

[201-/1-] XXX SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

XXX School language philosophy

At _____ we believe that multilingualism opens the world for students, exposing them to opportunities and relationships beyond what one language can provide. We believe that “language study develops international understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth and promotes effective communication” within and beyond cultural groups.

We recognize that the multilingual classroom is the norm at _____. Because language is so integral to personal, interpersonal and cultural development, all _____ teachers are language teachers. Ideally, the “acquisition of language is an active process taught through authentic experiences with the goal of developing listening, speaking, reading, writing, presenting, and viewing skills through a culture of inquiry.” The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding.

As a component to teaching to the whole child and in all subjects, teachers value and promote understanding of students’ cultural identities and backgrounds. Students are provided opportunities to maintain or obtain language skills – both in terms of language specific to the disciplines, the school’s language of instruction, and their mother tongues.

The _____ community language profile

Languages used in the school community

Languages of teaching and learning	Language and literature: English Language acquisition: French, Spanish and Japanese
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Languages of communication used in the school and outside the classroom	English
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The range and types of mother tongue and other languages in the community	At the time of writing, the following mother tongues are represented in our student population: Afrikaans, Albanian, Cantonese, French, German, Persian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.
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73% = English
9% = Mandarin
18% = other

Language needs of the school community

The language needs of the community (including any legal requirements as a result of government legislation)

The Ministry requires public schools to teach students a language other than English from grades 5 – 8 [PYP/MYP years]. Please see Policy and Legality section below.

On average, about 90% of _____ students attend post-secondary education. As most large post-secondary institutions require a

second language up to the grade 11 level [MYP year 5], the community supports multi-lingual teaching and learning.

Language education logistics

Practices relating to the choice and planning of language courses for learners	_____ offers French and Spanish for students in language acquisition. We also offer Japanese as a language acquisition option for students who progress out of the English language learning (ELL) support program after MYP year 3 or who register at _____ in MYP years 4 or 5.
Spelling and referencing protocols	Please see the Academic Framework as explained in _____'s Academic Honesty Policy
Preferred bibliographic styles	Please see the Academic Framework as explained in _____'s Academic Honesty Policy
Rules and expectations about language use around the school	We expect students' use of language to adhere to the _____ Code of Conduct with regards to decency and academic honesty.

Language learning

Major approaches to language planning include language policy [...] as problem solving, and [...] as an interactive democratic practice.

Language learning occurs in every classroom and in every subject group in the MYP because we recognize that language stands at the center of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning. Because of this reality, teachers attend to the various language needs of their learners.

For those whose mother tongue is not English, our main language of instruction, students may receive classroom support through one or more of the following examples where appropriate from this *non-exclusive* list, depending on the context:

- Use of visuals
- Buddy system for speaking mother tongue
- Access to readings in advance
- Access to graphic organizers
- Adapted tasks so as to make tasks less dependent on large amounts of writing when writing is not the objective
- Checks for understanding in ways that require students to respond with more than a yes, or smile and nod because we know that many cultures view this as being polite and respectful despite the respondent's actual lack of understanding.
- Additional time to complete a task
- Where the assessment is not specific to the language, students may respond in their mother tongue or use language aids like dictionaries or translators
- Descriptive body language alongside verbal explanations
- Tasks designed to empower peers in offering one another feedback

- Tasks designed to discourage the reliance on a digital translation software or program
- Activation of “students’ prior understanding, using the mother tongue and other languages when appropriate
- Consideration of “time and strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson”
- Demonstrations of the learning objective or task
- Learning structures designed to enable students to work in small, collaborative groups

Most of the differentiation strategies listed above will also benefit many other learners – even those whose mother tongue is English. This dynamic is especially true when learners of all backgrounds approach discipline-specific terminology. Likewise, communication is a criterion in each subject group of the MYP.

Library support of language learning

The _____ library recognizes the importance of language to the intellectual, creative, and ethical development of students. The teacher-librarians work with language teachers to ensure a wide variety of texts are available to meet the needs of language learners, including English, Spanish, French and Japanese.

