



Language Philosophy, Policy, and Essential Agreements

Philosophy

We believe:

- Learning multiple languages is a benefit to all children, promotes international-mindedness and encourages multilingualism.
- Learning to read and write in multiple languages provides greater cultural awareness of one's own culture and other cultures, leading to open-mindedness.
- Languages are best learned by shared experiences and interaction.
- Language learning improves communication skills and develops a love of learning that extends into adulthood.
- Learning a language other than one's mother tongue opens the mind to diversity and understanding.
- Language and communication involves more than just words and written text. Languages can also be taught through art, music, movement, or theater.
- All teachers are language teachers and language is a crucial component of learning, thinking, communicating, social-emotional awareness and self-expression.
- A child's mother tongue should be respected and maintained.

Purpose

At GIS, we are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. As an IB World School, we aim to utilize the following practices:

- Support all language learners and their families, including those in which the primary language of instruction is not their mother tongue.
- The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programs.
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.

Policy

Because of our philosophy that language acquisition is a process that involves both learning the language and the culture of the language itself, we strive to take actions that promote such development in our students. Therefore, GIS is committed to students and families to provide a learning community that promotes and supports language development through meaningful, relevant, and engaging inquiry-based instruction.

At GIS, the language of instruction is American English and instruction is based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All teachers collaborate in an inquisitive manner to plan instructional units to meet the needs of our students. We believe language to be interdisciplinary and strive to support all students to gain access to content, whether English Learners or only English speakers. Parent engagement, in conjunction with student-driven units of inquiry, is a valuable addition to the instruction given by our teachers and support staff.

Additional Language

All students at GIS receive instruction in one additional world language. The language profile of each student is based on a survey that parents take at enrollment to GIS. Currently offered during instructional hours are Russian and Spanish. We have four additional support staff members experienced in Russian language along with a credentialed Russian teacher. We also have one additional support staff member to aid our Spanish language learners along with a credentialed Spanish teacher.

Mother Tongue Support

Mother tongue is defined as language the student uses at home and/or outside of the classroom/school environment. This term encompasses other terms including: first language, home language, preferred language, native language, heritage language, sign language and sometimes best language. This could also include multiple languages since many second-language students are using more than two languages outside of the classroom.

GIS recognizes that language begins developing before students begin school. Our philosophy involves respect for and preservation of a child's mother tongue. Students at GIS are a diverse group of global learners and speak a variety of languages. Through our Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, we utilize Culturally and Linguistically Relevant and Responsive Teaching practices (CLRT) to ensure that students can succeed alongside their peers. We strive to ignite the acquisition of a second language while still incorporating and fostering their home language. Communication between school and home is translated into Russian, Spanish, and Ukrainian in order to ensure equal access.

Multilingual Communication

- Parents are an integral part of our community and provide tremendous support for language learning. Our diverse staff is able to communicate with families to support with translation.
- GIS utilizes the help of many bilingual staff to translate and/or interpret for our diverse learners.
- All parent communication goes out in English, Russian, Ukrainian, and Spanish.

- The school library includes materials to support continued use of the mother tongue as well as offering diverse language selections.

Language Instruction

- Teachers select and provide access to literature from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
- Teachers provide differentiated instruction for students with diverse needs, including students with learning disabilities and students who are academically high.
- PYP Language teachers contribute to grade level units of inquiry and MYP teachers create their own units of inquiry.
- Teachers assess students using a combination of formative and summative assessments. MYP teachers also assess according to MYP criterion and rubrics.
- Bilingual Paraeducator support is provided to support newcomers with English.
- GIS offers summer school for all students and encourages families to sign up if their student is academically low.
- After-school tutoring is offered to all interested students.
- Students receive additional reading and math support with online supplemental material.

English Language Support

- Instructional materials are translated for newcomers when appropriate.
- Let's Go, Access Newcomers, and Escalate English are used for intervention support.
- Teachers are certified in Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Development).
- Google translate is used to support English language learners.
- We offer Foundational Skills Development Lessons in English for Kindergarten through eighth grade.

Resources

- GIS offers Russian and Spanish instruction during school hours.
- Duolingo is used by language teachers for enhanced language support.
- Literature is offered in multiple languages in the school library.
- Teachers use strategies such as modeling, visual aids, choral reading, pair/share, prior knowledge discussions and engagements, graphic organizers, total physical response, sentence frames, explicit vocabulary instruction, etc.
- GIS offers an online library through Lightbox learning with over 1,200 interactive eBooks.

Opportunities for IB Policy Review

The pedagogical leadership team, consisting of, Head of School, Vice Principals, Instructional Coach, and Lead Teachers reviews the IB policies annually.

Reviewed: August 2023

Next Review: August 2024