative writing, presentations, evidence for debates and discussions is duly acknowledged by staff and students. Creativity of self and respecting the creativity of others is a principle that is upheld at the school.

Students admitted to the school at all levels, are tested for a general understanding of English. The Admissions policy states that for a transfer candidate, MHS for Girls makes special provisions to accommodate the second and third languages choices, if these are different from languages listed in the school's available language options. This is done to encourage continued language competency and promote multilingualism. Wherever possible, the school attempts to ensure that the students' chosen second language is available.

All aspects of the language policy underscore the requirement of ongoing formal and informal assessments to evaluate the student's progress and proficiency. The details of the assessments in the languages are referred to in the Assessments Policy. Based on their performance in the assessments, students are given specific and constructive linguistic feedback and further guidance to enhance their skills.

Mother Tongue Programme at MHS:

The school recognizes that mother tongue plays an integral role in a person's identity and emotional stability thereby affirming its value and importance in the school curriculum. This belief encourages the attributes in the IB Learner Profile of respect as well as promoting awareness of one's cultural heritage. Bengali and Hindi account for the mother tongue of almost 95% of the student population as a second language option from the Primary stage.

Sanskrit is offered as a third language option along with German and Chinese, thereby reinforcing respect for other cultures as well as international-mindedness. The parent community is also encouraged to cultivate and maintain the child's mother tongue at home and to view English as an additive, but not a subtractive language.

The philosophy of teaching a second and third language at MHS which may or may not be the mother tongue is to provide a platform for lifelong language acquisition. It allows students to become members of a global culture, it enables opportunities for inter-

disciplinary connections while also preparing the girls for College and University admissions.

Language Pathways at Modern High School for Girls

The Language pathways at MHS for Girls demonstrate that students begin learning a second language at a very young age. A typical student at the school speaks in at least three languages- English, Hindi the official language and the mother tongue which may be Bengali or any other Indian language. The school encourages the students to learn not only Indian languages, but in recent years has incorporated the study of German followed by Chinese.

Grade Level	1st Language	2nd Language	3rd Language
Classes XI and XII IBDP	Group 1 English A Literature HL/SL Bengali A Literature HL/SL	Group 2 Hindi B HL/SL German B SL German ab initio SL	
Classes XI and XII (ISC)	English	Hindi OR Bengali	Elective English
Classes IX and X (ISCE)	English	Hindi OR Bengali	3 rd Elective German
Classes V to VIII	English	Hindi OR Bengali	3 rd Language Hindi Bengali Sanskrit German Chinese
Upper KG to Class IV	English	Hindi OR Bengali	-
Nursery and Lower KG	English	-	-

The IB Diploma Language Programme at MHS for Girls:

There are many points of convergence between the school's language policy and that of the IB philosophy of language learning. The school promotes the learning of English and at least one more language at all levels of the school. From Middle School onwards, several students study three languages- English, a second language which is Hindi or Bengali and a third language which could be German. For students who opt for the National Curriculum, study two languages, and some may choose a third language and

literature option, commonly referred to as Elective English. It is an in-depth study of a range of genres of literature- drama, novel, short stories, poetry and essays.

The Language options available for the IB Diploma programme are:

Group 1 : Studies in Language and Literature or Language A. The Group 1 languages are meant for students who plan further academic study in the subject. The courses focus on developing the social, aesthetic and cultural literacy in the student while also enabling them to hone their communication skills through a choice of texts in a range of genres. The course also aims to develop an understanding of techniques involved in literary criticism and promote independent literary judgments by the students.

Languages offered are English A and Bengali A. These subjects can be studied at the Higher or Standard level. In time, English A Language and Literature will also be included in the curriculum.

Students who are proficient in their mother-tongue Bengali, Language A Bengali literature, will be encouraged, so that student may opt for a Bi-lingual Diploma if required. This will be ascertained only after the student's proficiency in both languages and a high level of achievement is assessed.

Group 2: Language Acquisition or Language B

For this subject group, there are three levels of language acquisition:

Beginners : Ab initio SL

This is a course for students who wish to learn a new language. The students who take up this course of study have not studied the language formally and have little or no knowledge in this subject.

Presently the school offers only German ab initio SL .

Prerequisites for the study of this course: There is no prior learning in this language

Language B Higher /Standard Level:

This level is for students who have studied the language previously. Through Language B the students will explore the culture connected with the target language. The focus of this course is to emphasize language acquisition and foster inter cultural understanding. The Language B course approaches language learning through meaning. Through a study of the core themes related to culture and two literary works at the Higher level,

students develop the receptive, productive and interactive skills associated with language learning.

Language B courses include Hindi B and German B both of which can be studied at HL or SL.

Prerequisites: Prior language learning

English B: MHS for Girls will keep the programme open to include English B in the curriculum. This course will specifically be for non-native speakers of English and those who have had limited exposure to spoken and written culture as well as Anglophone culture. English B will be offered both at the Higher and Standard Level.

Support for the mother tongue language at MHS for Girls

MHS for girls reinforces its commitment to supporting language learning through its commitment to promoting the mother tongue language of the student. If the language is not one of the 6 languages taught at the school, then the school will attempt to facilitate language through one of the following options”

- a. **The school supported self-taught option:** A student, who selects this option will receive tutoring in the subject from a teacher, who may or may not be a member of the staff. The costs for the tutoring will be borne by the student’s family. The tutor instructs the student text handling so the she may understand the nuances of the language and the literary devices. The school will support such a student by providing learning support for the completion of the internal assessments and how to handle the external assessments.
- b. **Pamoja Education:** A further option to support students in the study of the mother tongue language is through enrolment in the online courses provided by Pamoja education. In such cases, the parents of the students will be requested to pay for the online course but The school will support such a student by providing learning support for the completion of the internal assessments and how to handle the external assessments

The school supported self-taught language will be offered **at the Standard Level only**, which is in compliance with the IBO guidelines.

The language policy and the stakeholders of Modern High School for Girls

The language policy of the school is made available to the community in a range of ways. Students are encouraged to participate in a range of language related activities both in the classroom and outside the classroom. The school regulations requires students to study at least two languages.

The language policy will be available on the school's website, once the school is authorized to offer the IB Diploma Programme. A copy of the policy will be made available in the student and staff diaries. The language policy will also be available in the student handbook for the IB Diploma Programme.

The Policy was created by and discussed with Language teachers

Mrs D Mukherjee (Principal)

Mrs A Confectioner (Head of Junior and Primary Section)

Dr R. De (Acting Vice Principal and Former DPC)

Mrs S Saha (DPC and Senior Coordinator)

Ms I. Roy (Middle School Coordinator and English teacher)

Ms M Pramanick (English Teacher)

Ms Swapna Kar (Hindi Teacher)

Ms Asmita Chatterjee (German Teacher)

Ms Bina Ghosh (German and Psychology Teacher)

Ms Saugata Banerjee (Bengali teacher and Middle School Activities Coordinator)

Review of the Policy:

The language policy will be reviewed annually by the school's leadership team which includes the Principal, the Head of Junior and Primary Section and the Acting Vice Principal and the DPC. Any changes to the policy will referred to the Director. Once approval for the changes is received, the policy will be amended. The amended policy will be disseminated among the stake holders.

Acknowledgements:

IB Publication *Guidelines for a language policy* Published April 2008

IB Publication *Learning in a language other than the mother tongue* Published April 2008