

Daystar Academy Language Policy

Purpose, Philosophy and Guiding Principles



Daystar's Mission Statement

Daystar Academy develops world citizens by embracing Chinese and Western culture through its integrated education model. Daystar students strive for distinction in Chinese and English studies, creative thinking and character development for the purpose of serving the community at large.

Daystar strives to educate the whole child and in doing so is strategic in embedding not only academic outcomes into the curriculum that address both Chinese and English, but also character education and 21st century learning outcomes as well.

Daystar's Core Values:

- Unity: Celebrating unity in diversity and creating a compassionate community that is accepting of everyone.
- Caring: We are caring towards each other and are consciously improving our environment.
- Excellence: When we challenge ourselves and strive to the best of our ability, we bring excellence to our community.
- Respect: We respect different ideas and show empathy and appreciation towards others thoughts and feelings.
- Service: We are part of an enthusiastic and caring community that strives to learn and develop our gifts for the purpose of serving others.

Philosophy and Purpose

Daystar offers a bilingual Chinese and English language immersion program that aims to develop bilingual and bicultural 21st century learners—effective communicators who express themselves "confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways." (*IB Learner Profile*, 2013) We view bilingualism and multilingualism as "essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding," (*Learning in a Language other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes*, 2008, p.3) and demonstrate our commitment to bilingual education through our use of research-based best practices to support language development in all of our students.

All Daystar teachers are language teachers just as all Daystar students are language learners. We are committed to creating a learning community that promotes and supports language development while fostering confidence and creativity in a way that values all students' cultural identity and sense of self—recognizing the unique knowledge and experiences that each student contributes to our shared learning community. We recognize that language learning is "a developmental process where there are opportunities for students to build on prior knowledge and skills in order to help them progress to the next phase of language development." (*Language and learning in IB programmes*, 2011, p.17)

The purpose of this document is to inform teaching and learning in the classroom; to guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and to engage families in our goal to develop bilingual, bicultural, and internationally minded students.

Guiding Research

Cummins (1991) demonstrated that acquiring academic literacy for a non-native speaker of English is a cognitively challenging and time-intensive process with very specific context-related demands. Bigelow and Tarone (2004) and Gibbons (2009) put forth that academic language proficiency for language learners encompasses a subset of vocabulary and skills that must be explicitly developed in order for language learners to have full access to academic content. Further, Halliday and Hasan (1985) and Derewianka (1991) suggest that each genre and academic discipline have context-specific strategies, vocabulary and conventions that must be identified, modeled and taught.

Similarly, research (Vygotsky, 1978; Collier, 1989) also informs us that students benefit from receiving instruction at a level that is proportional to their ability and skill. In this sense, Daystar believes that academic content should be differentiated in such a way as to keep cognitive rigor high, but the lexical load appropriate. Conjointly, with differentiation, Feldman and Kinsella (2005) discuss the need to equip students with grade-level appropriate and deliberate scaffolds that allow students to show the breadth and depth of what they know and can do.

Expanding on this, many researchers have shown that language instruction is more equitable and effective when educators help students make connections from students' own lives, cultural assets, and prior knowledge to the academic content they are learning (Cummins, 2007; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009).

It is largely agreed upon that, in order to accurately measure whether students are hitting these targets, it is necessary to employ research-based and standards-driven assessment tools and practices. These tools serve to differentiate and guide instruction in addition to gauging content mastery and academic language competence.

Language Profile and Admissions Policies

Language Profile

At Daystar, roughly 75% of our students are native Chinese speakers, while the other 25% of students' native languages represent approximately 20 countries around the world, including Korea, Germany, the Netherlands, India, The United States, and The United Kingdom. Approximately 80% of the student body speaks English as an additional language. While the language of instruction at Daystar is both English and Chinese, the use of other languages is celebrated and encouraged.

The Learning English for Academic Proficiency (LEAP) and Chinese curriculum coordinator work with the Admissions Department to build and maintain the language profiles of all students by using input and data from previous school reports, parent and student interviews, new student assessment that occurs within their first few weeks of schooling, and on-going consultation with teachers.

Admissions Policies

Applicants to Daystar complete a Home Language Questionnaire prior to enrollment that indicates their proficiency in their mother tongue. Any application for a student who indicates that English is not their mother tongue will be assessed as part of the placement into the LEAP program. Conversely, any application for a student who indicates that Chinese is not their mother tongue will be assessed as part of the placement into the Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) or YuYue programs. All applicants are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.



