

# HOME LANGUAGES IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

HOME AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP



Our Primary School follows the IB Primary Years Programme philosophy. Multilingualism and global understanding are part of the IB's and our mission statement.

## A HOME LANGUAGE ...

- is the language (or languages) you speak at home.
- may be the language your child hears and speaks fluently – also referred to as dominant language.
- is a key part of your child's identity and is important for your child's academic success.
- can be developed when the parents and school work together.

## WHAT DOES BBIS DO TO SUPPORT HOME LANGUAGES?

### Supporting translanguaging

What is translanguaging? Translanguaging involves multilingual students using their languages flexibly to support their learning. In the translanguaging classroom, the languages of our multilingual students are not seen as separate but as

working together. BBIS students are offered the space and time to learn, communicate and make meaning using their language repertoire. This promotes "additive bilingualism" which means that our school language, English, adds to but does not replace the home language or languages.

### Works towards multilingual mindedness

BBIS promotes multilingual mindedness by providing opportunities for our students to draw on all of their languages, to make meaning, and to develop their language identities and competencies. BBIS is working to achieve this goal by:

- Promoting literacy in different languages, seeing all languages as of equal importance to the language(s) of instruction
- Helping our teachers to create environments and learning engagements where our students use their language meaningfully and in a relevant way
- Offering home language options as curriculum subjects
- Promoting multilingualism among our staff by learning and using other languages, thus acting as bilingual and multilingual role models

- Knowing that multilingual people naturally translanguage and draw on their full language power
- Adapting our language offerings to the languages and needs of our students

## WHY ARE HOME LANGUAGES AND MULTILINGUAL MINDEDNESS IMPORTANT?

### Socioemotional wellbeing and social justice

It is our priority that BBIS students feel secure in their multilingual identity and that they see their languages positively inside and outside school. When home languages are valued and supported, our students feel secure in strengthening their multilingual identity.

### Identity

Language is part of our identity. Languages shape our brain and our thinking and make us who we are. A strong home language supports and secures our identity.

### Thinking and cognition

Language is a tool for thinking; it gives structure to our thoughts. Research shows that bi- and multilingual people think more flexibly, use more parts of their brain and are more creative problem solvers than monolingual people.

### Academic success

A strong home language provides an excellent basis for the acquisition of new languages. Literacy skills in the home language facilitate the acquisition of literacy skills in any additional language. Good literacy skills are in turn an important predictor of success at school.

## THE PRIMARY SCHOOL HOME LANGUAGE PROGRAMME

At our Primary School we have a team of home language tutors who help to build up our students' proficiency and cultural identity. The home language lessons are closely linked to the curriculum and units of inquiry, which helps our students to access the curriculum by using their full language repertoire.

Home languages are supported not only in home language lessons, but across the school and in all learning. Students are encouraged to use their languages to research, reflect and make meaning.

## WE NEED YOU! MULTILINGUAL MINDEDNESS BEGINS AT HOME

### What can parents do?

Your child's multilingualism starts with you. Children should spend at least 30% of their time thinking in a language to develop it. These tips will improve your child's home language:

- Read to your child in your home language. Talk about the ideas and words in the book. Ask questions, ask your child to summarise the story. Talk about the favourite part of the book.
- Build up your child's vocabulary – find multiple ways of saying things in the home language. Inquire into what your child is learning in school and talk about it! Give tips in "how to say it" in your home language.
- Play with the language: teach your child rhymes, games, songs, and traditional sayings. It is fun!
- Compare and contrast the languages your child knows. How are they different? How are they the same?
- Use original (not dubbed, if possible) TV programmes, films, educational videos in the home language.
- Talk about your home culture. How is it different to cultures you have lived, or are currently living in?
- Families with two home languages can try the "One Parent, One Language" approach.

## RESOURCES

BBIS provides access to a variety of multilingual resources. Teachers help students to access resources in their languages. Students are encouraged to bring resources from home in their home languages. Our Primary School Library offers a variety of books in many languages that our students can borrow. The library also offers books for parents about bilingualism and multilingualism, translanguageing and multilingual education. We offer parent-teacher coffee mornings about literacy and languages at BBIS!

Home languages thrive when teachers and parents work together! Please contact the Primary Home Language Coordinator if you have resources, books or great ideas to support our students' multilingualism.

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