

DEVELOPING A SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

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What is a school language policy? **Yintoni umgaqo-nkqubo wolwimi ezikolweni?**

A school language policy is a document that states which languages are used for the different functions at school such as teaching, learning, assessment, extramural activities and administration. It offers a guideline on how the speakers of different languages in the school community will be respected. A school language policy takes stock of the school's learning, teaching and assessment support materials (LTSM) and how these could be used to develop the abilities of children to speak, understand, read and write in more than one language. It provides practical steps on how the underlying principles of bi/multilingual education can be applied at school and is accompanied by an action plan for implementation.



What is the content of a school language policy? **Ziintoni eziqulathwe ngumgaqo-nkqubo wolwimi ezikolweni?**

A school language policy should state: how the language/s of the school community should be valued; the language(s) of learning, teaching and assessment (LOLTA/s); which languages will be offered as subjects, and at what level(s); and which languages will be used for external and internal communication. The policy should recommend a language model for the school, such as dual- and/or parallel-medium classes, or flexible bi/multilingualism. It should also take an inventory of the school's language resources such as library books, resource centres and human resources and suggest how these could be used effectively.

Why is having a school language policy important? **Kutheni kubalulekile nje ukuba nomgaqo-nkqubo wolwimi ezikolweni?**

All schools are required to have a language policy. The process of creating a language policy encourages ongoing reflection on how to learn, teach and assess meaningfully. It provides a basis for sound relationships among and between children and teachers. A language policy enhances the school's capacity for improved overall performance, provided learners' home languages are included in the curriculum. It can also bring about positive academic and social changes in the school since the atmosphere is more inclusive and accepting of diversity.

How is a school language policy developed?

Uqulunqwa njani umgaqo-nkqubo wolwimi ezikolweni?

Creating a school language policy is a process that entails consulting with parents, teachers and learners about the languages to be used for administration, teaching, learning, assessment and extra-mural activities. Consultation should build unity of purpose in the school community, including amongst parents and teachers. It involves reflecting together on language attitudes, beliefs and practices; fact-finding to determine language use in the community, and inform parents, teachers and learners and raise awareness about the value of using and learning two or more languages. Developing a school language policy includes making decisions about how children could develop multilingually, and building a school vision on how the uses of languages could contribute to meaningful education. The policy requires formulation, adoption, implementation, monitoring and ongoing revision.

Who is involved in developing a school language policy?

Ngoobani abathabatha inxaxheba kuqulunqo lomgaqo-nkqubo wolwimi ezikolweni?

SGBs (school governing bodies) are required by law to formulate a policy that promotes multilingualism. Parents participate in the decision-making. Teachers and other professionals inform the broader community about the educational value of bi/multilingual education, including mother-tongue-based bilingual education (MTBBE). Teachers are the main agents of policy implementation and curriculum delivery. School management and/or the SGB should co-ordinate the coming together of the different role-players to discuss the various processes and tasks.



What difference could a school language policy make to the school community?

Ngumahluko mni onokuthi wenziwe ngumgaqo-nkqubo wolwimi ezikolweni kwabo babandakanyekayo nginxaxheba esikolweni?

A school language policy could lead to a shared vision among parents, teachers and learners on the role of language in learning as well as a vision for using multiple language resources. It could improve the literacies of children and lead to higher levels of learner confidence. The policy should lead to higher levels of respect among speakers of different home languages as well as a spirit of participation amongst all interest groups at the school.

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