



Language Policy

John F. Kennedy Middle School

Suncoast High School

Purpose of the School Language Policy

Suncoast Community High School and John F. Kennedy Middle School recognize that language is fundamental to learning, thinking and communicating. It is necessary not only to learn language, but also learn about language. It is our goal that all students reach their highest levels of literacy and proficiency in a second language. The language policy is designed to:

- Recognize that the acquisition of language is a process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth.
- Promote internationalism and multicultural understanding through language instruction.
- Facilitate learning about the host country or regional language and culture.
- Promote inclusion and equity of access to the IB Programme, to all students.
- Support the development and maintenance of the mother tongue language.
- Communicate the role of every teacher as a language teacher.
- Establish school curricular practices that promote student proficiency, in at least one language, in addition to their mother tongue.

School Language Philosophy

The Administration, World Language Department Chair, and Academic Leadership Team are responsible for communicating and implementing the language policy. The language policy will be reviewed by the Administration, World Language Department Chair, and Academic Leadership Team every two years to update and refine practices. The Language Policy will reflect the interests and support of the school community and invite changes in the current language learning program, as deemed necessary for student success.

The development of communication skills in multiple languages is seen as a critical element for fostering international understanding and cultural empathy. The language policy should be used to:

- Understand the teacher's role in implementing teaching practices that facilitate learner participation and engagement.
Design a curriculum that promotes student proficiency in at least one language in addition to the mother tongue.
Recognize that the acquisition of language is a process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth.
- Promote multicultural interaction within the school community to foster sensibility of cultural diversity.

Language Practices: Language and Literature (*English*)

English is the language in which instruction occurs. The development of Language A is important as it allows students to make connections within and across subject areas. All students are required to take Language A in grades 6-10. Language A courses incorporate the Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards for English Language Arts (ELA)

All teachers are considered to be language teachers. As such, they are encouraged to model writing and speaking conventions and whenever possible, to make real world connections linguistically, stylistically and culturally.

English will be acquired with proficiency through classroom instruction analyzing a variety of texts, such as fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and prose.

- Students utilize the internet and web tools to facilitate research for all internal and external assessments and follow the MLA referencing protocols for citations.
Teachers need to identify prerequisite skill deficiencies of students.
- Teachers are expected to analyze school-based data to provide remediation in skills and to support students' English studies.

Language Practices: Language Acquisition (*Spanish and French*)

Language B courses are offered in Spanish and French. The mastery of essential language skills - reading, writing, listening, and speaking- is a vital part of a student's overall development. Each course is a full year. Students who participate in Language B courses will:

- Build language skills in context through short, applicable, and relevant lessons.
- Have ample opportunities to speak, read, write, and listen to Language B.
Make connections between subject matter and life experience.
- Read authentic literature from many genres.
- Learn to use the writing process for different writing tasks.
- Analyze and respond critically.
- Take responsibility for their learning by self-assessing and reflecting.

The goal is to have students establish literacy through the application of language knowledge to other areas of their lives (Language and Learning in 1B Programmes, 2011).

Students with English as a Second Language (ESL)

The aim of the ESL program is to provide equity and access to all, and to help integrate students into the mainstream classes. ESL students in grades six through ten are assessed to determine level of English proficiency.

In-class support and withdrawal support are offered in grades 6-8. Monitoring support is offered in grades 6-10. Both schools receive district support through the Department of Multicultural. A full-time language facilitator is housed at JFK to assist in transitioning ESL students into Language A classrooms. A district language facilitator is also assigned to Suncoast for students who require monitoring.

ESL classrooms at the grade 6-8 level are facilitated in both the mother tongue (language spoken in the home) and in English. This gives students the opportunity to maintain identity and emotional stability, while also preparing them for the mainstream program. At grades 9-10, teachers use best practices to make mainstream instruction accessible to all, while still maintaining the level of rigor and relevance required by the MYP curriculum and in preparation for the diploma programme.

On-site translators for Mandarin, French, and Spanish are available, and the district Department of Multicultural Education can provide *access* to speakers of other languages as needed.

Mother Tongue (*language spoken in the home*)

In Riviera Beach, 21% of residents communicate in a language other than English at home. Suncoast students speak around 34 different languages in their homes, while John F. Kennedy students use approximately 16 languages in their households. As language is part of one's identity, the recognition of mother tongue and the cultural traditions and customs associated with it increase a child's self-esteem. Multicultural celebrations foster understanding and cultural awareness while strengthening self-identity, and are an integral part of both the Language B curriculum and school life *as a whole*. Cultural celebrations in class and in school (for example, club activities and the Suncoast Heritage Celebration) maintain cultural and linguistic pride and cross-cultural understanding.

Support of Language Learning

The school has several formal and informal services to support language learning.

- The media center plays an important part in all learning. Increasing the resources for this learning environment provides a well-stocked hub of support for classroom instruction, research, and reading opportunities. Students receive direct instruction in research and are instilled with the importance of the media center as an integral component of independent learning and inquiry. Acquiring print and visual media in other languages is a continual process.
- Intensive Reading Classes (grades 6-10) are required for students who show below proficiency in reading comprehension, based on state standards. The purpose of this class is to assist students in reaching proficiency in reading and writing in Language A.
- Special Education Services (grades 6-10) provide services from a special education teacher in Language A. Support facilitation is provided in grades 6-10, and direct instruction is provided in grades 6-8. The special education teacher, as well as subject area teachers, uses strategies that promote the mastery of essential language skills in an effort to maximize the potential of each student.
- Administration provides opportunity for professional development in the field of language learning and teaching. Administration also provides a means to inform parents of the current resources and practices for acquisition of both Language A and Language B.
- Tutoring is provided after school to support students in learning Language 8-Spanish or French.

Supporting Documents

Language and Learning in IB Programmes, 2011.

Guidelines for developing a school language policy, 2008

MYP: From principles into practice, 2014.

Suncoast High School IB Diploma programme language policy, 2023.

Revised 9/26/23