



Southlands Elementary School Language Policy





IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers: We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable: We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers: We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators: We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Principled: We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-minded: We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring: We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

Risk-takers: We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced: We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives - intellectual, physical, and emotional - to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

Reflective: We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.



The Southlands Elementary School community provides a child-centred education that addresses each student's academic, social, emotional, and physical development. We support learners to become compassionate, inquiring, and engaged citizens who take action to improve the local and global community.

Purpose

This policy is intended as a source of information, for the school community, on language teaching and learning at Southlands Elementary. This policy outlines how language development is taught, supported, and assessed at school, with the goal of consistency between classes and across grades. This policy is intended to assist teachers in their planning, teaching, and assessment of language development and to clarify, for parents, the ways language development is supported at school and can be supported at home.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with our Inclusion Policy, Assessment Policy, and Academic Integrity Policy.

International Baccalaureate Programme Standards and Practices

Standard: Culture through policy implementation (0301)

Schools develop, implement, communicate and review effective policies that help to create a school culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.

Culture 4: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language. (0301-04)

- **Culture 4.1:** The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (0301-04-0100)
- **Culture 4.2:** The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)
- **Culture 4.3:** The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)
- **Culture 4.4:** The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context. (0301-04-0400)
 - **PYP 1:** PYP: The school ensures that students learn a language in addition to the language of instruction, at least from the age of seven; multilingual programmes where students are learning at least two languages can but are not required to offer additional languages. (0301-04-0411)

Standard: Students as lifelong learners (0402)

Learning in IB schools aims to develop students ready for further education and life beyond the classroom.

Lifelong Learners 7: Students pursue opportunities to explore and develop their personal and culture identities. (0402-07)

- **Lifelong Learners 7.3:** Students take opportunities to develop their language profiles. (0402-07-0300)

Standard: Approaches to teaching (0403)

IB programmes encourage approaches to teaching that create learning experiences that are shown to be meaningful to the school community.

Approaches to teaching 5: Teachers remove barriers to learning to enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve challenging personal learning goals. (0403-05)

- **Approaches to teaching 5.4:** Teachers support language development with consideration for the language profiles of students. (0403-05-0400)

Philosophy

At Southlands we acknowledge that language is the foundation for all learning. We believe the ability to communicate confidently is a fundamental part of positive social interactions, academic success, and meta-cognitive awareness, and that the ability to use language to express ideas, to understand others, and to work collaboratively is crucial for students to be engaged members of the local and global community. We believe that every teacher is a language teacher, as all learning takes place through language and we view students' on-going language development as the shared responsibility of all staff, parents, and students.

We believe multilingualism is an important part of being internationally minded and that it fosters intercultural understanding. Our students come to our school with many different language backgrounds and vary in their ability to communicate in English. We aim to support the development of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and media literacy skills in English for all students, and we aim to support the development of an additional language for all students. We also aim to honour and nurture the many languages spoken at home by our students' families. We believe the diversity of languages used by our school community is an asset.

School Language Profile

At the time of writing, 80% of students at Southlands live in the surrounding neighbourhood, and the rest commute from other neighbourhoods. Twenty-five percent of students are Indigenous and live on the Musqueam Indian Reserve.

We embrace the diversity of culture and language in our school community. Approximately 75% of students speak English, and 25% of students speak a first language other than English. The students who speak English as an additional language are at various stages in their acquisition of the English language. After English, Mandarin is the most common first language in our school community. Over 15 other languages are represented at Southlands, including Cantonese, Farsi, Korean, Spanish, Croatian, Ukranian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Japanese. All of the staff speak English fluently, and some speak a first language other than English. Currently, the Musqueam Indian Band is working to revive the həŋqəmiŋəŋ language within their own community.

Because many students are more comfortable in their first language than in English, there is a need to support English language development in the classroom. Our school is allocated Resource teacher support, and some of this time is used to support students who are developing English language skills.

When students enroll at Southlands, their home languages and preferred languages are self-identified on the registration form. Each year, classroom teachers conduct both formal and informal language assessments, to determine students' English language proficiency, as well as surveys to gather information about students' home languages and language preferences, experiences, and goals.