The prospect of meeting the needs of our English language learners (ELL) is exciting because it presents an opportunity to embrace an international spirit that values diversity. The teacher-librarians will build on our collection of international authors, displaying their work, and book talking their stories. The teacher-librarians will also work in consultation with our ELL students, asking them what their ideal library would look like and the resources it would deliver. The library will display signs in the mother tongues of _____ to welcome all students and help them navigate our virtual and physical spaces. The teacher-librarians will also rely on the advice of our ELL families to deliver mother tongue resources. We will consult with ELL parents and students to get recommendations for novel titles and authors from their home countries.

Mother tongue support

In addition to providing structures such as those listed above to support language learners within the classrooms, the school offers many informal opportunities as outlined below to respect and support the language of those whose mother tongue is not English.

Students may join one of the following clubs to support their mother tongue in the following non-exclusive ways:

Club / Structure	Note about how this club or group supports the use and development of mother tongues
Kanata Club	The Kanata club organizes social, cultural activities for the student body.
Basketball group during lunch breaks	Mr T. plays basketball with International students during lunch hour and many speak in their mother tongues in this environment.
Foods Programs	The Foods teacher organizes or supports the students who organize specific food/cultural events such as (but not limited to) the following: bubble tea, Chinese New Year, Schnitzle, etc.

Teachers are encouraged to design learning tasks that require English language learners to interact meaningfully with native English speakers such as the example tasks listed below:

Task

English and individuals and societies – Students in the English and individuals and societies classes are paired up with ELLs in a Transitional English or individuals and societies course for the purpose of offering appreciative feedback on a visual or writing task that incorporates their mother tongues.

Lesson on the acculturation process that many international students experience. Used a graph that outlines the ups and downs new ELL students feel in the first six months. Led to discussions around being sensitive, compassionate and respectful of others' cultures.

Language and literature: English

Understanding a language at a fluent level empowers students to take ownership of their thinking and communicate it clearly to others. The subject is academically rigorous; it equips students with linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that can be used in an interdisciplinary manner across all other subject groups.

Language acquisition: French or Spanish

In their first year of MYP at _____ (which is MYP year 3 as we do not offer MYP years 1 or 2), students are required to choose either French or Spanish as their language acquisition choice for the rest of their MYP years. Because we recognize the need to experience sustained learning in one language in order to benefit from the exposure, students will not be permitted to switch out of the language acquisition they initially chose and into the other unless they achieve beyond phase 4 in their language acquisition course, in which case they may choose to begin another language acquisition course. Students who progress out of our ELL support classes or who progress beyond phase 4 in their language acquisition course, may choose to enroll in Japanese as their language acquisition option. This course is open to students who begin a language acquisition in year 4 for the stated reasons or who are new students to _____ in years 4 and 5 of the MYP.

Host country language

_____ is responsible for supporting “all students [in reaching] their full potential, [so we must] provide for the language needs of such students so that they can participate fully in the programme.” To this end the following course offerings are “designed to help students acquire language skills that will enable them to be integrated successfully into regular, age-appropriate classes. Each English language learner will be assessed and appropriate classes selected to meet that student’s individual needs.” All ELLs take an ELL-normed test. The professional judgment of ELL teachers, test results, and conversations with students will determine recommendations for next year’s classes. Landed ELLs have an Annual Instructional Plan (AIP) which is similar to an IEP but which deals specifically with students’ language learning needs. Once ELLs are fluent enough to be successful in their courses, students may graduate out of these support classes and into the regular class offerings. This structure aims to create equity between students whose mother tongue is English and those for whom English is not their mother tongue.

Our English language learner levels are defined as follows.

ELL Level 1: *Emerging / Beginning*: Student is starting to learn English. Direct ELL support is needed in scheduled language support blocks.

ELL Level 2: *Developing*: Student is beginning to communicate in simple English with frequent grammatical errors and limited vocabulary. Direct ELL support is needed in scheduled language support blocks.

