



Mountainside Middle School IB MYP Language Policy



Rationale

Culture 4: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language. (0301-04)

Student support 2: The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support (0202-02)

Lifelong learners 7: Students pursue opportunities to explore and develop their personal and cultural identities. (0402-07)

Approaches to Teaching 5: Teachers remove barriers to learning to enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve challenging personal learning goals. (0403-05)

MMS Mission Statement

Mountainside Middle School strives to develop principled, caring, and inquisitive learners in order to prepare them to be knowledgeable and respectful global citizens.

Philosophy

Mountainside Middle School (MMS) welcomes all students and strives to create a learning environment that embraces diverse language backgrounds while preparing students to succeed in the 21st century. All teachers at Mountainside Middle School are responsible for language instruction. In all classes, students read, write, speak, view, and listen in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. These skills are the crux of the academic standards that our curriculum is aligned to.

The language of instruction at MMS is English. One exception to this is the world language instruction in Spanish, French, and Mandarin for grades 7 and 8. At Mountainside Middle School, the students explore the many ways language is used to communicate ideas, develop an intercultural awareness, and become global citizens. Language and Literature and World Language Acquisition are core academic classes at MMS. Through the study of language, students will come to know that every language has its own unique form, and they will make connections to another culture while developing a deeper understanding of their own.

Support for Mother Tongues

Mountainside Middle School recognizes the importance of maintaining and developing students' mother tongues as a vital part of their identity, cultural heritage, and cognitive development. As an IB World School, we are committed to fostering multilingualism and supporting students in preserving and celebrating their home languages alongside the development of English as the language of instruction.

To support mother tongues, we will:

- Encourage students to use their mother tongue at home and in appropriate school settings to strengthen language skills and cultural connections
- Provide access to reading materials in a variety of languages through the school library and digital platforms
- Collaborate with families to identify students' home languages and explore opportunities for language development
- Support teachers in adopting culturally and linguistically inclusive practices by deepening their understanding of the host country's language, culture, and regional context
- Where possible, connect students with community resources, language clubs, or peer groups that promote the use of their mother tongue

We believe that valuing and supporting students' mother tongues enhances their academic success, intercultural understanding, and global engagement, the core principles of the IB Middle Years Programme.

Language Profile/Placement Tests

- Upon school registration, parents/guardians are required to complete a Home Language Survey. This form helps our school to identify mother tongue and any other language a student may speak
- Students who are preliminarily identified as English Learners are given assessments through the Scottsdale Unified School District's Language Assessment Department to determine English proficiency levels
- English proficiency levels are used to determine placement in English Language Development Support classes
- Upon registration, students are given placement assessments to determine the appropriate placement in Spanish classes

Language A: Language and Literature

As stated, MMS believes that all teachers are language teachers, but Mountainside Middle School students participate in specific language instruction daily. A portion of the instructional time is dedicated to English Language and Literature. Time is spent in this class analyzing text, producing text, and using the English language to communicate effectively as well as understand competently.

Students explore a variety of texts including expository, argumentative, and narrative. The instructional strategies used at MMS include, but are not limited to: inquiry-based, direct instruction, close reading, novel studies, problem based/holistic learning, and the use of formative assessments to guide the direction of instruction. MMS has adopted StudySync curriculum as the primary source. Students read high quality, culturally diverse novels both independently and as a class. They analyze the reading and practice the skills through whole group discussions, small group practice, and Socratic seminars; they answer text-dependent questions and cite their evidence using MLA style. Students write narrative, expository, and argumentative essays responding to real world issues or events as well as in response to their reading. They also use MLA style citations when applicable.

Exceptional Services students have additional resources in the Language A classes dependent upon their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan. Students who attend general education classes may have an instructional aide or Exceptional Services certified teacher for assistance and guidance.

Language B: World Languages (Spanish, French, Mandarin)

At Mountainside Middle School, world language instruction is dedicated toward language acquisition. MMS' World Language class is a core class rather than an exploratory/elective class. Each sixth grade student is enrolled in World Language Exploratory as an introduction to language development. Each seventh and eighth grade student chooses one of the three world language classes offered: Spanish, French, and Mandarin. MMS' World Language class supports students in the acquisition of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

The World Language course, as a core class, will be a year-long class. At MMS, we believe strongly in our students becoming proficient in at least two languages. Once the student has chosen their world language course of study, they will continue with that course of study through the two years of middle school.

Through language courses, students will also experience culture. This will provide the student with language proficiency and they will begin to understand how language provides a window into another culture. By being bilingual, students will be more balanced, open-minded, and better communicators in their global community.

As part of the IB Continuum, Language B classes have been chosen because they are included in the high school curriculum, offering students the opportunity to expand their horizons. By offering courses in these languages, we aim to foster an understanding of language and culture among our students. Proficiency in these areas will prove beneficial as students progress through high school and navigate the IB program. Through these courses, students will improve their skills in reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and oral communication, while also gaining insights into the cultural communities associated with each language. The Language B courses are structured in phases, and the phase a student is enrolled in will be determined by their level of proficiency. Students will move through the phases as their knowledge of the language and culture progresses. If no progression is shown, they will remain in their current phase.

Exceptional Services students will attend regular Language B classes. Determined by their ability levels, Exceptional Services students will be in Language B classes with support as needed, through their Exceptional Services teachers. Students identified as EL, whose proficiency is Intermediate or below, will be exempt from taking the World Language classes offered.

English as a Second Language

Mountainside Middle School's student population includes those students who are non-native speakers of English. Our goal at MMS is that they become fully integrated in the culture of the school. As students enroll in Mountainside Middle School, they are asked to complete a Home Language Survey. Students who indicate a language other than English are evaluated using AZELLA (Arizona English Language Learner Assessment) to determine their English proficiency levels. Students who score less than Proficient are identified as ELL Students. They are monitored annually using AZELLA.

According to the SEI model submitted to and approved by the Department of Education, students are placed in an SEI (Structured English Immersion) class. The Arizona ELD (English Language Development) standards are taught and implemented by general education teachers with SEI endorsements.

Language A Teachers in grades 6-8 should be certified in Language Arts or English. Additionally, SEI teachers must have a Structured English Immersion endorsement (Provisional endorsement or full endorsement), an English as a Second Language endorsement, or a Bilingual endorsement.

Teachers work closely with their colleagues as well as other support professionals to provide the students with subject specific vocabulary and a sense of success. Students receiving support in English development are re-assessed each year to determine both language proficiency, as well as the amount of support necessary.

Library Media Center

MMS realizes that a quality library media center is crucial to the success of our students. MMS will provide a variety of resources in our language of instruction (English) and our World Languages. In addition, we will provide materials in a variety of languages to foster the development of languages. We envision that our library media center will provide a space that empowers students to develop their discipline skills, their personal interests, and their love of learning.

Mountainside Middle School Language Policy

March 2024 - revised by MYP Coordinator and ELD/SEI Teacher

March 2024 - reviewed and approved by the IB Implementation Team (Policies and Procedures) and School Administrators

March 2025 - revised by the IB Implementation Team (Policies and Procedures)

March 2026 - next review

References

IB Coordinator Support Materials, 2020

MYP: From Principles into Practice, 2022

Citation of schools and districts referenced in the writing of this policy:

Language Policy for Kyrene Middle School

Language Policy for Global Academy of Phoenix

Academic Integrity Policy for John F. Kennedy Middle School