

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

Language Policy



NOTRE DAME
Prep OF SACRED HEART
UNIVERSITY

Language Policy

Notre Dame Prep recognizes that it is part of a global community of people who, in our current times, are closely connected via technology. Further, the school community recognizes that communicating in different languages across cultures is integral to fostering a more collaborative, just, and connected world. Our high school seeks to tap into its diverse community of learners to ensure it is a school where students can draw upon and celebrate their cultural heritage.

Notre Dame Prep understands that nurturing cultural awareness and language skills is a gradual process. As this happens, students steadily develop awareness and competencies that encourage them to develop into mature, responsible, active, and informed citizens. Throughout the years, concepts of cultural similarities and differences are sharpened so that before graduating from high school, students have a greater awareness of political, legal, national, and international issues and they are able to join in larger discourses. In short, our goal is to cultivate globally-minded citizens.

Notre Dame Prep follows the “purpose and general principles” as cited by the International Baccalaureate Program. It “is committed to supporting multilingualism as fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.” As a result, the school has devised a platform to safeguard IB principles and ensure student commitment and intellect.

IB World Language

Notre Dame Prep provides a learning environment conducive to the sharing of knowledge and appreciation of cultures. The school fosters an atmosphere of academic discipline, Christian morality, and social diversity. The current working World Languages offered by Notre Dame Prep are French, Latin, and Spanish.

Our IB World Language program provides students with advancement in the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The content provided will increase the IB student in strategies and opportunities to acquire the technical skills to describe and analyze issues with a high degree of proficiency and competence. IB students are provided with the challenge to pursue and develop communication skills, connect to global issues, and develop international-mindedness.

The IB program at Notre Dame Prep encourages the student in:

- Thought
- Communication
- Analysis
- Comprehension
- Inquiry
- Evaluation
- Application
- Description
- Service
- Synthesis
- Research
- Reflection

School Language Profile

The **Working Language** is the primary language of the school. At Notre Dame Prep, the *working language* is **English**. It is used:

- at any and all faculty/staff meetings, gatherings and professional development.
- at school gatherings or events both on and off campus, including athletics.
- in the classroom during instruction by the teaching faculty, most especially non-world language teachers.
- as the written language for correspondence between teachers and students, including but not limited to class websites, online correspondence, email notifications and class syllabi.
- as the written language of all official school policies including faculty/staff handbooks, students handbooks, and any correspondence from the school regarding public announcements and notices.

Access Languages are the languages that have been identified as being important in our specific school community because they support the mother tongues of students and/or their families. These languages are used in addition to our *working language* of English when appropriate and deemed necessary. At Notre Dame, our *access languages* are **Spanish, Portuguese, Creole and Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Ukrainian**. The vast majority of these languages are also viewed as the supporting language needs beyond our community. *Access languages* may be used for:

- communication with the families of students
- public announcements and notices

The **Language of Instruction** is the language in which all education instruction is conducted at the school. With the exception of specific world language courses, the language of instruction at Notre Dame Prep is **English**.

The **Response Language** is the language that all students utilize during course instruction for oral participation/communication with their teachers. This language is also expected for all written assignments and formal assessments/examinations (with the exception of some of our world language courses). At Notre Dame Prep, the *response language* is **English**.

Course Languages are the languages of instruction for our offered world language courses. In addition to our *working and instruction language* of **English**, Notre Dame hosts courses in **French, Spanish, and Latin**. Some students also take an online course in ASL (American Sign Language).

Spoken Languages are the languages spoken at home by students, faculty and/or staff. These languages include (but are not limited to): **English, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, Creole, Patwa, Albanian, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, and Greek**. In some situations, a staff or faculty member may be asked to translate a conversation in the event that the *working language* is not able to be communicated.

Support for Mother Tongue/Host Languages

At Notre Dame Prep, the primary language spoken by students and families is English. Students who speak another language at home are supported in our school. Students have the opportunities to share and celebrate their cultures in some assignments as well as through the Culture Club, Culture Night, and our arts celebrations.

Summary of Language Policy at Notre Dame Prep

Working Language	Language of Instruction	Response Language	Access Languages/ Support Languages	Course Languages
English	English (except in some specific World Language courses when appropriate)	English (except in some specific World Language courses when appropriate)	Spanish Portuguese Creole Mandarin Vietnamese Ukrainian	English French Latin Spanish

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process. Assessment is beneficial to both the student and the educator to determine the level of skills the student embodies and the knowledge that the student possesses. Both parties (the educator and the student) can reflect on ways to further develop and expand upon their strengths, identify areas of weakness and implement strategies for improvement.

Assessment in a world language may take on different forms of assessment versus traditional class assessments. Students may show language knowledge and proficiency by utilizing the target language in real life scenarios/situations and not through rote memorization.

There are also opportunities provided to demonstrate proficiency/language acquisition via performance-based assignments, writing exercises and oral communication. Journal entries written in the target language help foster proficiency in spontaneous real-life interactions.

Novels are researched and read in the target language. Upon completion of the novel, students write a reflective paper, identifying the key elements of the novel, identify the types of magical realism (profoundly prevalent in Latin American literature) or other identifiers in literary work,

as well as make cultural connections to the relevance of the time the piece was written to its application to society today.

Performance-based assessment is contingent upon the abilities demonstrated and the depth of dialogue and awareness of the cultural nuances of the parties involved. They are scored based upon what they have incorporated in the exchange and the proficiency in that exchange. Both the student and educator can reflect upon this performance-based assessment and make the necessary adjustments to increase true “bilinguality.”