When students who are not born in Canada or who do not speak English as their home language register for a Vancouver public school, they are required to register through the Newcomer Welcome Centre. During this process, a formal English Language proficiency assessment may be done and this information is passed on to the school. English Language Learners at Southlands have an Annual Instruction Plan that is coordinated and developed by the resource teachers at Southlands.

Legal Language Requirements

Southlands Elementary School is a public school under the jurisdiction of the British Columbia Ministry of Education and the Vancouver Board of Education. The main language of instruction must be English and French language instruction is mandated from grades 5-7. The grade-level expectations in each subject area require that students have at least a basic proficiency in English in order to fully engage in the curriculum.

BC has curricular competencies and content mandated for kindergarten - grade 7 for English Language Arts as well as for grades 5-7 for Core French. The BC Ministry of Education has also developed a set of Core Competencies that transcend traditional subject areas. The IB Approaches to Learning and the IB Learner Profile mesh well with the Core Competencies, one of which is Communication.

Components of Language Instruction at Southlands

IB Primary Years Programme		BC Ministry of Education Curriculum		
IB Learner Profile	PYP Approaches to Learning	Core Competencies	English Language Arts Curriculum	Languages Curriculum
<p>Communicator We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.</p>	<p>Communication Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● exchanging information skills (listening interpreting speaking) ● literacy skills (reading writing) ● media representation ● informed choices 	<p>Communication: Communicating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● connecting and engaging with others ● focusing on intent and purpose ● acquiring and presenting information <p>Communication: Collaborating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● working collectively ● supporting group interactions ● determining common purposes 	<p>Curricular competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● comprehend and connect (reading, listening, viewing) ● create and communicate (writing, speaking, representing) <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● story/text ● strategies and processes ● language features, structures, and conventions 	<p>Curricular competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● thinking and communicating ● personal and social awareness

Language Use in School

For more information on translanguaging, please see Appendices 1 and 2.

English is the working language at the school and the main language of instruction, and all staff are fluent in English. Students are encouraged to use English in the classroom, so that there is a common language, however all teachers foster a learning environment where other languages are valued and translanguaging strategies, including translating, are encouraged. All languages are encouraged in the hallways and on the playground, provided they are not being used to exclude others.

Classroom Environment

We aim to foster our students' natural curiosity and encourage them to become life-long language learners by providing a literacy-rich environment that includes a wide variety of materials and resources, organized classroom libraries that are easily accessible to students, evidence of student inquiry, thinking, and learning in the classrooms and throughout the school, and literature that represents diverse cultural backgrounds.

We aim to provide opportunities for students to learn about other languages in both the local and global community. We want our students to see, hear, share, and be curious about language. Some of the ways we do this are by making sure the languages of the students are spoken, sung, and displayed in the classroom, by playing language games, hosting multilingual performances, reading bilingual texts, exploring similarities and differences between languages, inviting community members into the classroom, and investigating language and culture through units of inquiry.

Language Instruction in School

Language learning is fostered during the entire day and integrated into every aspect of the curriculum. Language learning is embedded into the PYP Programme of Inquiry, but it also occurs outside the units of

inquiry when appropriate. In both contexts, language instruction is planned to be meaningful, authentic and inquiry-based. For language learning, structured, purposeful inquiry is usually most effective. Teachers consider the language learning needs of their students when planning inside and outside the units of inquiry, and they plan for differentiation.

Our students are diverse in their knowledge, understanding, and skill development. Through scaffolding, teachers provide various opportunities for students to connect this knowledge to their new learning. We believe students acquire language by being immersed in it, but sometimes direct instruction is necessary, particularly for students learning in a language other than their home language.

In the primary grades, the focus of English language instruction is the acquisition of basic listening, speaking, reading, writing, and digital literacy skills. Oral language development is a fundamental component of the primary grades and includes instructional activities such as small and large group discussions, group-work, presenting, story-telling, and singing. Teachers model reading and writing with instructional activities such as think-alouds, mini lessons, and mentor texts. Shared reading and writing extends understanding and models strategies, guided reading and writing reinforces skills, and independent reading and writing provides opportunities for practice.