Daystar Academy relies on a combination of interviews, standardized assessments and school records in order to place students appropriately. The most frequently used assessments for English language evaluation are the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP), and the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Measure of Developing English Language (MODEL). Daystar assesses incoming students' Chinese language proficiency using a local test based on previous grade level standards and the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP4Se). Families whose native language is not Chinese and students who do not hold Chinese passports have the option to enroll in the YuYue Program described below.

Support for Mother Tongue Languages

The term "mother tongue" within this document includes the following meanings as defined by the International Baccalaureate program: the language learned first and the language which is known best and used most. The majority of students at Daystar Academy have Chinese or English as their mother tongue.

As a bilingual school, Daystar Academy acknowledges that "the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development." (Cummins, 2005) Given that the majority of students' mother tongue is one of the two languages of instruction within the school, we are strengthening students' mother tongue skills while building a strong cognitive foundation upon which second language acquisition can develop.

We also believe that students' development of an additional language is best served by supporting not only a broad understanding of students' mother tongue but affirming students' culture as well. Our curriculum planning framework emphasizes the intentional planning of both language and culture to ensure that students are developing intra- and intercultural understanding in every unit of inquiry. Daystar Academy libraries include materials to support interest and research in Chinese and English as well as other mother tongues represented within our community. After school activities in languages other than Chinese or English (taught by native language speaking staff) offer additional opportunities for students whose mother tongue is not one of the languages of instruction within the school.

Daystar recognizes the need for and is committed to providing clear communication between home and school to advance student learning. To support this commitment, the majority of school communications such as newsletters, websites, and other publications are published in Chinese and English. Many of our staff are bilingual and assist parents with interpreting as needed. While reports of student learning are communicated in the language of instruction, most of the meetings at Daystar with both parents and staff are conducted in Chinese and English.

Language Program Overview

Daystar students are developing early literacy skills as they "learn language;" they are constructing knowledge about the world as they "learn through language;" and they are developing a sophisticated understanding of the purposes, audiences, and intricacies of language as they "learn about language." (Halliday, 1985, as cited in *Learning in a Language other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes*, 2008).

Essential Practices

The following practices represent examples of the supports Daystar provides to students in all aspects of their language learning.

Classroom Environment

- Create a culturally-inclusive classroom representing values and beliefs of many cultures
- Establish open and fair norms of communication where a variety of opinions can be expressed and celebrated
- Create a visually and print-rich environment
 - Post content ideas and questions for student reference and reflection
 - Display content and language objectives in student-friendly language
 - Co-create bilingual word walls with students
 - Reference anchor charts frequently
 - Provide anchor chart copies to ELLs
- Use flexible grouping to maximize language clarification and student output
- Provide a balanced classroom library of English and Chinese books in addition to other mother tongues that are represented by class members

Instruction

- Utilize a planning process that provides a framework for the intentional planning and integration of language and culture in instruction and assessment
- Develop academic vocabulary in both languages of instruction to support learning across languages and disciplines
- Provide scaffolding by utilizing a variety of research-based strategies to support learning in the second language (Ex. Modeling, modified texts, visuals, graphic organizers, non-verbal clues, etc.)
- Utilize differentiated instructional strategies that support language development (ex. Frayer model for vocabulary development)
- Learn about language: Utilize explicit language learning development—explicit grammar development; writing purposes—field, tenor, mode; and applying metacognitive and concrete reading strategies and skills across genres
- Activate prior knowledge/schema: contextualize learning using concrete examples that allow students to connect prior knowledge, experiences, and cultural assets with new learning (ex. Using pictures, graphics, and videos to facilitate connection and reflection)

Assessment

- Differentiate assessments by language proficiency levels
- Use WIDA performance definitions to guide the amount of text complexity and density in assessments to support students on both the comprehension of text and the expectations of students' written production by language proficiency levels
- Ensure essential academic skills are being consistently assessed across differentiated assessments
- Score consistently across differentiated assessments with the exception of frequency with which students produce elements of cohesion and technical vocabulary



Continuum of Language Instruction

Language of Instruction For Academic Subjects		
Grades	Chinese	English
1 - 5	50%	50%
6 - 8	20% - 30%	70% - 80%
9 - 12	10%	90%

