

We review our IB Policies annually at the beginning of the school year with our IB Committee, Faculty and Staff members. In addition, the policies are shared with our Parent Organization and SAC Committee and published on our school's website. All members are given the opportunity to offer suggested feedback for revisions before final publishing. The most recent version of our Language Policy is September 2022.



# Language Policy

## Freedom 7 Elementary School of International Studies

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### **Philosophy**

#### **What are our views on language?**

We believe that all children are natural learners of language, and all teachers are teachers of language. Language is the foundation for clear thinking and expression. It enables the learner to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings, and ideas, which gives them order and meaning. Exposing children to a variety of literature and informational texts creates a thinking, feeling, articulate and balanced internationally minded citizen, and transdisciplinary learning will be promoted. We aim to produce literate children who are capable of meaningful communication. Language proficiency is essential for children's intellectual, social, and emotional development, along with encouraging inquiry. Competence in language and exposure to world languages enables learners to function in society; and to fulfill their potential as individuals and lifelong learners.

### **Purpose**

#### **What is our purpose regarding language instruction?**

Our purpose as a school is the development of internationally minded students who can function in a global community. To achieve this purpose, we recognize mother tongue and second language development as foundational components. Language enables the student to express and understand needs, feelings, ideas, and experiences. As students develop their understanding of language, they foster strength around the Approaches to Learning. As language use and structures are fostered, students become active, compassionate, lifelong learners who embody the characteristics of the learner profile.

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## **Principles**

### **What are our guiding principles?**

Teachers will strive to develop a caring language community, in which the students feel confident that they are accepted and supported by others in language learning.

- We will be faithful in fostering language development that is respectful to the commonality and individuality among students.
- We will foster creativity and confidence in communication using a variety of modalities and languages.
- We recognize that language is the primary connection between home and school.
- We will actively support and encourage the development of mother-tongue languages as well as world languages.

## **Policies**

### **What are our essential agreements regarding language?**

- The staff is kept current regarding research and best practices in language learning through state, district, and school professional development opportunities.
- The Literacy Coach/IB PYP Coordinators ensure faculty is kept up to date with new district and state policies and practices regarding language.
- The classroom teacher is responsible for the instruction of Information Communication Technology (ICT). The Media Specialist works collaboratively with classroom teachers for instruction of ICT.
- The responsibility for the purchase/acquisition of resources to implement the language policy effectively and to maintain the Center for Inquiry (CFI) is a shared responsibility.
- The district and school administration makes funding available and conducts periodic reviews of materials on hand. The school Media Specialist solicits input from teachers and other sources and makes recommendations for the purchase of books and materials. The school community contributes to the school media collection through donations and fundraising efforts.
- The school language policy is reviewed annually and revised as needed.

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- The school's language policy is given to each faculty member and is available both electronically and in print.
- The school community shares responsibility through commitment to professional development. Teachers select in-service sessions or are recommended to attend specific in-services by the IB PYP Coordinators and/or administrators based on individual and/or programme needs.
- Communication with parents and the school community about language teaching and learning can be found in school and classroom newsletters, the school's web page, faculty meetings, SAC meetings, student-led conferences, orientation meetings and parent night meetings.
- Language instruction aligns with ELA Florida B.E.S.T. State Standards and Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. I
- Differentiated language instruction occurs across the school.
- All students receive weekly world language instruction in Spanish, Grades K - 6.
- Through the MTSS process students may receive necessary language intervention including but not limited to Speech and Language services.
- English Language Learners and English for Students of Other Languages (ESOL) students receive instruction according to state and district policy delivered by ESOL qualified classroom teachers.
- The use of text sets to support the curriculum units of inquiry is ongoing.
- Freedom 7's Assessment Policy is all-encompassing as the connections between language learning and assessment are delineated.

## **Practices**

### **What are our language practices?**

English is the primary language of instruction. Second language instruction includes Spanish (K-6). Learning language involves learning, learning about, and learning through a language. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and ICT literacy are considered interactive and interrelated. The following practices are incorporated for language learning:

#### *Reading*

- Students learn through balanced reading with both informational texts and literature.

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- Both heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping are used.
- Literacy centers provide individual learning opportunities.
- Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry and Open Court books are used at many grade levels.
- Support for all readers is provided through differentiated small group instruction.
- Assessment of reading includes the use of i-Ready, STAR test (Grades 2-6), STAR Early Literacy Progress Monitoring (K-2), District required Benchmark assessments, Florida Assessment of Student Thinking Progress Monitoring (FAST- Grades 3-6) and other assessments created by teachers to support unit concepts and skills.
- Using primary sources and informational text to research and gather new information (real-life situations, Document Based Questioning, Quality Questioning).