ELL Level 3: *Expanding*: Student can communicate ideas in English with some grammatical errors. Student needs support with content language and vocabulary development (academic language). Conversational

language may be strong. Students receive instruction in language adapted/supported English classes.

ELL Level 4: *Consolidating/Proficient*: Student's English language proficiency skills are strong enough to enroll in regular-stream classes. ELL support will be given as needed.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAM

Designed for levels 1 and 2

Course offerings:

- **English development 8/9:** follows language and literature: English Year 3/4 framework with targeted ELL support
- **Transitional language and literature: English 8/9/10:** follows the regular English language and literature curriculum but with targeted ELL support
- **Academic and cultural Literacy 10:** this course is designed to help students improve their communication skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking in order to succeed across the curriculum. Students will gain cultural knowledge, linguistic competence, and a critical awareness of academic conventions as they explore a variety of genres and develop research skills. Students will be placed in appropriate section for their language skills. This course must be taken in addition to Transitional English 10.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Designed for levels 3 and 4

Course offerings

- **Transitional Social Studies 10:** required skills and content knowledge
- **English 10 Adapted:** Language and literature Year 5

Professional development

_____ recognizes the need for professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching for administrators, teachers, teacher-librarians, and other school staff. When appropriate, we will call on the expertise of our district specialists and our school specialists in language learning to support our professional development as requested. However, we will also offer teachers formalized professional development through related IB workshops and other quality opportunities.

Parent involvement

Parents are involved and valued with regard to ensuring the _____ library provides a wide variety of texts representative of the linguistic profile of our learning community.

Language policy alignment

_____’s language philosophy and policy align with our values and policies as outlined below. In all of these policies and positions, the student is central.

... to our mission statement

Part of our mission statement is to nurture “global citizens in a respectful and diverse environment”. Part of being a global citizen is learning how to communicate in a variety of ways and part of being respectful of diversity is understanding the world from different points of view: our language policy works to both of these aims because it ensures that students spend a significant amount of time learning an additional language while modelling respect and support for those whose mother tongue is something other than English.

...to IB's principles

_____’s language policy reflects the MYP concept of communication because we require students to learn a language in addition to their mother tongue thereby inviting them to broaden their opportunities for communication. Our language policy supports the IB’s holistic approach to education as it honours and supports the linguistic background and knowledge of our students and community. Finally, our language policy supports the philosophy of international education as it supports the idea of working across boundaries – cultural and national – to gain understanding of alternative perspectives.

...to our academic honesty policy

Our language policy aligns with our academic honesty policy in that students are supported, where possible, in learning through their mother tongue; this flexibility decreases the pressure students might otherwise feel to copy and paste information from English language sources when conducting research. Instead, students can choose (where possible and appropriate) to work from multilingual sources without feeling badly about doing so. We also provide support for our English language learners in this regard (please see the language policy for details of this support) as there may be differences in cultural understanding of academic honesty that need to be bridged.

...to our admissions policy

Our language policy aligns with our admissions policy to welcome all types of students within our catchment first and then from without because we aim to support students’ language learning regardless of their linguistic background.

...to our inclusion policy

Our language policy aligns with our inclusion policy in that we require all students to enroll in a language acquisition course unless their Individual Education Plan (IEP) specifies otherwise. An IEP would only suggest otherwise if such a plan were in the best interests of the student under recommendation by the relevant specialists.

...to our assessment policy

Our language policy aligns with our assessment policy because our assessment policy is directly applicable to all of our learners – regardless of their linguistic background. Flexibility is built into our assessment policy to recognize and allow for when students’ lack of vocabulary hinders their communication of their understanding.

Policy review protocol

The _____ language policy is a working document. Since language is “not static, a language policy needs to be dynamic and flexible so that it can evolve with the changing needs of the school population.” This policy will be reviewed and revised as needed each Fall through the curriculum coordinators in consultation with departments, students, and the parent community via the School Planning Council.

The policy’s effectiveness will be evaluated as part of the review process. The coordinator will gather ELL data from our ELL support teacher each Spring and Fall and this data will inform our review.

Communication of the language policy

The language policy will be listed with the other school policies on our public website.