



Convent & Stuart Hall

Schools of the Sacred Heart San Francisco

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Schools of the Sacred Heart - San Francisco

Language Policy in the IB Programme

The Language Policy of Schools of the Sacred Heart - San Francisco reflects the School's commitment to developing highly effective communicators who know how to engage globally. As such, communication skills are overtly taught and reinforced throughout the school program.

Located in the diverse San Francisco Bay Area, Schools of the Sacred Heart – San Francisco reflects the diversity and internationality of the region. While the majority of our students and faculty are English-speaking Americans, some families relocate to the area and attend the school from countries where English is not the primary language. Many students in the community are first generation Americans whose family heritage represents a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds throughout Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

Reflecting the multilingualism and multiculturalism of the school community, curricular and co curricular programs support intercultural learning, including visiting authors from various backgrounds and experiences (see Cor Unum below), chapels, assemblies and community cultural events.

Faculty also represent a variety of languages and cultures, and reinforce the linguistic diversity present in the community. Where families are not able to interact with the program because of a lack of English proficiency, faculty may often support translation services. (Note this is a rare occurrence, but something we have done as needed, most recently with a family who were from Ukraine.)

When a student has a heritage language background in their home environment, this is supported either by encouraging the student to pick up a third language in their curricular program, or by having the student develop a higher level of proficiency and fluency (often in the written and structural elements of the language) by pursuing that language at the highest level in the school program. Students may request to take the AP test in their heritage language to demonstrate proficiency. (Recent examples of this include Japanese, Chinese Language, and German.)



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Within the classroom, we commit to fostering a community of thinkers who draw from and interact with the cultural backgrounds of others to engage fully in all courses of study and varied ways of representation within the Schools of the Sacred Heart - San Francisco community. Using Generation Global's dialogue framework, we commit to practicing dialogue in order to explore and engage in perspective sharing to enhance understanding between people of different beliefs, values, or opinions.

We believe that language learning includes all disciplines, and each department promotes mastery and fluency in their academic field. Each department is aware of the lexicon and academic language that is essential for understanding in that subject area, teaching those fundamentals explicitly. When we have a student whose primary language is not English (albeit rarely), the explicit attention to teaching the subject area's cognitive academic language is essential support – not merely for the English as other language student/s, but for all.

In serving the development of the whole child - cognitive, personal, and interpersonal, we recognize that each student must develop their own voice. In daily classroom interaction, we expect that students know how to express their thinking in oral and written form. The atmosphere of the School's classrooms and laboratories is highly engaged and participatory: students are expected to develop and use their language capacity in all dimensions: cognitive, metacognitive, and interpersonal. There is an academic language to develop, as well as the language required to reflect on the learning process, especially when a student is "stuck" on a given topic.

Cor Unum as an expression of the school's multilingual and intercultural community

Schools of the Sacred Heart - San Francisco has a clear global vision as part of its membership within an international network of Sacred Heart schools with over 140 schools worldwide across all continents.

The school seeks to be a place where diversity of belief and opinion is promoted and supported. We commit to practicing dialogue skills robustly, avoiding the right/wrong outcomes of debate. This occurs throughout the community, in the classroom, and in commitment to professional development for faculty. The school has additionally adopted the Chicago Principles as a support for the ongoing work of robust dialogue.



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Cor Unum is about developing a sense of belonging in community for each community member, rooted in positive and productive communication skills. Cor Unum is articulated in the following statement: "Rooted in the Society of the Sacred Heart's foundational precept of "cor unum", the school promotes an inclusive culture of conversation and relationship founded on courage, openness and mutual respect. We understand that a diverse community provides essential opportunities for personal transformation, intellectual encounter and collective engagement. Through interaction inspired by deep intellectual sympathy, curiosity and shared humanity, we create an environment where innately human differences are recognized, honored and celebrated. We invite each member of the community to embrace and live into the core belief that there is a world within us and a world outside of us, and we must be able to engage and encounter both. "

The philosophy and practice of "Cor Unum" is present throughout the school. The school's position is that each person is shaped by their background and life context, including but not limited to racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identities. At the same time, each person may be influenced by those whose beliefs and personal contexts are different. Cor Unum invites us to open ourselves to learning along with and from other people. The tools of Cor Unum are: a spirit of inquiry, curiosity and dialogue. It is our practice to develop in our community a capacity for multi-faceted ways of viewing a topic as well as rigorous self-interrogation around "what do I know?" and "what else might be true?" (Teju Cole, Spring 2021 in conversation during Cor Unum Voices).

Cor Unum places value on diversity in the community. The key skill of cor unum is the ability to communicate – which involves speaking, listening and learning in primary and secondary languages and via interaction with different beliefs and cultural practices and experiences.

Global Platform

Linguistic understanding and fluency is further developed via student participation in a global platform program. The global platform program offers students exchange opportunities at Sacred Heart schools throughout the United States and internationally. Students can participate in exchanges focused on language immersion and are also supported to explore exchanges based on exposure to new cultures and experiences. In addition to a robust exchange program, students can join in vibrant immersive academic and service trips



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throughout the school year. Students' exchange choices are based on their Language B program, or they may reflect family heritage and background.

International trips are designed for students to experience their developing impact in a global context. Optional school global curricular immersion and service trips (which generally last for one week) have been offered in Denmark, China, Spain, Japan, Colombia, Germany, France, England, Italy, Mexico, the Philippines and a variety of other countries. While not limited to students whose family backgrounds intersect with the locations of these trips, it is true that many student participants are eager to interact within the countries that reflect their families' ancestral background.

In the 10th grade, all students participate in a full class trip to Costa Rica, which has become a foundational element of the high school experience, stretching students as risk-takers, to widen and deepen their connections among one another and within the communities they encounter.

The global platform program prepares students to be responsible and educated global citizens by providing students with opportunities to develop the mindset and skills they need to engage actively and ethically in a global community. Through curricular and co-curricular experiences, students are challenged to investigate the world and communicate with open dialogue, bridging linguistic, geographic, ideological and cultural barriers.

Language and Curriculum

Instruction at Schools of the Sacred Heart - San Francisco is in English for all courses, with the exception of Modern and Classical Languages. Assemblies and other communications are generally held in English, while certain festivals and chapels include other languages in respect of the tradition (some examples: Diwali and Dia de los Muertos and Lunar New Year). Parents in the community are invited to join certain cultural activities and celebrations.

The pedagogy of the school centers on the development of student voice and student thinking, so there is a focus on developing in each student communicative agency and confident voice.