### *Writing*

- Writing instruction is integrated with a transdisciplinary approach throughout all classrooms.
- Current district resources are used.
- Writing assessments provide structured writing opportunities and are used to inform instruction.
- Writing takes place for a variety of authentic purposes throughout the curriculum.
- Differentiated writing instruction is provided for all students.
- D'Nealian handwriting instruction is provided in grades K, 1 and 2. Cursive handwriting instruction is provided in grades 3-6.
- Students in grades 4, 5, and 6 are expected to write legibly in cursive.

### *Listening*

- Students will develop unique perspectives about the information presented in the classroom.
- Use listening to make inner voice connections to what they hear (which can be shared in speaking opportunities).
- Engage in active listening to peers during opportunities for collaboration.
- Keep an open mind to information being presented.
- Formulate questions or comments about content and ideas heard.

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### *Speaking*

- Oral presentation opportunities are provided throughout the curriculum and include individual and group presentations.
- Discussion among students is widely used as a means of expression.
- Opportunities are considered essential and are provided for both formal and informal speaking experiences.
- Speech pathology services are provided for students as needed.

### *Information Communication Technology*

- Students are provided varied opportunities to listen, read, write and view using technology in all classes beginning in kindergarten.
- Use of ICT and Center of Inquiry resources are utilized and integrated within the curriculum.
- Students are instructed in the safety and use of the internet when researching and presenting ideas and projects.
- ICT is used in a variety of ways to support reading with various research sources, drill and practice software programs, and assessment methods.

### *Second Language Learning*

As the PYP Learner Profile supports international awareness and respect for other languages, Spanish is an additional language of instruction. Beginning in Kindergarten and through 6th grade, students are provided with instruction in Spanish. Support of Spanish language learning includes:

- Weekly instruction is 80 minutes each week.
- Emphasis on vocabulary, grammar, and basic conversational Spanish.
- Regular use of the school's language lab.
- Common phrases and vocabulary integrated into all classrooms and used daily by students and teachers.
- Formative and summative assessment showing growth is regularly conducted throughout the year.
- World Language club is offered as an enrichment opportunity to further develop an additional language (Spanish), as well as mother tongue languages.

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*Mother-Tongue support is provided in a variety of ways:*

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.
- Interpreters are utilized as needed.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in language activities in the classroom.
- Books written in Spanish are available to learners in the language lab.
- Students use their mother-tongue as they participate in various school presentations.
- WORLD TV is utilized to support awareness of representative student languages.
- Continued development of mother-tongue through school-wide activities and opportunities.
- School World Language Club is available before school as an Enrichment activity for interested students and families.

*Family Involvement of Language Development:*

- Our school informs families of language development opportunities and resources via the district and school websites, individual teacher websites, school newsletters, email messages, Blackboard messages to all, and Friday Folders that are sent home with students weekly.
- School hosts families for curriculum nights related to language development.
- Parents participate in Student Led Conferences led by the student and give input on the language development goals of their children.
- Parents are given the opportunity to request Parent/Teacher conferences at any time to offer background information and input on their child's language development, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and Educational Plans (EPs.)
- Parents volunteer in the school and classrooms as Guest Speakers, Guest Readers, Small group center volunteers, Center for Inquiry assistants, Mentors for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Exhibition Groups, for our annual International Festival where they can help with performances, etc. that celebrate our Mother Tongue languages across the school. This allows varied opportunities for families to participate in the language development of our students.
- Families whose students are involved in the World Language Club participate in the language development of participants by sharing their cultural identities which promotes respect for diversity by all.

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- Our school's Center for Inquiry (library) houses a variety of books written in the Spanish language and related to varied cultures represented within our school. This allows families with resources to celebrate and share their individual cultural identity.
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### **Professional Development**

#### **What is our responsibility for professional development in language?**

All professional development related to our language policy will include IB standards, Florida B.E.S.T. Standards and Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The teacher's personal knowledge and experiences are of key importance in language teaching.

The PYP coordinator will ensure that the staff is aware of appropriate PYP professional development opportunities and will recommend PYP professional development. All teachers, including the IB coordinator and administration, will share newly acquired knowledge from in-services related to language.

The school administration will ensure that the staff is made aware of district professional development opportunities whenever possible.

The school will provide professional development quarterly for vertical teams to discuss standards (grammar, spelling, writing, speaking) and current practices in each grade level. The IB coordinator and administrators will conduct grade level professional development through weekly PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to address new standards and ensure language policy implementation.

A variety of professional development resources are available for the staff in the Center for Inquiry to meet the needs of the teacher, the students, and the curriculum. These resources provide teachers with current research and best practices in language learning and funds are spent each year to build these resources. The Center for Inquiry houses professional journals, multilingual books, and media that is accessible to all staff.

Mrs. Kathryn Lott

Mrs. Jennifer Noe & Mrs. Lisa Enrique

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*Principal*

*IB PYP Coordinators*

Mrs. Jesse De Leon  
*Assistant Principal*