

Glenview Park Secondary School IB Diploma Programme Language Policy

Philosophy

At Glenview Park it is understood that:

- The use of language is an essential component to the learning process.
- Students are encouraged to learn and become fluent in at least one other language beyond the language of instruction
- All teachers are recognized as language teachers.
- The school and community are enriched with the diverseness of cultures and their language.
- All students who qualify are entitled to equal access to the IB programme and that language will not be a barrier to success.
- Teachers promote and celebrate the cultural difference of students.

ESL Students

All students who have recently arrived in Canada where the usual means of communication is a language other than English are individually assessed at the "Welcome Centre for Newcomers. Schools within the Waterloo Region District School Board must refer these families directly to this centre. It is here that information is gathered from the parents and the student is assessed in English and Math. Once the student has been assessed a detailed report including recommendations will be sent to Glenview Park.

Upon discussion between parents, teachers, and resource teachers it may be in the best interest of the student to attend Galt Collegiate for a year, a neighboring secondary school, which offers an extensive ESL program. If the language barrier is minimal, the student may only require evening or Saturday morning classes offered by the St. Louis Education Centre. If necessary, Glenview Park will accommodate the student with a resource period in order to ensure that the student's needs are being met

Language Learning

When developing the practices of the language policy it is important to remember that there are *three* areas of language learning:

The language of instruction

- this refers to the language that is used to deliver the curriculum in the school

The school's additional language

- this refers to the second language taught within the school to meet the requirements of the OSSD curricula

Mother tongue support

- this refers to the language that is most strongly linked to the culture that the individual students identify with as their language of origin

Language of Instruction

The language of instruction and communication at Glenview Park is English. It is the expectation that students will use English in classrooms and in the corridors and other areas of the school. The rationale for this policy is as follows:

- One of the major reasons parents choose GPSS is because they want their children to develop excellent English skills.
- Academic classes at GPSS are conducted in English. The stronger the English skills, the greater the likelihood of students achieving their potential.
- GPSS wishes to foster a strong sense of community and belonging and so there needs to be a common language of communication. That common language is English.

The IB Programme stresses internationalism as a value and therefore cultural and linguistic diversity are positives, not negatives. But diversity in linguistic backgrounds may sometimes have a negative impact on learning if some students are hindered by a lack of fluency in the language of instruction. Therefore, it is important to minimize any such negative impacts while leveraging the positive possibilities inherent in cultural and linguistic diversity.

There are a number of assessment tools in place to help locate communication barriers which may hinder the student's success in the IB Programme.

In Grade 9 all students enrolled in the WRDSB are given the Ontario Comprehension Assessment (OCA). The results of this test are used as an early diagnostic tool and shared with all subject teachers. Detailed data is provided which can be used to target specific literacy skills of individual students.

In grade 10 it is mandatory for all students in the province of Ontario write and pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). At Glenview Park students are given additional preparation seminars during the months leading up to this test if teachers believe that there will be a benefit the student would benefit from requires

School's additional language

Initially French will be the only Language B IB course offered at Glenview Park. It is the official second language of Canada and all students in Ontario are required to study French from grades 4 to 9. Once the programme is established additional languages will be offered since GPSS recognizes that language learning is integral to the value of international understanding and the elimination of prejudice, one of the key obstructions to the advancement of learning.

Mother tongue support

The school provides opportunities for students to actively use their mother tongue in many school activities these include classroom assignments and community performances. The mother tongue must be respected both by its users and by those who have no fluency in it. It is essential in defining one's culture and, therefore, one's own identity. The respect for a person's mother tongue is in line with the policies and practices with the Waterloo Region District School Board which values diversity and inclusion.

Conclusion

A language policy is not just a vehicle for the effective teaching of a particular tongue, whether the language of instruction or an additional language. It goes to the heart of what it means to be an educational community. Language is of the essence of who we are, but also through learning to appreciate the languages of others, who we aspire to become.

Resources Used in the Development of this Document

IB Document: Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy (April 2008)

IB Document: Learning in a Language other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes (April 2008)

Waterloo Region District School Board Welcome Centre for Newcomers
<http://www.wrdsb.ca/schools/how-register/newcomers-welcome-centre>

Newcomers Waterloo Region Learn English and Other Languages
<http://www.newwr.ca/education/Pages/LearningEnglish.aspx>

St. Louis Education Centres English as a Second Language
<http://stlouis.wcdsb.ca/programs/il.html>