

updated 8 December 2022

*The purpose of this document is to provide clear information about WSA's language policy and language development practices to students, teachers, and other stakeholders.*

## WSA Background

**Our Mission:** To support students along an engaging educational journey where they can ignite their unique spark and learn to use it to make a positive impact in the world.

West Sound Academy is a globally-minded school centered on creating and communicating knowledge and ideas across geographical, cultural, and linguistic borders. We believe that part of developing impactful individuals means that we prepare students to engage as global citizens. Communication and multilingualism are essential skills. All teachers are language teachers and support the development of communication skills in their subject areas. We support language acquisition for all to engage beyond our current environmental context and to explore and more deeply understand different perspectives.

## Implementation

### Language development at school

The main language of instruction is English, except for in language acquisition courses and their equivalents. All teachers support language development in their subjects by developing subject-specific vocabulary and teaching communication skills. Students practice reading, listening, speaking, and writing with increasing complexity as they move through the grade levels. In addition to communication skill-building and language development in the classroom, teachers also provide specific strategies for English Language Learners. Depending on the subject matter and individual needs of students, teacher support may include subtitles, multiple modalities, guided reading, dictionaries or glossaries, access to translation, and individualized assessment goals.

WSA supports students in selecting the best language development pathway for individual students on a case-by-case basis in conferences with the student and their caregivers. Individual students and their families meet with the head of school and IB Coordinator, with input from language teachers, to plan a course of study to acquire additional languages to English. Language acquisition includes Spanish and French, as well as the independent study of American Sign Language, Chinese, and Japanese, depending on the needs and language knowledge of the individual student.

### Language Resources

In addition to a personalized WSA learning plan, we also provide resources for students and families in this [LibGuide](#).

# Language Acquisition Curriculum

## Middle School

### Eighth Grade

Students take one year of Introduction to Spanish which introduces them to basic language concepts. The 8th-grade language acquisition teacher also provides English language grammar instruction to complement language acquisition in context and support English literature work.

## Upper School

### Ninth Grade

Language Acquisition Year One: Currently, Students choose either Spanish, French or English as their Language B choice of study. Due to low enrollment numbers in French, this option will likely be phased out in 2023-2024. Students for whom English is not the mother tongue are enrolled in mainstream English Literature courses and provided differentiation and tutoring if needed. Mainstreaming students has proven to be far more successful in increasing understanding and fluency than having separate ELL courses. A student wishing to continue to study their mother tongue may choose to do so as an independent study course.

### Tenth Grade

Language Acquisition Year Two: Students who have completed Year One continue in the same language course of study to complete Year Two. Students who enroll in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade with no language are enrolled in a Year One Course, with the plan to begin IB Language *ab initio* in the following year.

### Eleventh and Twelfth Grade

Year One and Two of IB Language B in Spanish, English or French (Year Three and Four): Students are individually counseled on whether it is recommended they study the IB at the Higher Level (HL) or Standard Level (SL). SL students may opt to submit materials to IB at the end of the junior year. The language requirement is considered fulfilled if the student scores 4 or higher on the IB exam and the student is then not required to take the fourth year of language. All students who do not intend to send their materials to IB are required to take the fourth year of language in their senior year unless the student has specific accommodations for language learning. Students who have studied a language for one year or less are given the option to study the language at the *Ab Initio* level through an online IB School.

## International Students

Students enrolling at WSA may be required to take the TOEFL or IELTS test upon admission and set a baseline score for their English language skills. All International students will be enrolled in mainstreamed (meaning they are learning alongside native English speakers) English Literature classes appropriate for their level.

## Language representation

West Sound Academy currently has students who speak Chinese, French, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tamil, and English at home. Staff members speak Arabic, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Romanian, Spanish, and English.

# International Full Diploma Candidates

## Group 1 & 2 Options

### Language A

International Students who choose to complete the Language A: Language and Literature course in English and fulfill the assessment requirements in English may take their Group 2 course in another language such as Spanish or French. Depending on the needed level, this course may be offered only as an online option through an online IB School. For students with skills advanced enough to study literature in the second language beyond Language B HL, they may choose the School Supported Self-Taught for candidacy in a Bilingual Diploma option.

### School-Supported Self-Taught Option

International students who participate as IB Diploma Candidates with the Group 1 Self Study will take Language A: Literature - SL. This option is provided when the school has access to a supervisor who speaks the language of study or can facilitate coursework review with a tutor. The coursework is designed to give structure and instruction on the components of the self-study required for IB by the SSST coordinator. The student will complete all of their Group 1 Language A: Literature assessment requirements in their mother tongue and take Language A: Language and Literature in English for candidacy for a bilingual diploma.

### Students for whom English is spoken at home

All 11th- and 12th-grade students are enrolled in the same IB classes regardless of their Diploma Programme intentions. Students who speak English as their mother tongue will be enrolled in English Language and Literature, and they have a choice of studying French or Spanish for Language Acquisition.

## Policy Revision

This policy was rewritten in December 2022 by the IB Coordinator Assistant and the Head of School. In subsequent years, this policy will be collectively reviewed by all teachers and administrators at the start of school in-service.

## References

- [Language Resources LibGuide](#) for students and families

Website pages:

- [Middle School \(6th-8th\)](#)
- [Upper School 9th-10th](#)
- [IB Diploma Programme \(11th-12th\)](#)
- Course philosophy statements:
  - [Course Information 6th-7th](#)
  - [Course Information 8th](#)
  - [Course Information 9th-10th](#)
  - [Course Information 11th-12th](#)