These practices are continued into the intermediate grades, but with more emphasis on using language skills to acquire information and develop a better understanding of curricular-specific vocabulary as well as transdisciplinary knowledge and concepts. Students are given opportunities to develop their understanding of both transdisciplinary and disciplinary language, through the use of content-related vocabulary, text features, graphic organizers, and the Approaches to Learning. Meta language (learning about language) occurs through methods such as translanguaging strategies, novel studies, oral presentations, poetry, and explorations of how language is used in different contexts and by experts in different fields.

Our district offers support from a Speech-Language Pathologist who consults and works with students who require support beyond what can be offered at the school. As well, we have access to support from a Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher. *Please refer to Southlands Inclusion Policy for more information.*

Additional Language Instruction

We believe it is important that all students are exposed to additional languages. This introduces students to different cultural perspectives and expands their understanding of the world. All students receive French as an additional language from kindergarten to grade 7, taught by a French language specialist. For grades 5-7, the French curriculum is mandated by the BC Ministry of Education, and for kindergarten to grade 4, the French curriculum is locally developed. Language teaching and learning emulates authentic language use, and priority will be given to creating inquiry-based French language units that focus on a logical language learning progression, with ongoing reference to the Learner Profile and the Approaches to Learning.

Southlands is working with the Musqueam Language Department to explore ways to introduce the hən̓qəmiṇəm language to all our students, as well as explore the possibility of having some PYP vocabulary translated into hən̓qəmiṇəm to display around the school. We currently have permission and resources to introduce students to the hən̓qəmiṇəm alphabet and display alphabet cards in the school.

Home Language Support

We know students who feel their home languages are valued at school are often more successful. We also know students who have a strong understanding of their home language will find the acquisition of a second language much easier. Students are encouraged to maintain and enrich their home language(s), by continuing to listen, read, speak, perform, write, and view text in these language(s) at home. The continued study of their home language will be beneficial for their cognitive growth and important for the nourishment of their personal cultural identity. Strong home language skills are usually an indicator for greater success in learning an additional language.

We teach, model, and encourage the use of translanguaging strategies in the classroom. Translanguaging is the process where students make connections between their languages or use language skills from one language to support another. Students have access to Google translate and may access internet articles in their first language. As well, we have a small but growing section of multilingual books in the library.

When needed, we have access to an English Language Learners Consultant, whose multi-faceted role includes providing resources, professional development and mentoring, cross-cultural education, and parent presentations. The Vancouver School Board also has Multicultural Liaison Workers, who are able to facilitate communication between families and school staff. Liaison workers are currently available for Cantonese/Mandarin, Filipino/Tagalog, Korean, Punjabi/Hindi, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Liaison workers assist with meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and dissemination of important information. As well, through the generosity of parents in our community, we are often able to translate school newsletters.

English Language Learners

Please refer to Southlands Inclusion Policy for more information.

We want all students to have equal access to the curriculum and we recognize the importance of English language proficiency for students to be able to access the full curriculum. We recognize that language development moves through three stages: learning language, learning through language, and learning about language. For English Language Learners, we first provide support for students to develop basic interpersonal communicative skills. Support for cognitive academic language proficiency is given once students have a basic level of social language proficiency. We provide scaffolding for language learning, using strategies such as visual aids, graphic organizers, demonstrations, dramatizations, small, structured collaborative groups, and allowing students to use their home language to research.

We recognize that it may take up to seven years for English Language Learners to develop the same level of academic proficiency as those learning in their home language. We also recognize that learning in a language other than one's home language can be fatiguing, so we ensure that English Language Learners are given adequate time to process new vocabulary and information and we are mindful of their emotional and physical well-being.

Assessment

This policy is to be used in conjunction with our Assessment Policy.

As language is the vehicle for communication, the assessment of knowledge, conceptual understanding, and many skill sets is also, inadvertently, an assessment of language. As much as possible, we attempt to separate the two and provide opportunities for differentiation so that students can demonstrate their learning in the way that suits them best. For example, students who are not confident writers may choose to demonstrate their learning with an oral presentation or visual representation. When assessing specific language skills, we allow students to choose the content so any gaps they have in knowledge or understanding do not affect their ability to demonstrate their language skills.