Primary School Program: Kindergarten to Grade 5

English Language Arts

Daystar Elementary School's English Language Arts program is based on the U.S. Common Core State Standards and utilizes a comprehensive language arts curriculum that supports all aspects of English language development. It exposes students to a wide range of topics through texts with varying degrees of complexity. The curriculum resources provide a variety of instructional supports for all levels of English language learners that scaffold student acquisition of academic vocabulary, analysis and comprehension of complex texts from a variety of genres, appropriate use of grammar and writing conventions, as well as development of the writing process across purposes. All of the skills and strategies learned in each lesson continue to be developed year-after-year by increasing degrees of complexity.

Utilizing vertically and horizontally articulated curriculum resources from Kindergarten through fifth grade allows Daystar staff to construct a cohesive program that supports our students' English language acquisition throughout their elementary experience at Daystar. In addition, the themed language arts lessons allow teachers to make conceptual connections across disciplines to the language arts skills learned each week. Daystar's curriculum team has developed a comprehensive curriculum map that ensures knowledge, skill, and transdisciplinary theme alignment across our six units of inquiry that are studied throughout the school year.

Chinese Language Arts

Daystar Elementary School's Chinese language arts program is based on the Chinese National Standards and utilizes the *Renjiaoban* language arts curriculum resources to support Chinese language development.

Chinese language arts supports the development of reading and writing Chinese characters, oral expression, and comprehension. While strengthening students' basic skills, the curriculum also focuses on the application of skills, highlighting the characteristics of language through various activities. Students are encouraged to foster their own creativity and innovation through exploration, thereby comprehensively practicing and applying their acquired skills. Differentiation ensures all students' needs and Chinese levels are addressed in the learning process so that all students, including non-native Chinese language speakers, progress.

Daystar's Chinese language arts curriculum also provides opportunities for transdisciplinary teaching and learning. Students master important skills and knowledge through in-depth understanding of core content while learning about their own culture and others in our mission to develop bilingual, bicultural, and internationally minded global citizens.

Secondary School Program: Grades 6 to 10

Language & Literature (English/Chinese)



The primary aim of Daystar's MYP Language and Literature course is to enable students to continue to develop the critical and creative thinking skills necessary to study and analyze both literary and non-literary texts and to apply these concepts and skills as they produce a variety of authentic texts. In this course, students will have the opportunity to apply linguistic skills as they engage with texts from a variety of cultures and historical periods. Students will use language as a "vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, self-expression, analysis, and social interaction" which will equip students with the linguistic skills needed "to develop interdisciplinary understanding across all other subject areas." (*MYP Language and Literature guide*, 2014, p.4)

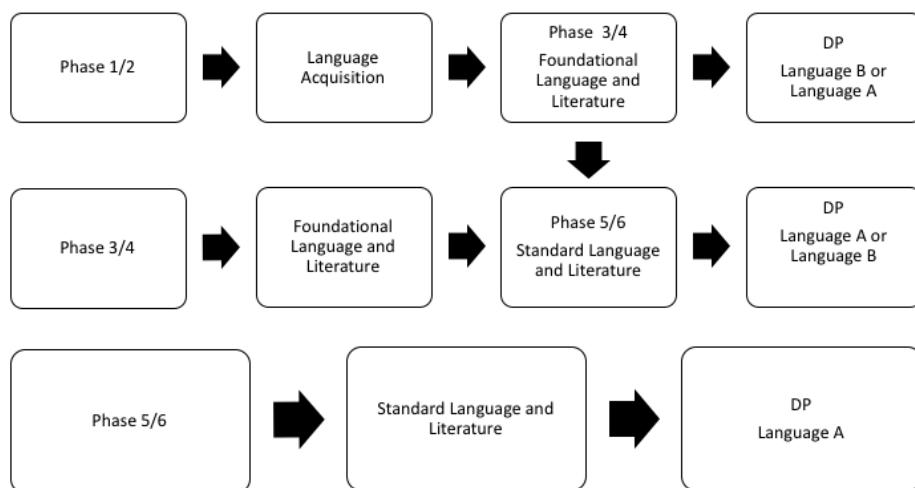
Language Acquisition (English/Chinese)

The primary aim of Daystar's MYP Language Acquisition course is to encourage students to gain competence in a second language with the long-term goal of balanced bilingualism. To this end, language learners who do not yet have the levels of English or Chinese required to fully participate in the Language and Literature curriculum (based on LEAP Program or Chinese language assessments detailed below) are placed in a Language Acquisition course and provided with specific strategies and interventions aimed at increasing linguistic proficiency across the modalities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a variety of academic contexts.

