

Windsor Mill Middle School

Language Policy

Philosophy for language policy

At Windsor Mill Middle School, we understand that through language and language learning we are able to make connections and become globally minded. The staff at Windsor Mill recognize and emphasize the importance of supporting the many facets of language for all of our students. Language can take the form of verbal, nonverbal and written communication, which are all instrumental in supporting our students' ability to interact with and respond to the world around them. Students should have the knowledge necessary to apply literacy and language skills to varying concepts to build deeper understandings. Students should be immersed in all forms of language through authentic and meaningful contexts. Students need multiple opportunities to practice and then apply language skills at a level that is developmentally appropriate and responsive. As such all teachers commit themselves to be teachers of language as they promote effective communication skills that are necessary to be competitive in a global society.

Language Profile

Windsor Mill Middle School boasts a significant population from African nations and Hispanic nations. Despite this populations presence in the building, only a handful of students register as speaking a different language as their primary language. Students, no matter their language background, who struggle with reading and language skills, have the opportunity to take a Reading Fundamentals class which focuses on essential of reading and language. This is advantageous to our struggling reader population as it provides them the opportunity to focus on advanced language acquisition skills instead of simply learning the language itself.

Language of the Host Country/Language & Literature

The language of the host country, United States of America, is English. English is the language of instruction. All classes except Language Acquisition classes are conducted in English. English is also the Language & Literature course for all students attending Windsor Mill Middle School. All English Language Learners are enrolled in classes to support their development in the use of the English language.

Language Acquisition

Students entering Windsor Mill Middle School have the opportunity to take Spanish as a

foreign language if they are proficient in their reading scores. All students are enrolled in a full-year Language Acquisition course unless their schedule or status (e.g., student has an Individualized Education Plan that mandates a different class) does not allow this.

Spanish is offered in MYP Years 1, 2, and 3. Students who are enrolled in Language Acquisition classes from MYP Year 1 will accomplish all three years of Language Acquisition unless extenuation circumstances exist. Students who have been identified as struggling readers, and whose test score indicate remedial instruction in reading, will not participate in Language Acquisition classes until their reading has improved enough to be mainstreamed out of the Reading class. When this occurs, students will be placed in Language Acquisition MYP Year 1 to gain the fundamentals of the Spanish language.

Second Language Learners

Baltimore County Public Schools uses immersion-based language acquisition practices to assist those where English is not their mother tongue become familiar and fluent in the English Language. Upon entry to a BCPS school, ELL students are assessed on their fluency of the English language. If it is determined that a student is in need of language-based services, students are placed in "Language Center" schools to receive immersion into the English language. They remain in these schools until such time that the instructors and parents are comfortable with their grasp of the English language. Students are then placed at their zone or community school. Here, they receive accommodations from their general education instructors and participate in further testing to ensure they comprehension of the language.

As Windsor Mill Middle School is not a language center for Baltimore County Public Schools, our students are considered to be proficient in the English language.

Mother Tongue Support

The Windsor Mill community supports, respects, and celebrates the mother tongue and culture of all students. Flags from all over the world are on display throughout the school. Windsor Mill as well as the school District provides English Language Learners and their parents\guardians with information in their mother tongue as well as translators when necessary. The media center houses resources from other nations and in other languages for our students who speak other language.

Using the Language Policy

This language policy is to be used in conjunction with the Assessment Policy and Inclusion Policy. Teachers are obligated to provided an inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of their language proficiency. Additionally, teachers are to adhere to

the Assessment Policy when it comes to the diverse needs of struggling language learners by providing significant practice assignments and minor assignments before summatively assessing students on language based skills.

Re-Evaluation of Language Policy

Windsor Mill Middle will review and revise this policy as needed at the first Leadership Meeting of the year in August. Members present will be provided with copies of this policy ahead of time in order to have educated discussion about the policy and revisions that might be necessary. Revisions will be made by the IB Coordinator, and copies of the policy will be re-delivered to staff regardless of whether or not changes were made.