Assessment tools and strategies for language include, but are not limited to: oral presentations, participation in class discussions, response journals, student self-reflection, performance scales, rubrics and single-point rubrics, checklists, running records, locally developed assessments, reading inventories, and teacher observations.

Twice a year, in the Fall and Spring, classroom teachers have students do a school-wide write, using the Three Step Write process. These writing samples are assessed using the BC Performance Standards for informal impromptu writing. As well, we assess students' reading skills each term using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Literacy folders are maintained for each student in grades K-7 and contain the Three Step Write samples and DRA assessments, as well as any other relevant literacy assessments.

Students who qualify for support as English Language Learners are assessed and tracked using an Annual Instruction Plan. Their progress in the acquisition of academic English language skills are communicated using an English Language Learner Matrix as well as in their written report cards.

Role of the Family

We recognize and honour families as a child's first language teacher. Families play a vital role in their children's success as language learners, and we anticipate families will continue their role as language teachers by providing language rich environments for their children at home. We encourage families to provide their children with opportunities to maintain and develop their home language. When English is an additional language, we also encourage families to provide opportunities for their children to be exposed to authentic English experiences in the community. Parents can also support language development by providing opportunities for their child to read, view, and listen to a wide variety of materials in the home language as well as English.

Spelling and Referencing Protocols

Staff and students are encouraged to use British (Canadian) spelling of words. Citation and referencing is to follow APA or MLA style. Our focus is on helping students understand the purpose and importance of citation, as well as the reasons for using a standardized system.

Professional Development

The PYP Coordinator, the Pedagogical Leadership Team, and the Professional Development Committee will work together to ensure staff is made aware of professional development opportunities related to language learning and teaching. As well, the Pedagogical Leadership Team will encourage staff to participate in related IB workshops such as: The role of language, Bilingual and multilingual teaching and learning, and Inquiry and the additional language teacher.

Professional Responsibility

It is the professional responsibility of all staff members to be fully aware of the content of this document, to accurately communicate the information to the school community, and to adhere to this document at all times.

Policy Review

The PYP Coordinator is responsible for developing and maintaining a policy review cycle, for updating this document as necessary, and for informing the school community of changes to the document. This policy will be submitted to Staff Committee each Fall for approval, and will be reviewed in-depth by a representative committee at least every five years. If significant changes are made to school practices, the policy will be reviewed, so that it reflects the most current state of practice. When teachers participate in professional development related to language teaching and learning, the PYP Coordinator will ask those teachers to review the language policy to see if it reflects their new understandings about language.

Communication of this Policy

The PYP Coordinator is responsible for providing copies of this policy to the school community. This is done through staff meetings, emails to staff and the PAC, MS Teams postings, and the school website.

References

IBO. (2008). [Guidelines for developing a school language policy](#). Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization.

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IBO. (2018). [How multilingual is my school - A self-audit tool](#). Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization.

IBO. (2008). Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB Programmes. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization.