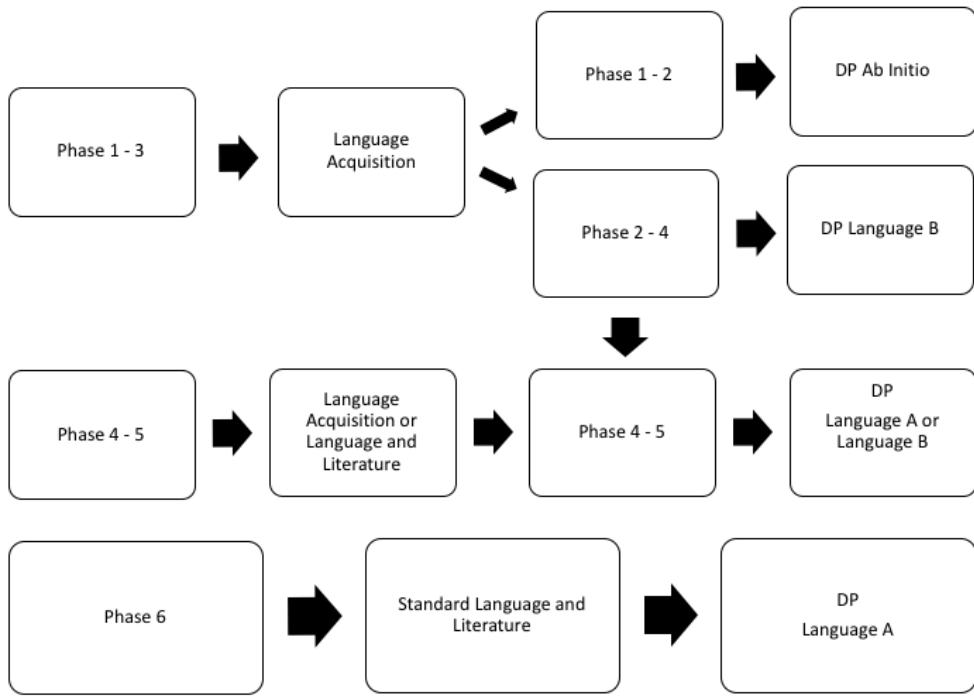
Students will be eligible to move into the Language and Literature class for that specific language via a combination of academic language assessments (WIDA/ STAMP4se), MYP Phase criteria, writing samples, and formative assessment. Once they do so, students will receive continued support in the form of academic reading and writing scaffolds intended to maximize meaningful interaction with rigorous, grade-level concepts and material. As students' academic linguistic skills mature, the scaffolds will be removed.

The following is a general overview of Daystar's language pathways for Chinese and English. Note that non-native speaking students will work through the MYP phases at varying speeds; therefore, a student's language pathway will be determined on a case-by-case basis using all available data and input from all stakeholders. Also, per the MYP Language Acquisition Guide, *it is recommended the student has at least one semester in MYP language and literature before starting these DP courses.*

English Language Pathways



Chinese Language Pathways



Learning English for Academic Proficiency (LEAP) Program (Grades 1 - 5)

Overview and Goals of the Program

Daystar Academy provides a LEAP support program designed to ensure that English Language Learners (ELLs), have equitable access to and fully engage with the Daystar curriculum including cognitively appropriate academic content and concepts. The main goal of the LEAP program is to support the English language development of ELLs, specifically, the use of academic English functions in reading and writing. To that end, LEAP teachers use a combination of formative and summative assessment data in addition to student profile data to target specific areas of academic linguistic growth. Our specific goal is that students make one full point of growth per academic year using the WIDA MODEL. In support of this goal, students receive specific language support in the regular classroom, as well as in regular targeted pullout mini-lessons. The result of participation in the LEAP program is that students develop the necessary academic English skills to perform and thrive in all subject areas.

