



**St. James Academy
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
Language Policy
2010 - 2014**

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I. Language Philosophy

St. James Academy's (SJA) IB MYP emphasizes language acquisition that encompasses **holistic learning, cognitive growth, communication, cultural identity**, and **intercultural awareness**. Learning a second language (Language B) while developing fluency in the mother tongue (English) builds a foundation for success in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in both languages. Learning more than one language is essential for recognition and appreciation of 21st Century global citizenship.

The IB Learner Profile describes a 'Communicator' as one who understands and expresses ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language. Enriching international experiences is a key component of IB practice. Communicating through oral, written, and nonverbal means in more than one language facilitates accomplishment of this goal. By transmitting and receiving information in this variety of ways, using both Language A and Language B, the communicator promotes intercultural understanding.

Since language is a foundation for intellectual and social learning, every SJA teacher is a language teacher. As students acquire knowledge, expand skills, and experience personal and emotional growth across disciplines, they begin to develop their **cultural** identities. This development is enhanced as literacy in dual languages expands students' **intercultural awareness**.

II. Language Profile

- 100% of SJA's current student population speaks the English language. English second language learners are considered for admission on a case-by-case basis. The demographics of SJA are less than ten percent racially diverse though more culturally diverse than this rural area of Northern Baltimore County, Monkton, Maryland.
- All students at SJA are offered a second language. French or Spanish are offered for IB MYP Years 1 – 3, with a minimum of 50 instructional hours per year.

III. Language Instruction in the Subject Areas

- Teachers, students and parents share ongoing language development for MYP students in SJA.
- SJA provides opportunities and resources to all learners in order to promote proficiency in language acquisition.

- Learning experiences are provided for students, using MYP objectives, concepts, and skills in both Language A (English) and Language B. (French or Spanish option)
- Language learning experiences vary in complexity based upon student aptitude and achievement.
- Assessment of language acquisition is ongoing and students and parents are provided feedback on progress in a trimester report card and annual parent conferences. Parent conferences may expand throughout the year, as needed.
- Instructional and assessment accommodations are made using differentiated instruction according to individual student needs as recommended by professional evaluators, documented IEP's, SJA reading resource coordinator, school counselor, and/or peer reports of successful strategies.
- The four dimensions of teaching language (activate prior knowledge, scaffold meaning, inquire and extend language, and affirm identity) to promote engagement are utilized at SJA.
- The school is responsible for identifying the language needs of each learner.
- SJA focuses on the cross-curricular nature of language learning while continuously developing the skills of literacy.

IV. Language Support in the Subject Areas

Support the development of Language A for all students. SJA will:

- Provide opportunities for all students to learn further languages.
- Promote a stimulating learning environment for students who do not speak the mother tongue.
- Integrate the learning of languages into all subject areas.
- Build capacity amongst all staff to activate each learner's prior understanding.
- Collaborate as interdisciplinary teams to differentiate tasks leading to expanded background knowledge.
- Implement scaffolding strategies to foster each learner's independence and ownership for his or her own learning.
- Provide additional language instruction and/or tutorial, when necessary.
- Provide literacy support and practice for learners to maintain high expectations across the programme.
- Provide resources and materials
- Recognize and support language development to ensure full participation in the academic programme, as well as in the social life of the school.
- Provide opportunity for school-supported self-taught options.

- Provide resources and materials from either the Prescribed Book List (PBL) for chosen language, or the Prescribed World Literature List (PWL).
- Ensure that all teachers recognize their role as language teachers as well as subject specialists.
- Offer school-supported self-taught Language A support and courses, for which the Reading Resource Coordinator will ensure that assessments and guidelines are maintained for each learner.

V. Second Language Acquisition

IB Middle Years Programme

Years 1-3 Language of instruction is English (Language A)

- Language B Spanish or French

Years 1-3

Students are assessed for appropriate placement in Language B levels at the entrance to Grade 6, Year 1. Teacher recommendation, parent and student input are encouraged. The transitions to Years 2 & 3 are progressive. Students continue the Language B that was developed in Year 1. Years 4 & 5 placements are determined by the future high school.

Programme Goals provide consistency of practice where more than one language of instruction is used.

1. Develop a caring language community, accepting and supporting of all.
2. If necessary, translate letters to parents before they are sent home.
3. Use books in Language A for scaffolding work.
4. Support language instruction by providing time to meet and plan literacy development across languages.
5. Integrate second language acquisition learners to develop proficiency and relationships.
6. Provide resources, materials, labels, and signs for all languages whenever possible and appropriate to current population

VI. Conclusion/Considerations

- Differentiated Instruction (DI) methods are used to address the needs of those learning in a language other than Language A.
- The library/media center ensures that students have access to a variety of media in multiple languages. Books, audiotapes, CD's, technology support, as well as online bilingual textbooks and resources facilitate language competencies for all learners.

- MLA Format (Modern Language Association) is most commonly used to write papers and list works cited.
- All IB programme team members are introduced to the language policy at the onset of each new school year.
- The language policy will be reviewed during the school curriculum review cycle to ensure that this document is current and has the input of the faculty, staff, and students.
- As learners move through inquiry to interdisciplinary learning in the MYP, the regular use and range of language competencies facilitates success.

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