



Norgate Xwemélch'stn Community Elementary International Baccalaureate School Language Policy Primary Years Programme

Policy Development Date: December 2022

Review dates listed below

Philosophy:

Language, like learning, can be embedded in memory, history and story ([First Peoples' Principles of Learning \(FPPL\)](#), [FNUESC](#)). It is rooted in relationships between people, land and all living things. In this way, language can serve to connect students to their history and ancestry, providing a sense of self, and can also help students find commonality and community as language is taught, shared and honoured in the classroom and around the school. Indeed, learning that includes an additional language(s) along with honouring and supporting the students' mother tongue helps ensure that all students feel seen and heard. This can engender an authentic community—one where students gain an understanding and awareness of global citizenship and acquire a better understanding of the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. All members of the Norgate community play an active role in the development of language.

Applicable IBO Standards:

- **Purpose (0101-03):** school community fosters internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile
- **Culture (0301-01):** The school secures access to an IB education for the broadest possible range of students
- **Culture (0301-02):** The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential
- **Culture (0301-04):** The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language
- **Culture (0301-06):** The school implements, communicates, and regularly reviews its IB-mandated policies to ensure they are cohesive and reflect IB philosophy.

Student's Roles and Responsibilities:

- Maintain a 'Growth Mindset'
- Actively engage in inquiry
- Be a Risk-taker
- Take ownership of learning
- Use PYP language whenever possible
- Understand that "Learning takes patience and time" (FPPL)
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions (FPPL)

School's Roles and Responsibilities:

- Actively participate in language activities
- Actively participate in additional language instruction
- Actively model and promote international mindedness
- Visual language supports and representation throughout the school
- Actively promote and encourage the speaking and learning of the Squamish language

- Recognize that some languages, such as Squamish, are sacred and are only shared with permission and/or in certain situations (FPPL)

Teacher's Roles and Responsibilities:

All teachers are language teachers. Language skills are essential for meaningful engagement in all units of inquiry and are at the heart of inquiry and collaboration. Language skills, including but not limited to, speaking and listening, small group collaboration and presentation, research, writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, and media literacy all require strong language acumen. At Norgate, we strive to teach all of these interconnected language skills to enable our students to inquire effectively so that they can share and express their thoughts and ideas. To help facilitate this, we use a common language, based on the essential elements of the PYP program, to ensure continuity of language instruction year over year.

Families' Roles and Responsibilities:

Families have an important role in the development of their child's language skills in both our language of instruction and their first language(s). Families have a responsibility to communicate with the school regarding their child's needs and development.

Procedures and Practices:

Additional Languages (Squamish/French)

The importance of being able to communicate in more than one language is essential to the concept of international education that promotes intercultural understanding. In this light, the school is committed to providing Additional Language classes beyond the requirements of the BC Curriculum in both French and Squamish. Students aged 7 and older will participate in Squamish or French classes focused on exposure to language, acquisition of high-usage vocabulary, and conversational skills. Students in Grades 5-7 will also follow the BC Curriculum. The school, in collaboration with the other PYP schools in the district, will develop a meaningful scope and sequence for French as a Second Language (FSL) learning for Grades 2-7. The school recognizes that the acquisition of a language is an active process taught through authentic experiences with the goal of developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing, through cultural inquiry. The Additional Language teachers will collaborate with the classroom teachers to ensure there are meaningful connections with Units of Inquiry at some point in the year.

In collaboration with the Squamish Nation Language & Culture Department, the school will provide Indigenous students with the option to take Squamish language classes as part of our commitment to language revitalization. Squamish language represents much more than words - it is a window into a unique Squamish world view through words, concepts and ways of phrasing questions. The teaching of Indigenous language enriches the spirit because it shows the diversity between cultures, their importance, and promotes respect. The school values language revival and, at the discretion of the Squamish Nation and their gifting of language, will increase the visual representation of the language around the school as a way to support the Indigenous/ Squamish children to be proud of their culture.

"When the children learn their language, they are learning to feel good about being Native."

- Lena Jacobs

English Language Learners

Any student entering the school system or coming into the district that lists their mother tongue as a language other than English is screened for ELL instruction, as required by North Vancouver School District Policy. The need for additional English Language Learning support is determined by an English Language assessment, carried out by our ELL specialist teacher. Teachers and staff use this and other ongoing assessment information determine appropriate

supports for the students in their classrooms and inform language instruction and intervention including the use of online translation devices.

Translanguaging and Mother Tongue

The school is open to including, celebrating, and supporting all languages. This is partly to develop international mindedness as this will help open a child's world and begin to give them a sense of how big the world really is. In addition to this, we recognize that students think in their mother tongue. Enabling them to both use and demonstrate the sophistication of their understanding without the barrier of language learning, is an important facet of equity for all learners. Therefore, we support students by providing access to mother tongue resources, both in print and online, and where appropriate allow students to work in their mother tongue. The school will also use community resources such as settlement workers and translators to ensure families are able to access important learning engagements such as Student-Family-Teacher conferences.

Use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

The school recognizes that communication takes many forms. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools—such as speech-generating devices, communication boards, or symbol systems—are used to ensure that all learners have equitable opportunities to express themselves, access the curriculum, and participate fully in the school community. Staff support and model the use of AAC to foster inclusion, respect diverse communication needs, and promote the development of language in meaningful, authentic contexts.

Essential Building Blocks of Language

The school values the essential building blocks for learning language (i.e., letter recognition, letter-sounds/phonemic awareness, concepts of print, etc.) and the teaching staff is committed to developing a consistent approach across the grade levels to foster their development.

Links to Other Policies – See School Webpage for:

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Assessment Policy

Essential Agreements:

At Norgate Xwemélch'stn Community Elementary School we value the culture, diversity, and histories of our students and families. Therefore, we:

- see language learning as a key to celebrating our unique backgrounds
- strive to include and promote our students' mother tongues
- view language learning as a key part of fostering equity in education

References/Additional Resources/Links to Further Information:

- There are 13 languages currently spoken at Norgate Elementary. They include, Farsi, Spanish, Dari, Tagalog, Kurdish, French, Japanese, Russian, Bengali, Ukrainian, Portuguese and Polish.
- All members of the teaching staff are involved in acquiring resources to help meet the needs of our diverse language speakers. This includes sourcing books and articles, online resources and websites. A varied collection of multi-lingual, multi-media, and culturally diverse literature is a priority for current and future resource purchases.

- [First Peoples' Principles of Learning](#)
- [Settlement Workers in Schools \(SWIS\)](#)

Policy Review Procedures and Dates:

Norgate's language policy has been written collaboratively with input from teachers and support staff. The language philosophy is a reflection of the perspectives of the Norgate Community and is representative of the current pedagogy and beliefs about language learning.

The policy will be reviewed annually during scheduled IB in-service meetings. The purpose of the review will be to ensure the document is up to date, ensure all staff members are aware of the procedures at the school, adjust to reflect changes in the pedagogy, beliefs and language needs of the learners, and to provide an opportunity for sharing activities and approaches, reflection, and goal setting by the staff. The policy will be made available to all members of the Norgate Xwemélch'stn school community.

Review Dates:
June 2025