

Language Policy - 2023-2024

Every IB school is expected to have a language policy that is inclusive and accessible. Our Language policy was developed using the *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*, April 2008, IB in conjunction with *T.C.D.S.B. policies and procedures*, found at www.tedsb.org.
Revised November 2017, March 2019 and October 2023.

Language Philosophy:

Language is an integral part of all learning that takes place at Saint John Paul II C.S.S. It is a critical component of student success. It is celebrated as part of our diversity and supported in the classroom and in the home. Language acquisition and mastery is a part of our commitment to excellence.

1. **Language is central to learning.** All teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication. This is done through listening, speaking, reading and writing activities in all classrooms, regardless of subject matter. In addition, during our Grade 10 year, all students must pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in order to receive their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. All teachers participate in Literacy practice sessions with their students. All teachers participate in identifying students in need of extra help sessions that are coordinated by our school Literacy Team. Work begins with our Grade 9 English and Religion classes with mock OSSLT tests in order to identify students in need of assistance well before their grade ten year.
2. **Students learn at least one language in addition to their mother tongue.**

The Board provides education in both official languages with a range of French Immersion and French as a Second Language programs. French language and French Canadian culture are taught in all English language schools. In order to be eligible for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, all students must earn a minimum of one French language credit.

Therefore, at Saint John Paul II C.S.S., all students must take one credit in French. In the Diploma programme, students must take French B SL. Students may take French B HL upon recommendation of the French teacher. We are able to offer French Ab Initio to those students arriving at our school without any French background. In terms of Self Taught Languages, given our limited financial resources, Self Taught Language A1, is offered according to needs only. Students would be required to assist with the locating of qualified individuals and resources in the self taught language. Individualized schedules to accommodate these requests would be worked on in conjunction with the IB DP Coordinator and IB Guidance Counsellor, and Language A teacher as well as students and family members or advocates. As well, for interested students, extended essays in French are available with fully qualified DP teachers prepared to support the students writing in a different language. And for some students, they celebrate their cultural (including linguistic) heritage through writing History Extended Essays, often utilizing

primary and secondary sources written in their mother tongue or conducting personalized interviews in the first language.

At Saint John Paul II C.S.S., we continue to offer a fully developed English Language Learners (formerly known as ESL) program available to any students new to Canada and whose first language is not English. In addition, sunset courses are no longer offered to further supplement language acquisition, namely conversation classes where students can practise their language skills under the direction of an ELL teacher. Students are still offered the opportunity to participate in continuing education opportunities to learn English proficiency.

Finally, in the larger school, all students (including IB) have the opportunity to travel to various destinations (such as Montreal, Quebec, France, and Italy) to pursue language exchange programs. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all travel was suspended, and is now just beginning to be revitalized through Board initiatives.

3. The Board supports the development and maintenance of the mother tongue for all learners through the Continuing Education Department. International Language classes are held for students of Polish, Tamil, Filipino, Greek, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Slovenian, Tigrigna, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Armenian, Cantonese, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Romanian, and Tagalog at various locations on the weekends. The IB Programme supports participation in these classes by offering CAS experiences for creativity. Many of our students use this as an opportunity to earn experiences while supporting language acquisition in their mother tongue. In addition, the TCDSB has a Heritage Celebration Program where they host and promote events for a specific community throughout the year. Included in these celebrations are Latin-Hispanic Canadian Heritage (October), Tamil Heritage Month (January), African Canadian Heritage (February), Celtic Canadian Heritage (March), Asian Canadian Heritage (May), Polish Canadian Heritage (May), National Indigenous Month (June), Italian Canadian Heritage (June), Portuguese Canadian Heritage (June) and Filipino Heritage (June). SJPII will be hosting its first Tamil Heritage conference on Friday Jan. 12, 2024 to celebrate Tamil culture in our TCDSB community. Many of these celebrations become part of our student's CAS portfolios, as they become active members of their cultural communities and volunteer to plan, lead and participate in many of these activities.
4. There are practices in place to provide inclusion and equity of access to the IB programmes offered by the school for all learners. All students receive literacy strategies during OSSLT preparation.

