

IB LANGUAGE POLICY

Kingston Secondary School

This document was developed by a committee of teachers and the IBDP coordinator, and reviewed by administrators and department heads. The IB “Guidelines for developing a school language policy” and IB “Programme standards and practices” were consulted in creating this policy.

1. School Language Profile

The majority of our students have identified that they speak English most often. The remaining students predominantly speak Canada's other official language, French. Our school also runs a French Immersion programme, independent of our IBDP. Some of our students speak other languages predominantly from Asia (e.g. Cantonese, Mandarin, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Arabic). Many of our students speak two or more languages in addition to their mother tongue.

2. School Language Philosophy

We recognize the central importance of language development in learning. Thus, in addition to studying English A - Literature, there is a school-wide commitment by teachers of all subjects to help students develop their language skills. We also affirm the IB principle of learning a second language, as it promotes intercultural awareness and helps students understand their role in our increasingly globally interconnected world. Therefore, students study Language Acquisition – French or Spanish in each year of the programme. Further, students are encouraged to continue to develop any other languages they know, and parents are encouraged to contribute to the development of their child’s mother tongue.

3. Language of Instruction

English is the principal language of instruction at our school. Due to the rigour of the IB programme, students have to demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing English. Students’ English language skills are assessed upon application to the program and are taken into consideration for admission. English instruction is mandated as cross-curricular by the Ontario Ministry of Education and, therefore, is a key component of the curricula of all DP subject groups. Language A is offered in English and is taken each year of the DP. English A is offered at SL and HL.

4. Language Acquisition

The primary aim of the Language Acquisition course in the DP is to encourage students to gain competence in a second language with the long-term goal of balanced bilingualism. Given that the best way to learn a language is to be immersed in it, Language B French is primarily instructed in French. This aim is in recognition of the role that a second language has in appreciation of cultural diversity and global mindedness.

The course offered for Language Acquisition is French as it is one of Canada’s official languages and Spanish ab initio, and sometimes as a Language B, for students who want to learn a new language. Upon admission to the programme at KSS, students will typically already have a minimum of 5 previous years of French instruction, and late immersion French students may have 4 of those years at the immersion level. Early immersion French students may have 12 years of French immersion.

5. Language Diversity and Support for Mother Tongue

We recognize that our school is part of a culturally diverse community with complex language and learning-related needs. While our students are literate in English, some students may have a mother tongue other than English or may speak a language other than English or French at home. To support language diversity and mother tongue development students are encouraged to continue honing their language skills at home and in their community. Students are permitted to use their preferred language in their independent work. Also, within our group two courses students learn dialect and cultural connections.

6. Language Support for English Language Learners (ELLs)

IB students must demonstrate a high level of language proficiency in reading and writing in English in order to be successful in the programme. Students' English language skills are assessed upon application to the program and are taken into consideration for admission. Those students who are accepted, and who are English Language Learners (ELLs) will have been formally identified on their student profile according to the Limestone District School Board's assessment (using the Ontario Ministry of Education's STEP assessment tool). If there is a need, these students will receive language support from individual classroom teachers as well as assessment accommodations.

7. Professional Development for Teachers

We recognize that administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff require professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching. This is achieved through official IB training, and through PD at the board, school or department level. For example, teachers receive opportunities for learning about language development, strategies for supporting English Language Learners and fostering language diversity and intercultural awareness.

8. Communication

The IB language policy is posted on our school website, and is available in print format for anyone who requests it.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years by a committee consisting of the Diploma Coordinator, representatives from the English and Languages Departments, and a school administrator.