

Willows Preparatory School



IB MYP Language Policy

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International Baccalaureate

Middle Years Programme Candidate School

Language Policy, 2018-19

WPS Mission and Purpose Statement:

Willows Preparatory School, in cooperation with families and the greater community, aims to foster a worldly perspective, innovation, and integrity in all students. Our dynamic, inquiry-based learning environment inspires and empowers our diverse student body in order for all learners to become compassionate, global citizens.

WPS Language Policy Introduction

The purpose of this document is to inform teaching and learning in the classroom, to guide curriculum, and to involve families in our goal to educate children in an internationally-minded environment. This document outlines the philosophy and practice of language instruction at Willows Preparatory School and demonstrates how we support students' acquisition of our language of instruction (English) and our world language (Spanish). Additionally, the document defines our support for learning mother-tongue languages.

IB MYP Language and Language Learning Standards:

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| Standard A7 | The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language, and other languages |
| Standard A9 | The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and philosophy. |
| Standard A9a | The school strongly encourages participation for all students. |
| Standard B1.5a | The school has developed and implements a language policy that is consistent with IB expectations. |
| Standard C3:7 | Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning in a language(s) other than their mother tongue. |
| Standard C3:8 | Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students. |

WPS IB MYP Language Policy Philosophies:

This policy outlines Willows Preparatory School's commitment to the learning of and skills associated with language and linguistic communication. The following language objectives are shared by WPS and International Baccalaureate¹:

- Language is central to learning and all teachers, in practice, are language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication.
- Students benefit from learning at least one language in addition to their mother tongue.
- Students should receive support for the development and maintenance of their mother tongue.
- Inclusion and equity of access for the MYP framework is in place to assist students who are learning in a language that is not their mother tongue.
- Students' host country language is promoted.
- All members of the school staff will receive training on this Language Policy and contribute to its evolution as the school's programme develops.
- A school will work with parents, if necessary to promote language abilities in students.
- Learning languages is an integral skill in the journey to be global citizens.

WPS Language Profile

Currently, just over 30 languages are spoken by our Willows student body, including Russian, French, Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, and Hindi. Several other languages are represented, including 13 of the 22 official languages of India, 11 other Asian languages, and seven European languages. These languages are listed in full on page 6 of this Language Policy.

Instruction and Assessment in Language A

The language of instruction at Willows Preparatory School is English. English language reading, writing, speaking and listening are taught in all disciplines and most directly facilitated in Language & Literature class. We have a strong, professionally trained Language Literature team that collaborates and standardizes assessment in accordance to our IB MYP Assessment Policy. In addition, our L&L teachers integrate other disciplines' knowledge into their units and collaborate with other discipline teachers to advance language and communication. In addition to instruction in reading comprehension, vocabulary, spelling and grammar, presentation and debate/discussion skills, and written instruction, L&L teachers promote intercultural awareness and cultural identity, create meaningful assessments, and support/utilize students' "mother tongue" in deepening collective understanding of the English language in the following ways:

¹ "Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy." International Baccalaureate, 2008. www.ibo.org. p.1.

- a. Students read world literature both written by international authors and translated from other languages. Teachers are encouraged to identify and utilize texts from cultures and experiences that reflect the students' backgrounds, as well as texts that reflect cultures students may not be familiar with.
- b. Teachers offer students the opportunity to access and utilize their "funds of knowledge," cultural and personal experiences and knowledge that can be applied to and included in classroom content. Students are also given opportunities to access their own mother tongues and compare/contrast that knowledge to their language learning at WPS.
- c. Students' language performances are assessed through oral and written summative and formative assessments. Students frequently use language in the classroom by regularly speaking with teacher and peers, as well as writing regularly as a crucial aspect of instruction. Teachers provide consistent formative feedback on language ability and performance.
- d. Students are given structured guidelines for self-assessment of language ability. They are given models of various language use to aspire to and taught to objectively compare their own language performance and ability to the model, as well as their own progress over time.
- e. Teachers know, recognize and acknowledge students' mother tongues in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to find ways for students to include their mother tongues in classroom instruction, projects and assessments (if possible).

Instruction and Assessment in Language B

Our belief at Willows Preparatory School is that students benefit from learning a Language B in order to fully become internationally-minded. Our school's chosen Language B is Spanish. Much like Language A (English) being predominately facilitated in Language & Literature, Language B (Spanish) is formally instructed in Language Acquisition. By learning Spanish, students continue their development intercultural awareness and cultural identity. Language B's objectives concentrate on learning how to look at situations in the world through different perspectives alongside reading, writing, listening, and speaking in a foreign language. As they learn about others who speak a different language than their native language, students also reflect on themselves, where they come from, Spanish's correlation to their mother-tongues, and their own unique point of view. The following reasons explain why Spanish is our Language B of choice and how students are instructed and assessed in Spanish:

- a. Spanish continues to be one of the fastest-growing languages in the United States. We have a greater population of native Spanish speakers in the United States than in any other country in the world, except Mexico. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), our number of Spanish speakers has increased by over 200% in the last few decades. Therefore, it is important for our students to learn Spanish so that they may become

more open-minded, knowledgeable communicators both within and outside our country's borders.

- b. Students who are native Spanish speakers can use their knowledge to become a leader in the classroom and offer a unique perspective in classroom discussions while also focusing on their specific growth areas, which often differ from that of a non-native speaker. Students who are non-native speakers and who have spent less time learning Spanish than their peers can improve their skills through group work, seeking private lessons with our Spanish teacher, or using language learning software. WPS students are placed in Language Acquisition phases according to their grade and fluency level. Each student will receive approximately 110 hours per year of language learning per academic school year.
- c. Language Acquisition values a variety of assessment tools which target a variety of skills. Correct grammar is important for effective communication, but testing whole language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, presenting) is a better way to assess a student's overall fluency. In Language Acquisition, students are given traditional written quizzes and tests. However, greater value is placed on writing samples, oral assessments, and group and individual projects.
- d. Students are encouraged to make connections between Spanish and their native language in order to develop greater comprehension of both languages and make meaningful contributions to in-class discussions. Having students from a variety of language backgrounds allows us to look at the Spanish language with varied perspectives.

Language and Interdisciplinary Learning

Interdisciplinary teaching and learning is a vital process for all types of language learners. At Willows Preparatory School, teachers collaborate to build interdisciplinary units that utilize multiple language skills and cultural explorations in both Language A and B. Occasionally, additional languages (e.g. languages listed in the WPS Language Profile) are utilized.

Communication to School Community

This policy is available to all stakeholders in the Willows Preparatory School community, and school leadership welcomes comments and recommendations at any time.

Language Policy Review

This policy will be formally reviewed yearly by Willows Preparatory School staff and revised as needed to adapt to changing best practices and the needs of our learning community.

WPS Language Profile

Indian Languages:

Hindi
Sindhi
Marathi
Konkani
Bhojpuri
Malayalam
Telugu
Tamil
Bengali
Odia
Punjabi
Gujarati

East Asian Languages:

Mandarin
Cantonese
Japanese
Korean
Vietnamese

Other Asian Languages:

Arabic
Turkish
Farsi/Persian
Indonesian
Urdu
Hebrew

European Languages:

Russian
Ukrainian
Belarusian
Romanian
French
Italian
German