

# International Baccalaureate Diploma Language Policy

Holy Heart of Mary High School

## *Philosophy*

- Language is the foundation for communicating and learning
- The acquisition of language is a life-long process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth
- All teachers are language teachers
- Teachers employ a variety of formative and summative assessment strategies and instructional methods that encourage the development of listening, speaking, reading, writing and presentation skills
- Students have the opportunity to engage in realistic and meaningful language learning experiences within a positive and encouraging environment
- Language learning refers not only to the acquisition of another language, but also to the understanding of a different culture, and reinforces international-mindedness and cultural identity

## *Language Profile*

The two official languages of Canada and its provinces are English and French. Within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) the primary settlers, and current vast majority of the population, are of Irish and English descent with a smaller, but active Francophone community. However, within the capital city of St. John's there is a more diverse population. Holy Heart of Mary, the largest school in the province, located in the center of St. John's, currently has 90% of the school population with English as their mother tongue. The school community has grown to reflect the larger, diverse community in the city as it now has students from more than 60 countries and speak more than 25 languages.

English	German	Albanian	Cantonese	Swahili
French	Norwegian	Arabic	Mandarin	Dinka
Italian	Russian	Punjabi	Korean	Tigrinya
Spanish	Bosnian	Hindi	Nepali	Kissi
Portuguese	Uzbek	Urdu	Filipino	Sinhalese

## *Language Instruction at Holy Heart of Mary High School*

English is the language of instruction at Holy Heart of Mary. The Department of Education of NL requires that all students successfully complete an English Language Arts course at each grade level in senior high school (Grades 10-12) as well as one optional language course. Prior to attending high school all students in the province have compulsory core French instruction from grade four to nine. At Holy Heart of Mary the French Immersion program is offered with instruction in language and social studies courses taught in French. Introductory level language courses are offered in Italian and Spanish.

*Holy Heart of Mary Language offerings*

English 1201, 2201, and 3201 (academic level)  
Literacy 1204, English 1202, 2202, and 3202 (practical level) Francais  
1202, 2202, & 3202 (French Immersion)  
French 1200, 2200, & 3200 (Core French)  
Writing 2203, AP Literature 4221 (optional Language Course)  
Spanish 3283 & 4283, Italian 3284 & 4284  
ESL 1205, 2205, 3205, & 3206

*IB Language Offerings*

Every IB Diploma student must take one subject from Group 1 and Group 2. Choice of language level in each group depends upon the student’s overall program of study.

	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
French Immersion	Francais 1202	IB French 3283 HL	IB French 4283 HL
Non - French Immersion	Optional Language Course	Spanish 3283 Italian 3284	IB Spanish 4283 <i>ab initio</i> IB Italian 4284 <i>ab initio</i>

\* Spanish and Italian may be offered an alternating years

*Overview of Teaching of Language*

Students are:

- encouraged to preserve and value their own native language as it enhances their personal identity, highlights their cultural heritage, and increases their overall ability to learn
- given the opportunity to become active language learners through inquiry and authentic real life applications
- introduced to a variety of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and respond to a variety of media and non-fiction sources
- exposed to a range of literature reflecting other cultures
- given constructive and specific feedback
- given time to reflect on their learning and to apply remediation strategies

“An inclusive classroom values the social and ethno cultural backgrounds of all students while creating opportunities for community building. Students can learn much from the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of their classmates in a community of learners where participants discuss and explore their own and others’ customs, histories, traditions, values, beliefs and ways of seeing and making sense of the world. In accessing and navigating information, students from different social and cultural backgrounds can come to understand each other’s perspectives, to realize that their ways of seeing and knowing are not the only ones possible, and to begin to examine the complexity of the ideas and issues they encounter.”  
Literacy 1204 Curriculum Guide

### *Extra-Curricular Language and Culture Opportunities*

A high degree of the students' learning occurs in a social context.

