

Language Policy

Language is important in facilitating inclusiveness As an IB school, we recognize that our students may have different linguistic backgrounds and that an understanding of and respect for these differences is important in creating intercultural respect and a sense of school community. This language policy is a guideline for how to help IB students overcome language barriers in the IB system, and the aim is to create open-minded and active learners who respect and embrace one another's linguistic and cultural differences.

Diversity IB students at Gjøvik videregående skole have many different backgrounds. Most students speak Norwegian as their first language but others have first languages such as Swahili, English or Dutch. Students may speak their first language outside of class unless they are in a group of students where some do not understand the language. We never use language to exclude others, so if a group speaking in Norwegian is joined by a student who does not know the language well, the group should automatically switch to English. To simplify this, we encourage students to always use English even outside of class.

Language of instruction The language of instruction in all classes, except Norwegian and other languages, is English. We therefore recognize that all teachers are not only subject teachers but also language teachers. Still, we also recognize that all teachers may not be at expert level in English, but then expect all IB teachers to continuously work on improving their English skills. IB-teachers willing to do online courses in English in their spare time will always get these for free.

English in the classroom English is the language of instruction in our classrooms (except for Norwegian A and other language subjects). It is expected that all teachers and students will always use English, including in group work where all the members are native Norwegian speakers. Using Norwegian (or other languages) on occasion for clarification purposes is acceptable, as long as the shift back to English is swift. In one-to-one student-teacher meetings outside the classroom, the teacher will decide which language is best to use.

Promotion of the host language As Norwegian is the host language of the school, it is important that students whose best language is not Norwegian are provided with good opportunity to improve their Norwegian skills. The school therefore offers Norwegian B as an option. Completing Norwegian B at Higher Level will qualify non-native speakers for admission to Norwegian universities, as well as for many jobs. In addition, the school offers many opportunities for non-native speakers to participate in activities in which they can practice their Norwegian. These include sport and leisure clubs, communal breakfasts, guest speakers, music jams, and so on.

Correcting language Language is important when delivering academic content, both orally and in written texts. Also in non-language subjects we therefore correct language in assignments if the meaning is obscured by incorrect language. However, if it is clear what the students have meant, poor language use is not penalized in assignments in non-language subjects.

Class assemblies English is used in class assemblies. Exceptions to this rule may be made when a guest (such as an academic advisor or health advisor) addresses the class, if that guest is not comfortable with English.

Internet All information about the IB program on the web pages of our school must be in English. If students in an IB class use social networks to discuss IB-related issues, or e.g. create their own IB Facebook profile, they should always use English. Even if most or all students have Norwegian as their first language, this will contribute to enhancing their writing skills in English.

Library Books at our school library are available in English, Norwegian, German and French. We continue to buy books in different languages, as the need arises. Books in foreign languages are also available through the State Library in Gjøvik. Our school library can also order books from other libraries without cost for the student.

Communication outside the classroom The working language in the IB program is English for both teachers and students. That means that written and oral information from the school staff to both parents and students is in English. However, we also recognize that we are a Norwegian school with many Norwegian students and, in certain situations where we know that everybody understands Norwegian well, we may therefore choose to communicate with Norwegian parents and students (for example on parent-teacher nights) in Norwegian.

I have read and understood the language policy, and agree to abide by it.

Student signature: _____

Place and date: _____