



AISL
HARROW
SCHOOLS
哈罗学校

ENGLISH AS A COMMON LANGUAGE POLICY (HS16)

APPLIES TO:	All staff and all pupil
AISL RESPONSIBILITY:	Chief Education Officer
LAST UPDATED:	15 th July 2026
REVISIONS: (Reviewer to enter initials and date)	AHU – 15 th July 2026 AHU - 5th August 2025

Educational Excellence *for* Life and Leadership
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1 PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- 1.1 All staff have a shared responsibility for the development of the English language inside and outside of the classroom. Alongside this, we recognise the equality of all languages and celebrate these as an essential part of our school context.
- 1.2 English is the common language of an AISL Harrow school community and the priority language of academic instruction, as such all staff should play an active part in ensuring it is used as much as possible when at, or representing, the School.

In a Harrow Li De School or HHKCS, pupil will engage with the curriculum using English and, when appropriate, Chinese. Outside of the classroom, it is expected that pupil will use English as much as possible.

- 1.3 In a HIS all pupil and staff are encouraged to speak English:
- during lessons (except local and Modern Foreign Language lessons).
 - in corridors, walkways, playgrounds, sports areas and in the dining hall.
 - in office spaces and public areas.
 - during activities and clubs (except language clubs).
 - when representing the school outside of the campus.

In a Li De School and HHKCS pupil and staff will use English in and around the school. Where practicable, adults may encourage pupil to transition between languages. All pupil should be encouraged to use English in the classroom and beyond.

- 1.4 Pupil and staff may need to speak in their home, or another, language:
- in lessons to explain or better understand a key concept that they are unable to express in English. In this case, they should ask the permission of the teacher.
 - when taking part in specialist sports instruction, particularly on a one-to-one or small group basis.
 - when emotionally distressed.
- 1.5 For schools with boarding, English is expected to be the common language within the boarding community and it is expected that all members will model excellent use of English and support those who are developing their English skills.

For Li De schools with boarding, English will be promoted within the boarding community. Chinese bilingual boarding staff will play a significant role in communication with pupil, parents and external services. Nevertheless, all adults are expected to promote the use of English.

- 1.6 Language should never be used to exclude. English speaking staff and pupil should support those who are developing their English by adapting their language where necessary.
- 1.7 Pupil and parents are encouraged to speak English to each other as often as possible when on the school campus.

2 ACTIVE USE OF ENGLISH

- 2.1 Research shows that motivation, self-confidence and anxiety play key roles in language acquisition. It is the responsibility of all staff to create an environment in which pupil feel secure and valued in their use of English (or any other language), and able to take risks to enable it to develop.
- 2.2 Creating opportunities for active speaking and listening inside and outside of lessons is a vital part of this approach:
- Speaking and listening activities should be a key component of all lessons. Good ways to add more speaking activities to lessons include peer review before responding to questions, group presentations, speaking carousels and Socratic talk.
 - Start lessons with warm-up activities that promote accurate communication: using a key idea or concept from the lesson, a language-based scavenger hunt (find someone who can explain/ define), or word association games, e.g. Taboo and Balderdash.
 - Model good use of English by engaging pupil in conversations in English, particularly when walking around campus and on duties.
 - Give regular positive praise for use of English, rewarding effort rather than ability.
 - Show an active interest in pupil' home language, allowing them to demonstrate their linguistic ability; find out how to say something in the home language before modelling how it can be expressed in English.
 - Adapt English to support the needs of pupil in the earlier stages of language development by using non-verbal signals and stressing keywords to aid understanding. Grade your language to an appropriate level for pupil. Explain the use of idiomatic or colloquial language.
 - Engage with pupil' pronunciation and volume when speaking English. Model how to pronounce difficult words in English and at an appropriate pitch. Encourage pupil to reflect on their confidence in their home language and apply that to their spoken English.

APPENDIX I

The statement below can be used in HIS school with pupil and parents to reinforce the message about English-speaking across the campus.

Speaking English on our Campus

The English language unites our community.

We are an English curriculum school, and excellence in English enables us to thrive in our academic studies.

We expect English to be spoken as the common language across our campus creating an inclusive environment, and empowering pupil to become confident communicators and leaders in an international world.