

Abby Kelley Foster International Baccalaureate Language Policy

Philosophy

Abby Kelley Foster High School believes the cultural and language diversity of its student body should be celebrated and integrated into all classroom curriculum to better promote peace through intercultural understanding and respect. It is the goal of the faculty to provide linguistically and culturally diverse students with instruction that will assist them in language development and in mastering academic subject content. As such, all instructors and staff within AKF are language teachers. Language is an essential element in developing globally minded, lifelong learners. Students consistently and effectively reflect the IB Learner Profile: risk-takers, communicators, inquirers, and thinkers who are knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, and reflective.

Many of the students at Abby Kelley Foster are multilingual. The student body itself reflects diversity in mother tongue and cultural heritage, including Spanish, Portuguese, Twi, and Creole. Among the IB Diploma students Spanish and Twi are common languages spoken at home.

The language of instruction at Abby Kelley High School is English. Foreign language classes are offered in Spanish and Latin. All our teachers are required to obtain the Sheltered English Immersion endorsement, completed through a state approved Sheltered English Immersion course, or completion of the Sheltered English Immersion MTEL.

Practices

Admissions

Abby Kelley Foster is a public charter school, so there are no English language proficiency requirements. However, as a public charter school, it follows all English language proficiency requirements set by the Department of Education.

The Abby Kelley Foster High School IB Diploma programme accepts applications from all students with a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. All applicants are evaluated based on grades, teacher recommendations, a writing assessment, and an interview process. IB Course candidates are accepted based on their sophomore subject teacher's recommendation. The AKF High School IB Programme staff encourages and supports all students accepted into the programme in their academic endeavors regardless of language proficiency.

Language A

The teaching of language is a continuous process supported across all academic subject groups and curriculum. At AKF High School, Language A is limited to the English language. Students are taught to develop close-reading and analytical skills in both written and oral formats over a variety of text genres. Language A course opportunities are English Literature Higher Level and English Literature Standard Level. However, support of language development is required across all IB courses.

Students are expected to develop their written language skills in all subject areas. Through formal written assessments and oral presentations, a working knowledge of MLA, APA and Chicago style citation practices are required. In alignment with the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy, turnitin.com is utilized consistently throughout the IB Diploma Programme and serves as both an accountability check and a teaching tool. Writing assignments may take the form of, but are not limited to, personal reflections, journaling, essay writing, and lab reports. Feedback is provided by teachers and peers through the use of rubrics, and written and verbal communications that are focused on building language skills.

Oral communication is strengthened through a variety of instructional methods and activities: formal oral presentations, debates, Socratic Seminars, TOK-style open-ended questioning. Class discussions provide opportunities to develop verbal communication skills. Instructional feedback must include a sensitivity to cultural and language backgrounds.

Language B

All AKF students are required to take three years of a second language (one required year of Latin included); they are encouraged to achieve proficiency through a fourth and fifth year of the program. Currently, students are offered the opportunity to develop language skills in Spanish or Latin. As language is the means by which knowledge is acquired, developed and shared, foreign languages are vehicles for acquiring knowledge more broadly, diversely and, in constant comparison with one's mother tongue, more reflectively. Beyond language development, study of a second language promotes an appreciation of different cultures.

The methods of foreign language learning at AKF follow the structure of "trivium": grammar, dialectic and rhetoric. The rudiments of vocabulary and syntactical structure come first; the growth in relational awareness of ordered statements and their logic comes next; the skilled use of language for expression, argument, narrative, and poetic beauty comes last. Throughout their studies the first two foundational elements continue to grow in complexity, sophistication and nuance.

Students' foreign language skill development is assessed through verbal and written translation, formal and informal commentary, reading comprehension, and written communication. In alignment with the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy, the use of online translators is not allowed.

Students are provided the opportunity to obtain the Seal of Biliteracy (with or without distinction) upon graduation. The Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy is a key element of the Language Opportunity for Our Kids, Chapter 138 of the Acts of 2017. The purpose of the State Seal of Biliteracy is vast, but includes: encouraging students to study and master languages, recognizing the value of language diversity, preparing students with skills that will benefit them in the labor market and the global society, strengthening intergroup communication and honoring the multiple cultures and languages in a community. To obtain the State Seal of Biliteracy, students must demonstrate a deep understanding of the English language as well as a second language of their choice as measured by state approved assessments or portfolio assessment if a language assessment is not available in the language sought. The State Seal of Biliteracy program is coordinated by Abby Kelley, Foster's Director of ESL.

Language Support

Abby Kelley Foster High School encourages students to share their unique cultural and language perspectives. We encourage students to continue to use their mother-tongue language skills in order to promote their personal identity and improve their overall learning ability. Native Spanish speakers are encouraged to provide peer tutoring for their non-Spanish speaking peers. Within the Spanish classrooms, differing dialects and vocabulary are recognized and brought into classroom learning. In Literature and History classrooms, cultural backgrounds and perspectives are encouraged, as it promotes a sense of global mindedness and openness among our students. In choosing Extended Essay or History IA topics, students are encouraged to pursue areas that have personal connection to their cultural identity. The library contains literary works in languages other than English. Other resources can be accessed through online resources, interlibrary loans, and cooperative arrangements with local universities.

In alignment with the Abby Kelley Foster philosophy that all teachers are language teachers, and in accordance with Massachusetts' state licensure requirements, members of the high school teaching staff are required to obtain the Sheltered English Immersion endorsement within one year of their employment at Abby Kelley Foster. Although every educator is not required to obtain the SEI Endorsement, all educators renewing a Primary area Professional level license must continue to participate in professional development that provides at least 15 PDPs in SEI or English as a Second Language (ESL). Translation services are provided for any families requesting such support.

Communication of Policy

The Abby Kelley Foster High School IB Language Policy will be distributed to all IB teachers and school administration. In addition, the policy will be posted on the IB page of the school website.

Language Policy Committee:

Kelly Davila – IB Coordinator

Benjamin Gitkind – Language A Teacher

Roxanne Padilla – Language B Teacher

Karen Rodas - Language B Teacher

Victoria Smith – Group 6 Teacher

Amelie Cabral – Director of ESL

Last Review - 2021-22 School Year

References and Resources

IB Guidelines for developing a language policy. IBO, 2008.

Language policy. IBO, 2014.

Abby Kelley Foster English Language Guide, 2016.

Academic Honesty & Integrity Policy, Abby Kelley Foster High School, 2011.

Language Policy of Vanguard High School in Marion County, Florida.

Language Policy of Rio Mesa High School.

Language Policy of Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.