For incoming Grade 9 students who are within the TCDSB, the SOAR application identifies if candidates are designated as ELL. The Board ELL Coordinator is able to provide us with specific information about how many years they have been learning in an English environment. A-E levels classifications are used to identify proficiency levels at time of enrollment.

During the period under review, 2014-2019, our Board's International Education Program has grown and expanded (for details please see <https://www.tcdsb.org/FORCOMMUNITY/Pages/Secondary-School-Information-for-International-Students.aspx>). International students can apply to come and study at a TCDSB school. A host of services and supports are provided by the TCDSB to help acclimate the international students into the Ontario education system. From these groups of students, potential IB DP students may be selected. Those International students interested in the DP, will often select our school and then through meetings with the student, their agents, DP Coordinators, IB Guidance Counsellors and Administration, placements may be made. We have had several International students participate in the DP.

In support of this, individualized language programming may occur within the DP, to accommodate Ab Initio or SSST language options as appropriate. This requires hand timetabling and personalizing programs of study for the students affected. This is done by the IB Guidance Counsellor in conjunction with the DP Coordinator, Language Acquisition teachers, Administration, students and their parents or advocates.

5. English, which is the language of the host country, is promoted via School Board and internal initiatives. There are Literacy programmes and numeracy programmes. In Grade 9, all students undergo various diagnostic tests with their classroom teachers in order to assess reading proficiency so that students at risk can be identified and intervention efforts made. All programs, with the exception of specific language classes, are delivered in English. Media, internet and text resources are readily available in English. Our Learning Commons offers training sessions to all Grade 9 and 10 English students, Grade 9 geography and Grade 10 history students on how to research and reference using online sources, as well as seminars on misinformation, disinformation, and ChatGPT. In-services are also presented by the Toronto Public Library (where students can receive library cards) and the University of Toronto at Scarborough Campus Library Services (for our DP EE students). As well, the TCDSB offers English Language classes for Adult Immigrants through the Continuing Education program, free of charge.
6. American Sign Language - ASL Clubs have been offered as an after school activity through an IB student's CAS experience. We also have a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Itinerant Teacher, Shurly Arnold, who works with our hard of hearing students.
7. Administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff will require professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching. This may be fulfilled via in-services, participation in language conferences (Reading for the Love of It, The Ontario Modern Languages Teachers' Association, etc) and membership in various organizations.
8. Parents/Guardians should be involved in planning their children's language profile and development. Parents/Guardians are consulted regarding their child's academic progress through Parent/Guardian -Teacher Interviews, various Reports, discussion with Teachers,

Counsellors and Board Personnel. Participation in International Language classes is at the discretion of the Parents, Guardians and students.

As our school community speaks over forty primary languages, we regularly use the School Board translation services. Translators are contacted who set up appointments to help with communication with parents/caregivers in order for teachers and Administration to properly inform and work with all parents. The TCDSB offers this service in 49 different languages, free of charge. This ensures that all parents can fully participate in all planning around their child's language learning and development. Our Head of School is also fluent in the Tamil language.

9. The TCDSB has a 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee that participates in regular meetings. The 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee shall be comprised of the following volunteer members who shall be members of or allies to the 2SLGBTQ+ community:
 - 1) Two community members
 - 2) Four staff
 - 3) Two students
 - 4) Three parents/guardians
 - 5) Two Trustees
 - 6) One Human Rights and Equity Advisor
 - 7) One representative of Nurturing Our Catholic Community
 - 8) The Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations.

At a school-level, we implement 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive languages in our curriculum and classroom settings. We also have a GSA (Genders and Sexualities Alliance) Council at SJPII which fosters the use of inclusive language and access policies throughout our school community.

Please Note:

This policy is reviewed every five years, during the School Self Study review year, unless there is an obvious need to do so earlier. This is done through a process of inquiry, reflection and then action by the various stakeholders including DP Coordinator, Administration, CAS/EE Coordinator, Librarian, IB Guidance Counsellor and DP Language Teachers. If there is a new curriculum document produced by the IB, this policy will automatically undergo a review to ensure compliance with the new document.

It is recognized that this policy is a living document, and changes will be made as our school's needs and student population changes.