

# Bellevue Children's Academy



## Language Policy



# **Bellevue Children's Academy Language Policy**

## **Introduction**

International Baccalaureate® (IB) World Schools are required to create a written language policy. The purpose of this document is to inform teaching and learning in the classroom, to guide curriculum, and to involve families in our goal to educate children in an internationally-minded environment. This document outlines the philosophy and practice of language instruction at Bellevue Children's Academy and demonstrates how we support students' acquisition of our language of instruction (English) and our world language (Spanish). Additionally, the document defines our support for learning mother-tongue languages.

## **Philosophy**

At Bellevue Children's Academy, we respect and honor how language reflects a culture's beliefs, attitudes, and perspective. Language and communication creates cohesiveness and understanding across cultures and is best shared through experiences and interactions. We believe that:

- language instruction is the responsibility of all teachers.
- language is the primary means of learning and communication.
- mother-tongue languages help form cultural and personal identity.
- language enables students to become inquirers as well as develop critical thinking and social skills.
- learning world languages is an integral part of becoming a global citizen.

## **Aims**

We aim to nurture an appreciation of the richness and diversity of language. Bellevue Children's Academy administrators, teachers, students, and parents/guardians work to:

- enable students to learn and use language confidently in a variety of contexts.
- promote student understanding and enjoyment of learning.
- allow students to explore different perspectives through language.
- encourage students to express themselves through language.
- assist students to become both culturally and linguistically proficient in a second language.

# Language Profile

Students at Bellevue Children's Academy speak a variety of mother tongue languages. These languages include, but are not limited to, Arabic, Cantonese, English, Farsi, Fijian, Gujurati, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Kanadda, Korean, Mandarin, Mayalam, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, and Turkish.

## Language A

The language of instruction at Bellevue Children's Academy is English. We have a strong language arts program that is backed by professional development for teachers. Currently, our students receive instruction in the following areas to support language development across all disciplines:

- **Reading comprehension:** Via novel studies, the anthology *Literacy Place*, and other selected texts. Each grade level purposefully connects these stories to our units of inquiry as authentically as possible.
- **Vocabulary:** Words related to our units of inquiry. We also utilize the curriculum *Wordly Wise* to expose students to additional vocabulary words.
- **Phonics, spelling and grammar:** Systematic focus with topics spiraling throughout the year and integrated into our written curriculum.
- **Written instruction:** Each unit of inquiry includes at least one writing project, with grade level teams being mindful of including a wide variety of genres throughout the program of inquiry.

## Language B

Our belief at Bellevue Children's Academy is that students benefit from learning a Language B in order to fully become internationally-minded. Our school's chosen Language B is Spanish.

### Grades K-5:

- K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students receive instruction in Spanish for 45 minutes once per week.
- At BCA, we deem learning a second language enriches personal growth, provides cognitive advantages, and is essential to the development of international mindedness.
- Another goal for Spanish instruction is to authentically connect it to the PYP Program of Inquiry, with students learning vocabulary and concepts related to their current unit of inquiry.
- Spanish instruction includes methods such as kinesthetic learning (Total Physical Response), songs, and partner tasks.

# Bilingual Program

We have a Bilingual Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten classroom that instructs in Japanese and English. In the morning, students are instructed in Japanese whereas the afternoon instruction is in English. These students follow each kindergarten unit of inquiry.

## Extra-Curricular Language and Cultural Opportunities

A variety of enrichment offerings are available to Bellevue Children's Academy students with the aim of increasing cultural and international-mindedness. Examples are:

- Mandarin
- Ancient Culture Club: Rome
- Our World Through a Lens
- Cricket
- Origami
- Shudokan Karate

## Support of the Language of Instruction

English is the primary language of instruction in all but one classroom. We have a Bilingual Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten classroom that instructs in Japanese and English. In all classrooms, we support students in language acquisition in the following ways:

- Implementing reading and writing strategies across the curriculum
- Selecting and providing access to literature from a variety of cultures
- Providing multiple opportunities for students to write in a variety of genres
- Allowing students ample choice in their reading materials and encouraging reading for enjoyment
- Assessing students formally and informally in the classroom using classroom discussions, writing prompts, reading comprehension checks, and presentations

Bellevue Children's Academy will support students with limited English proficiency in language acquisition in the following ways:

- Systematic phonics timings
- Pre-K-4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Daily spelling/phonetic instruction
- Picture cues and word walls
- Primary grades: Kinesthetic and musical learning of the English language
- Other individualized instruction: iPad apps, audio books, ESL readers

# Support of Native Languages

Bellevue Children's Academy understands the importance of students preserving their mother tongue language. It is critical to allow students to continue the use of their mother tongue language to enhance their personal identity and highlight their cultural heritage. This encouragement includes the following:

- We are developing our school library to contain materials that support and enrich the continued use of the mother tongue.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences occur on an as needed basis to update on language development progress.
- Opportunities to share culture and native languages (International Festival of the Arts, Poetry month, various unit of inquiries, homework assignments).

We also have a Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Japanese Bilingual program. The purpose of this program is to:

- help students obtain/maintain fluency in their native language.
- support the development of literacy skills in their native language.
- celebrate and value the students' home culture.

The framework of this class includes:

- Posting the Wonder Wall and IB Learner Profile in both languages
- Students receive two homework packets- one is devoted solely to English acquisition, the other is a math homework packet in the Japanese language
- Conducting a vocabulary assessment each trimester which includes conversational questions, basic vocabulary, and academic vocabulary
- Using an array of pictures and actions to model English words
- Teaching vocabulary in both languages and encouraging conversation
- Utilizing Total Physical Response methods for language acquisition

## Communication to School Community

This policy is available to all members of the Bellevue Children's Academy community, and school leadership welcomes comments and recommendations at any time.

## Language Policy Review

This policy will be formally reviewed yearly by Bellevue Children's Academy staff and revised as needed to adapt to changing best practices and the needs of our learning community.