- These clubs and activities are available to students to enrich experiences in mother-tongue languages, second languages or additional languages, with the aim of increasing cultural awareness and international-mindedness: International Club, Sharing Our Cultures, Interact Club, and Model United Nations.
- The school offers a variety of opportunities to celebrate the diversity of its students and gain exposure to various languages and cultures via music, art, assemblies, multi-cultural clubs, CAS trip, music trips, student exchanges, Sharing-our-Cultures exchange to Nunavut (Northern Canada) for some of our new Canadians – our LEARN students, summer immersive French language programs in Quebec, and curricular units.
- Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) opportunities exist within the local community that focus on ethnic diversity and allow for the practice of world language skills.

### *English as a Second Language Support*

- Currently, Holy Heart of Mary has three full-time ESL teachers.
- One of these positions is allocated to Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers. The LEARN teacher provides instruction to linguistically diverse students who have significant academic gaps in their education.
- An ESL teacher assesses the student's language proficiency, monitors academic achievement, and makes recommendations for ESL placement and academic programming decisions.
- An ESL teacher provides comprehensive instruction in English as a second language (ESL 1205, 2205, 3205, & 3206) for linguistically diverse students. This specialized language preparation will permit the ESL student to participate effectively in academic programs instructed in English.
- ESL teachers collaborate with content area teachers to assist the academic needs of the student.
- Association for New Canadians (ANC)  
The school has close ties with the ANC as it is the official settlement agency for newcomers. Settlement Workers in the Schools (SWIS) are a liaison between the school and home. The SWIS worker's office is based in the school and facilitates or provides;
  - support in issues related to culture and settlement (hygiene, housing, clothing, medical, etc.).
  - home-school communication and translation services
  - homework clubs, volunteer tutors for some students, and arranges summer programs

Apart from the ESL curriculum, an inclusionary model, of education is utilized. As necessary, an ESL student will be referred to guidance and the Inclusive Education Support Programming Team would initiate the delivery of services model that provides specific interventions and assessment arrangements for the student. (See Inclusive Assessment Policy).

## ***Mother Tongue Support***

- Holy Heart of Mary offers an environment of acceptance to a very diverse population and maintenance of mother tongue development is acknowledged as being very important.
- The student's native language use is validated and fostered to promote acceptance of the mother tongue and to maximize the potential for the student's prior knowledge to enhance second language, and other, learning. It is accepted that as students complete project work in small groups it can be appropriate for them to exchange ideas and explore concepts in their mother tongue. Even though the end product will be presented in English, the preparation phase (researching, discussing, reflecting, etc.) can be carried out in the students' mother tongue to facilitate understanding of the matter.
- Students whose fluency in English needs further support may access resources available such as supports from the SWIS worker, peer-tutoring assistance, credit recovery, language dictionaries, and Internet access to translators and articles in a variety of languages.
- To date we have not offered an IB Language A course through school-supported self-study. This request has not been made by any IB student. The diversity of our student population is well represented in our IB classes. The vast majority of these students have lived in an English or bilingual culture for a number of years, have well-developed English language skills, and have interests in studying literature in English.

## ***Resources***

Bridgestock, Laura (2009) *Every Teacher is a Language Teacher*, IB World, January

Trahey, Martha (2010) *Bilingual education in a multilingual context: Incorporating L1 into linguistically diverse classrooms*. Contact volume 36, issue 1 page 27-32

*Literacy 1204 Curriculum Guide* (2013) Department of Education, NL

*General Regulations* (2016), International Baccalaureate Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

*Guidelines for developing a school language policy in the Diploma Programme* (2008), International Baccalaureate Organization, Cardiff.

## ***Note:***

Acknowledged as a working document, Holy Heart of Mary's IB Diploma Program *Language Policy* is reviewed annually by school faculty members, the IB coordinator and school administration.

The language policies for various schools available online were viewed and it was concluded that in many cases we concurred with their phrasing of some policy components.

Holy Heart of Mary's IB Diploma Program Language Policy is available on the school's website.