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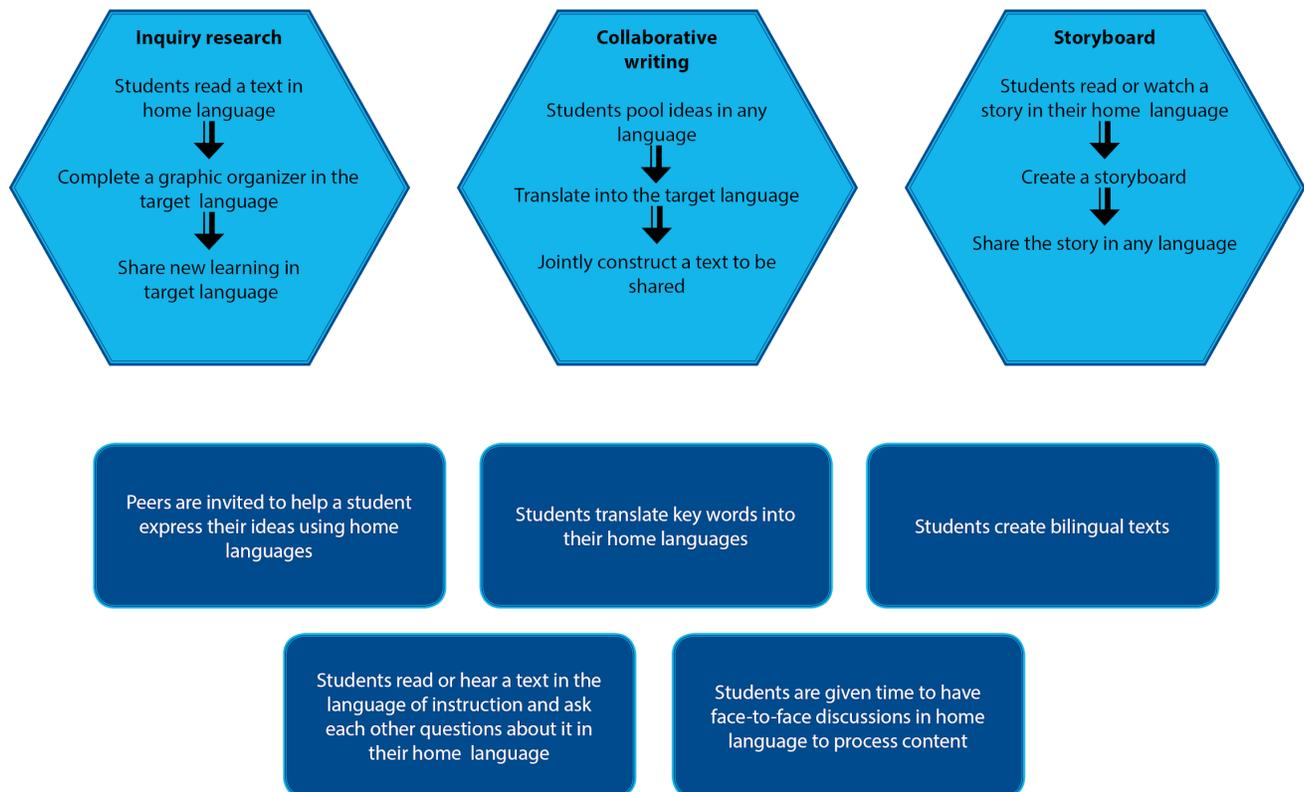
Planning for Translanguaging

Effective translanguaging strategies are intentional. When planning for inquiries and assessment, teachers build in appropriate opportunities for students to draw on home and additional languages.

Planning Questions

- What are the language backgrounds and needs of my students?
- Do I want to scaffold content or language?
- What content is not easily accessible to particular students?
- What are the unit aspects which might best be approached through a home language? (For example, local or cultural knowledge).
- In what ways can translanguaging strategies be incorporated into the engagements—pre-engagement, partner/collaborative and using home language resources?
- Am I using home languages for input or output or both?

Examples of translanguaging strategies



Building an Active Translanguaging Classroom

Opportunities to explore and develop translanguaging strategies exist in lots of daily contexts and many may arise spontaneously. Making languages visible in the learning environment through class routines, labels, signs, transitions and interactions will encourage and foster these moments. Teachers may not understand all the languages of the classroom, but by seeing themselves as co-learners they support and build positive attitudes in their learning community.

Phonics

- Explore similarities and differences between the sounds of students' languages.
- Have fun comparing animal sounds in different languages.
- Use rhyme and tongue-twisters in different languages in the class.
- Identify different sounds through onomatopoeia.

Texts

- Students read or listen in home language text then transfer to the target language.
- Start with the target language and translate to the home language.
- Students research through home language but present in the target language.
- Compare the different ways language is written - letters, characters, numbers, directionality.

Vocabulary

- Students explore similarities and differences in word form and meaning in different languages.
- Build word walls with many languages.
- Hunt for patterns among words in different languages.

Sentences

- Explore similarities and differences in word order.
- Look at tenses in different languages - what are some of the ways languages express the past and future? How do languages use or not use articles (a, an, the)?

Language Norms

- How is gender expressed in different languages?
- How is formal and informal language different?
- What form does politeness take in different languages?
- What are the different forms of address?
- How does language express cultural values?

