



# Language Policy for World Academy of Tirana



## Our Philosophy of Language

This language policy aims to define the philosophy of World Academy of Tirana, where we offer education to children through the Primary Years Programme (PYP) from grades Pre-Elementary through grade 5. The purpose of this document is to outline our goals for language teaching and learning, and to guide our curriculum. The beliefs of our teachers and administrative staff support the goals included in this document.

At the World Academy of Tirana, through our language program, we aim to develop effective communicators who are able to express their thoughts and feelings in daily life. We believe that students should be present in a language-rich environment where all school community members support the acquisition and enrichment of languages. Language learning nurtures growth and development and supports international diversity and cultural understanding. WAT understands that mother tongue language development is crucial for maintaining cultural identity. We also believe that acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and supports internationalism.

## School Language Profile for WAT

- The primary language of communication and instruction is English.
- The main language of teaching and learning is English.
- Albanian is the mother tongue for approximately 60% of our primary and 80% of our secondary students.
- Albanian is maintained at grade level proficiency for native speakers through daily coursework mandated by the Albanian government.
- Albanian language acquisition classes are provided for non-native speaking students.
- French is offered to all students from Kindergarten and up as an additional language.
- German and Mandarin classes are offered at varying levels as elective co-curriculars.
- English language acquisition classes are provided for students from Grade 3 and up, in accordance with IB Language B acquisition requirements.

## Language Acquisition

WAT language of instruction is English. Speaking, reading and writing competence in English is necessary to gain access to and understand the IB curriculum. Classroom teachers are qualified and experienced, receiving ongoing professional development, to ensure their lessons and learning activities support students to improve their English language proficiency. IB curriculum offers opportunities for students to be active participants in the learning process. Teaching and learning is based on meaningful, authentic, relevant and purposeful real-life experience.



## The Written Curriculum

"What do we want to learn?" The five essential elements provide the framework for learning:

- acquisition of knowledge
- understanding of the key concepts
- disciplinary and transdisciplinary skills
- higher order thinking and reasoning skills: analysis, evaluation, synthesis, connection
- attitudes toward learning
- learning through responsible service and action.

## Effective Language Teaching in the Classroom

At WAT, we believe students need to develop an understanding and appreciation for language. This appreciation is constructed through the four strands of language, which include: 1) Speaking and Listening 2) Presenting and Viewing 3) Reading 4) Writing

## Albanian Language

Our Albanian language programs are designed to help students develop and maintain interest in the language itself, while gaining the knowledge and skills to become proficient in Albanian. The programs offered accommodate two distinct language needs within our school.

- Albanian A is designed for mother tongue speakers of Albanian heritage. This program allows native speakers to build language proficiency and cultural identity. IB curriculum encourages students to continue to develop to improve their mother tongue language, while developing fluency in the English language and acquiring additional languages.
- Albanian B is for non-native speakers and international students. This program allows students to also discover Albanian culture, arts and history, while being introduced to basic words and phrases in the Albanian language, which pertain to the alphabet, family, numbers, foods and other important aspects when living in a new country.

## French Language

French is offered as an additional language from Kindergarten through DP. French Beginner and French B classes encourage students to inquire about French culture, arts, history and tradition. French classes are offered in the class timetable and differentiated by group to meet individual levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced, native) as students' language abilities improve.

## German and Mandarin Languages

German and Mandarin are also offered as additional languages from Kindergarten through DP



outside the class timetable, and differentiated by group to meet individual levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced, native) as students' language abilities improve.

## Language Practices in the Classroom and at School

- all teachers are responsible for teaching English language acquisition skills at all times
- language learning is supported in an age-appropriate, interactive, hands-on environment
- instructional methods and materials support and challenge individual needs of each child
- instructional methods include inquiry-based language lessons
- students acquire language facility differently, according to their learning style, experiences, abilities and pace of learning
- only English may be used to communicate in mixed language groups at school
- all students must study at least one language other than their mother tongue language
- students shall receive appropriate, timely feedback of their progress in language acquisition
- students shall recognize their own growth in the process of learning a new language
- students shall pursue authentic language learning experiences to develop language skills
- students shall attend differentiated classes according to their language learning needs
- teachers shall give special accommodations for students who are not proficient in English
- in-service training for teachers shall offer current research for language learning methods
- students' understanding of subject-specific vocabulary shall be monitored and assessed on a timely basis, using a variety of assessment types
- students shall move to a higher language acquisition group upon achieving its precedent

## Assessment Practices for Language

The four IB strands of language learning are assessed as a continuous process, using various methods to progress through the six phases of language learning, including:



- observations
- performance and project assessments
- open-ended tasks
- portfolio writing samples
- Teachers use various methods to record, analyze and determine student language progress:
- rubrics based on the criteria for each of the four strands in each of the six phases
- samples of student's work
- anecdotal notes and records

## Essential Agreements for Language Assessments

Language assessment is an ongoing process of gathering, analyzing and reflecting on evidence to make informed judgment and provide consistent feedback to drive further student learning.

- Use of IB language benchmarks is used to determine the skills and concepts to be integrated and delivered through units and those to be taught as stand-alone topics.
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- Teachers plan, assess, record and report students' language acquisition progress.
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- Student assessment of learning progress will be reported on each end-of-term report.

## Guidelines for English Language Acquisition

1. The primary objective of the IB English Language Acquisition program is to enable English Language Learners to acquire survival skills, conversational fluency, and subject-specific language proficiency to support their participation in all academics. Students will progress through the 6 language acquisition phases, gaining proficiency, according to IB criteria, in each of the four strands that focus on speaking, listening, reading and writing English.
2. English language learners are identified to receive individual language acquisition support through assessments, student portfolios and other samples of work, school reports/records, teachers' anecdotal records/observations, and parent/teacher/student conferences.
3. Teachers are committed in practice and philosophy to the ideal that additional language learners draw on their mother tongue language and culture: as a resource in their learning, as a celebration of their diversity, and to develop their personal identity. Thus, students are encouraged to develop their mother tongue language skills in addition to learning English.

## Parent Involvement with the Language Process

Teachers believe that parents play an important role in their child's education and the learning process continues, and should be reinforced, at home. Students benefit from reading, writing and speaking in their mother tongue, as well as in English. Teachers and Librarians work closely with parents to provide materials or resources that will benefit student learning and acquisition of other languages. Parents can support their child by ensuring completion of homework daily.



## Language Policy Review

Language Policy will be reviewed and updated annually by WAT teachers. Changes can be made on an as-needed basis, upon approval of the WAT Senior Management Team.