Guiding Principles

LEAP's guiding principles align with the overarching principles detailed above, including:

- Interwoven language and content instruction designed to concurrently develop conceptual understandings and language proficiency so that students are set up to thrive independently in a variety of real-world and scholarly settings. *Language is the vehicle through which learning occurs.*
- Standards-aligned instruction for ELLs that:
 - Affirms and leverages students' cultural assets and prior knowledge, including mother tongue as integral to the learning experience.
 - Explicitly identifies and teaches specific context-related interdisciplinary vocabulary, strategies, and conventions that are part and parcel to academic language proficiency.
 - Advances ELL academic proficiency by considering students' previous learning experiences and current level of academic proficiency.
 - Maintains grade-level appropriate rigor differentiated by specific linguistic complexity and density.
 - Scaffolds temporarily and appropriately so that students can demonstrate the breadth and depth of what they know and can do.
- Research-driven formative and summative assessment that informs instruction and provides the means for students to set meaningful goals regarding academic language proficiency.

Structure

The LEAP program does not have curriculum standards of its own, rather, it supports the other curricular areas of the school. However, the WIDA levels of language proficiency and Can Do Descriptors are used to inform instruction and to determine each student's English reading, writing, listening, and speaking proficiency. All four of these areas of language proficiency are explicitly assessed and taught. Though the LEAP program provides balance across all four skills, emphasis is placed on reading and writing as the students are provided other pathways to increase English fluency in speaking and listening, such as performing arts, music, and many after school activities.

Initial Identification

An ELL designated as an Academic English Learner (AEL) for Daystar Academy would include any student who meets the following requirements.

1. Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ): All students registering in Daystar Academy answer an HLQ during the admission process. If there is evidence of another language spoken in the home, they would be referred by the school office staff to the LEAP teacher for further evaluation.
2. LEAP Program Entrance Assessment
 - a. LEAP teacher will evaluate any/or all of the following data:
 - i. Scores from the WIDA Measure of Developing English Language (MODEL) or WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)
 - ii. Evidence of past participation in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs
 - iii. Scores from Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS)
 - iv. Classroom performance
 - b. If a student is new to Daystar Academy or the above data is not available at the time of registration, W-APT will be administered to determine language proficiency level



LEAP Placement Criteria

When a potential ELL meets the majority of the entrance criteria and it is determined that additional LEAP support would provide educational benefit to the student, they will be admitted to the LEAP program.

Entrance Criteria

The criteria for entrance into LEAP services is based on one of two comprehensive English academic language assessments: W-APT or MODEL. *A student is eligible for LEAP services at Daystar Academy if the W-APT or MODEL Composite score is below 5.5*

The composite level in addition to the data on specific modalities will be used to determine the appropriate level of service. School staff will also evaluate data such as evidence of past participation in ESL programs, literacy assessment data using Fountas and Pinnell BAS, and classroom performance to determine level of service.

Exiting LEAP Support Program

In general, ELLs are no longer classified as an AEL once they have attained the language skills necessary to compete with mainstream English speakers in age and grade appropriate settings in all areas of language development without the use of adapted or modified English materials.

The fully English proficient student, ready to exit language instruction educational programs, demonstrates English language proficiency in relation to the full range of classroom demands and the academic language needed for successful educational performance including demonstrating proficiency in:

1. Understanding and speaking English
2. Reading and comprehending academic English
3. Writing in English, and
4. Demonstrating English proficiency in other academic subject areas

At the end of each school year, LEAP teachers evaluate all spring standardized testing data as it becomes available to determine each ELL's eligibility for ongoing LEAP support. When a student meets a majority of the exit criteria detailed below, with an emphasis on standardized scores, they will be reclassified in late spring for the next school year and will no longer receive LEAP supports.

Exit Criteria

- Language Acquisition:
 - MODEL Composite Score of 5.5
- Literacy
 - A minimum literacy subscore of 5.0 or above on the MODEL, and
 - A Fountas and Pinnell BAS score within the range of grade level proficiency
- Writing
 - Student portfolio
 - Proficient or above proficient based on Daystar rubric
- Proficiency in other subject areas
 - Determined by classroom observation and formative assessment

LEAP Program Service Model

Daystar Academy will employ a combination of push-in and pull-out instruction and co-teaching with grade-level content instructors. The following serve as a guideline for ESL instructors when determining which service model to use:

WIDA Level 1 and 2:

