

Abby Kelley Foster International Baccalaureate Language Policy

Philosophy

Abby Kelley Foster High School believes the cultural and language diversity of its student body should be celebrated and integrated into all classroom curriculum to better promote peace through intercultural understanding and respect. It is the goal of the faculty to provide linguistically and culturally diverse students with instruction that will assist them in language development and in mastering academic subject content. As such, all instructors and staff within AKF are language teachers. Language is an essential element in developing globally minded, lifelong learners. Students consistently and effectively reflect the IB Learner Profile: risk-takers, communicators, inquirers, and thinkers who are knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, and reflective.

Many of the students at Abby Kelley Foster are multilingual. The student body itself reflects diversity in mother tongue and cultural heritage, including Spanish, Portuguese, Twi, and Creole. Among the IB Diploma students Spanish and Twi are common languages spoken at home.

The language of instruction at Abby Kelley High School is English. Foreign language classes are offered in Spanish and Latin. All our teachers are required to attend Sheltered English Immersion classes and must obtain a successful endorsement to renew their professional licensure within the state of Massachusetts.

Practices

Admissions

Abby Kelley Foster is a public charter school, so there are no English language proficiency requirements. However, due to admission restrictions beyond the sixth grade, high school students have received a minimum of three years of language support services.

The Abby Kelley Foster High School IB Diploma programme accepts applications from all students with a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. All applicants are evaluated based on grades, teacher recommendations, a writing assessment, and an interview process. The AKF High School IB Programme staff encourages and supports all students accepted into the programme in their academic endeavors regardless of language proficiency.

Language A

The teaching of language is a continuous process supported across all academic subject groups and curriculum. At AKF High School, Language A is limited to the English language. Students are taught to develop close-reading and analytical skills in both written and oral formats over a variety of text genres. Language A course opportunities are English Literature Higher Level and English Literature Standard Level. However, support of language development is required across all IB courses.

Students are expected to develop their written language skills in all subject areas. Through formal written assessments and oral presentations, a working knowledge of MLA, APA and Chicago style citation practices are required. In alignment with the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy, turnitin.com is utilized consistently throughout the IB Diploma Programme and serves as both an accountability check and a teaching tool. Writing assignments may take the form of, but are not limited to, personal reflections, journaling, essay writing, and lab reports. Feedback is provided by teachers and peers through the use of rubrics, and written and verbal communications that are focused on building language skills.

Oral communication is strengthened through a variety of instructional methods and activities: formal oral presentations, debates, Socratic Seminars, TOK-style open-ended questioning. Class discussions provide opportunities to develop verbal communication skills. Instructional feedback must include a sensitivity to cultural and language backgrounds.

Language B

All AKF students are required to take three years of a second language (one required year of Latin included); they are encouraged to achieve proficiency through a fourth and fifth year of the program. Currently, students are offered the opportunity to develop language skills in Spanish or Latin. As language is the means by which knowledge is acquired, developed and shared, foreign languages are vehicles for acquiring knowledge more broadly, diversely and, in constant comparison with one's mother tongue, more reflectively. Beyond language development, study of a second language promotes an appreciation of different cultures.

The methods of foreign language learning at AKF follow the structure of "trivium": grammar, dialectic and rhetoric. The rudiments of vocabulary and syntactical structure come first; the growth in relational awareness of ordered statements and their logic comes next; the skilled use of language for expression, argument, narrative, and poetic beauty comes last. Throughout their studies the first two foundational elements continue to grow in complexity, sophistication and nuance.

Students' foreign language skill development is assessed through verbal and written translation, formal and informal commentary, reading comprehension, and written communication. In alignment with the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy, the use of online translators is not allowed.

Language Support

Abby Kelley Foster High School encourages students to share their unique cultural and language perspectives. We encourage students to continue to use their mother-tongue language skills in order to promote their personal identity and improve their overall learning ability. Native Spanish speakers are encouraged to provide peer tutoring for the non-Spanish speaking peers. Within the Spanish classrooms, differing dialects and vocabulary are recognized and brought into classroom learning. In Literature and History classrooms, cultural backgrounds and perspectives are encouraged, as it promotes a sense of global mindedness and openness among our students. In choosing Extended Essay or History IA topics, students are encouraged to pursue areas that have personal connection to their cultural identity. The library contains literary works in languages other than English. Other resources can be accessed through online resources, interlibrary loans, and cooperative arrangements with local universities.

In alignment with the Abby Kelley Foster philosophy that all teachers are language teachers, and in accordance with Massachusetts' state licensure requirements, members of the high school teaching staff received Sheltered English Immersion training and endorsement. Core curriculum teachers are required to have 15 Professional Development Points in the area of Sheltered English Immersion or in English as a Second Language. Translation services are provided for any families requesting such support.

Communication of Policy

The Abby Kelley Foster High School IB Language Policy will be distributed to all IB teachers and school administration. In addition, the policy will be posted on the IB page of the school website.

Language Policy Committee:

James Brehany – Language B Teacher

Kelly Davila – IB Coordinator

Jessica Dalzell – Language A Teacher

Roxanne Padilla – Language B Teacher

Amelie Tambolleo – ELL Coordinator

References and Resources

IB Guidelines for developing a language policy. IBO, 2008.

Language policy. IBO, 2014.

Abby Kelley Foster English Language Guide, 2016.

Academic Honesty & Integrity Policy, Abby Kelley Foster High School, 2011.

Language Policy of Vanguard High School in Marion County, Florida.

Language Policy of Rio Mesa High School.

Language Policy of Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.