

SFE IB Language Policy 2022-2023

Mission Statement

In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, we are an inclusive school community that attentively nurtures love, understanding, faith, knowledge, and individuality.

Language Philosophy

Since language is the primary means of communication and learning, all teachers at St. Francis Elementary School are charged with the responsibility of instructing students in language development via writing, speaking, and reading. Students are expected to become proficient in English. In addition, St. Francis offers both Spanish and Italian as second language acquisition courses.

St. Francis Elementary School seeks to develop and continue the Franciscan charism by providing a positive world outlook and an acceptance of diverse world cultures and value systems. This global understanding will prepare students to effectively relate, communicate, and interact with the world around them. Teaching towards a global perspective provides students with the necessary learning environment to acquire multicultural appreciation and the ability to communicate in a world of linguistic and cultural diversity.

School Language Profile and Demographics

English is the central language of instruction at St. Francis with a second language, Spanish, being introduced at the TK level. Sixth grade students have the choice of continuing with Spanish or studying Italian in grades 6-8.

Currently, we do not collect student mother tongue information. All demographic data is developed by the Diocese of Sacramento for annual census reporting.

Mother Tongue Development

English is the main language of students attending St. Francis Elementary School. Based upon our current knowledge and information, we have less than 5 students for whom English is not their first language.

In an effort to build awareness of and expand the multilingual/multicultural nature of our community, cultural events (Day of the Dead altars and artwork, Multicultural Days, dancer for Black History Month and one with Native American dancer-5th, inclusivity plan) are planned with an objective toward developing an appreciation for different languages and traditions that are part of our school family.

SFE IB Language Policy 2022-2023

We are committed to increasing our classroom libraries and media center's offerings of multicultural literature and resources. In addition, the MYP summer reading program incorporates multicultural voices and is creating suggested reading lists to enable students to explore reading content centered around inter and intra-national cultures.

Current Practices of Language Teaching and Learning

We believe that intentional and active reading in all subject groups advances the development of language skills that nurture a knowledgeable and open-minded learner. Across grade levels, we have purposefully chosen texts and literature that represent a multicultural lens and promote an appreciation for different languages and cultures. These diverse texts are leveled for readers of varying abilities. Teachers use an online reading program (Accelerated Reader) and vocabulary program (Membean, grades 5-8) to aid in personalized and differentiated instruction.

We believe that intentional and active writing in all subject groups supports the development of language necessary for the clarity and creativity of thought that drives a true inquirer. Our preferred bibliographic style is MLA.

We believe that intentional and active listening and speaking in all subject groups is the foundation for the development of language necessary to be an effective communicator. Students engage in thought-provoking, meaningful discussions that promote language fluency and proficient use of domain-specific vocabulary. We use music, as well as the visual and performing arts, as modes of communication to enhance the understanding and power of language and to celebrate other cultures. Most importantly, students practice listening and speaking skills that lead to the open-minded, caring reflection that deepens understanding.

As well as a cross-curricular emphasis on language development, the acquisition of domain-specific vocabulary is inherent and emphasized in each subject group. For example, in Design Class students are expected to learn the strategies to engineer a solution to a problem by utilizing various current Computer Science vocabulary and concepts.

For students who require additional support in language development, the school has an Education Achievement Specialist who works with individuals and small groups regularly. Also, all students have access to our school library and classroom libraries to select reading materials that meet their individual reading levels and interests across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Admission

SFE IB Language Policy 2022-2023

Our language policy aligns with our admission policy in welcoming students of diverse backgrounds. While all students are expected to work toward high-level mastery of the English language, we strive to support students' language learning regardless of their linguistic background. Currently, with the aid of our Spanish teacher, we tutor and support Spanish-speaking students, not only in their mother tongue, but also in supporting their growth in acquiring English. In terms of greater admission policy, determination of student admission is done by the Principal after baseline evaluation and conversation with families.

Assessment

St. Francis teachers use students' writing to assess language development. In addition, students' listening and speaking skills provide another form of assessment. Reading is assessed in a variety of ways through formative and summative assessments.

Data from the diocesan-mandated STAR standardized tests, as well as teacher-generated, standards-based tests, guide instruction. Longitudinal data from the STAR tests are available to teachers online and visited by Educational Achievement Specialist and subject teachers to determine individual student needs.

Continuous assessment to monitor language development is an integral part of the language program. Teacher observation notes and in-class assessments allow teachers to make ongoing adjustments to instruction. Teachers annually discuss students for the next grade level.

Language Programmes at SFE

The World Languages program emphasizes the development of the basic language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students are provided opportunities to recognize and reflect upon modern cultural traditions and to discover modes of expression. In addition, students explore the similarities and differences of language structure, syntax, and development.

PYP

First grade through fifth grade students receive 45 minutes of a global language (Spanish) instruction twice a week. Students are introduced not only to the Spanish language but also to the cultures of Spanish speaking countries.

MYP

Students in grades six through eight opt to study either Spanish or Italian. Students explore their language of choice and its culture in order to be open to the perspectives, values, and traditions

SFE IB Language Policy 2022-2023

they encompass and to encourage international mindedness. The development of basic communication skills is balanced with appreciation, empathy, and respect for the people, their cultures, and traditions.

Communicating the Language Policy

The language policy is communicated to our entire school community by posting on the school website.

Reviewing

The language policy is reviewed and revised by all faculty members on an annual basis to reflect the current needs of our school community and to ensure consistency with IB expectations.

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SFE IB Language Policy 2022-2023

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