- Regular pull-out services to focus on language acquisition and building of academic vocabulary that aligns with content instruction in the classroom.
- In-class group mini-lessons to scaffold learning objectives within the classroom, including:
 - Leveled reading groups using similar content, themes, and vocabulary as mainstream instruction
 - Scaffolded learning activities that align with classroom instruction using WIDA Can-Do Descriptors and language supports
- Co-teaching:
 - Pre-teaching vocabulary
 - Ensuring accessibility of content for all students through the use of graded language, visuals, hand signals, realia, and movement
 - Modeling academic language strategies

WIDA Level 3 and 4:

- Pull-out services on an as needed basis to focus on academic language and text structures, which students are struggling with in the classroom
- As above, see WIDA Level 1 and 2

WIDA Level 5:

- In-class support, monitoring and co-teaching:
 - Pre-teaching vocabulary
 - Ensuring accessibility of content for all students through the use of graded language, visuals, hand signals, and movement
 - Modeling academic language strategies
 - Mini-conferencing with students to help students self-assess and set academic goals
 - Direct instruction on an as needed basis

Chinese as a Second Language and YuYue (Grades 2 - 5)

Overview and Goals of the Program

Daystar Academy provides the YuYue Program and Chinese language support for non-native Chinese speakers—referred to as Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) so as not to be confused with Chinese Language Arts (CLA) in the elementary school and Chinese Language Acquisition (CLA) in the middle school. Both programs promote the balanced development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as



well as access to high-level academic learning leading to our goal of developing bilingual and bicultural graduates.

Guiding Principles

The Daystar CSL program operates under the premise that language teaching should be based on students' experience, needs, and interests, rather than following established or prescribed language patterns. Learners should learn in meaningful situations and develop understanding of concepts and language abilities at the same time.

Chinese language acquisition at Daystar is committed to:

- Creating a language community where students feel comfortable and supported by all in their language learning.
- Providing students with a true and reliable environment for the development and use of language.
- Valuing learner's prior experience and current understanding.
- Emphasizing the influence of students' mother tongue learning experiences, knowledge, and cultural background on second language learning.
- Utilizing temporary and appropriate scaffolding to enable students to demonstrate the breadth and depth of what they know and can do.

Structure and Service Model

CSL Support Program

The CSL program does not have curriculum standards of its own, rather, it supports Chinese Language Arts instruction based on the Chinese National Curriculum standards as well as other curricular areas of the school. Students who participate in this program have Chinese language arts classes with native Chinese speakers and support teachers provide extra help and practice with push-in language sessions.

YuYue program

The YuYue program allows students to successfully learn Chinese no matter where their journey begins. It is based on the Chinese National Curriculum and International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education standards.

The YuYue program is a pull-out program that divides students into different classes according to their Chinese level. It uses Singapore Language Arts texts and *Huanying*, U.S. Chinese language arts curriculum resources, instead of the *Renjiaoban* used in Chinese Language Arts classes. YuYue teachers collaborate with homeroom teachers and provide push-in support in academic areas beyond language arts.

Entrance and Exit Criteria for CSL and YuYue Programs

Entrance and exit criteria for the CSL and YuYue programs are based on language assessments including those used in admissions testing [a local test based on previous grade level standards and the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP4Se)], students' classroom performance, and input from all stakeholders].

During the school year, the Chinese language arts and YuYue teachers work closely with homeroom teachers to assess and document non-native Chinese students' language development in grade-level classes. If there are concerns about Chinese study, they will communicate with



the YuYue program coordinator. Teachers also analyze students' classroom performance, unit tests, and other indicators to monitor student progress and adjust YuYue levels as needed.

Communicating the Language Policy

Daystar Academy has made this Language Policy available to all stakeholders by:

- Translating it into both English and Chinese
- Posting it in both languages on the school website
- Ensuring all staff have an opportunity to provide input as part of the review process
- Using it as a tool in new staff induction
- Making copies available to parents upon request
- Discussing its contents with parents at information sessions and coffee talks
- Discussing its contents, as relevant, with students in assemblies, advisory, and in class
- Making it available for the Admissions Department and in each school division.

On-going Review

Daystar Academy's Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment team, in collaboration with all community stakeholders, will formally review this policy as needed, but at least once every three years, to ensure it reflects current practices based on the needs of our learning communities. This policy is available to all participants in the Daystar community and comments and recommendations are always welcome.

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Resources

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