Garibaldi Secondary School Language Policy

In support of the IB MYP, and DP Programs

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Rationale

This policy is common for the Diploma Programme and the Middle Years Programme. The ability to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes is important for student success. Teachers facilitate language development through reading, speaking, listening, and writing in all subject areas.

- The use of language is an essential component of the learning process.
- Students are encouraged to learn and become fluent in at least one other language beyond the language of instruction.
- The school and community are enriched by multilingualism through the diversity of cultures.

Connection to Learner Profile

Language enables students to become **communicators** and **inquirers** as they develop critical **thinking** skills. The mission statement of Garibaldi Secondary School (GSS) aims for "students to become responsible participants in a democratic global society" (Garibaldi Secondary School, 2026) For them to do so, language-proficiency and the acquisition of a second language is important for cultural understanding and international mindedness.

Student responsibilities

- be actively involved in using language and developing language skills.
- respond to feedback on language development.

Teacher responsibilities

- support and encourage student language development in subject areas.
- facilitate the development of language through the Approaches to Learning skills: *Thinking, Communication, Social, Self-management* and *Research* as related to language.

Languages at GSS

The primary language of instruction at GSS is English, and most of the students at GSS speak English as their first language. Since French is also an official language in Canada, Grade 8 -10 students have French in their timetable as their Language Acquisition course.

This ensures three consecutive courses of the same language acquisition as required by the Middle Years Programme. This fulfills the *BC Government Language Policy* that requires all students in BC to study a second language from grades 5 to 8, as stated in the *Required Area of Study in an Educational Program Order*:

"Each school year, a board must offer to all students in grades 5 to 8 an educational program that meets all the learning outcomes set out in the applicable educational program guide, specified in the Educational Program Guide Order, in the following subjects: (a) where an educational program is offered in the English language, a language other than English" (Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2025).

Additionally, students have the opportunity to take French 11, French 11 Ab initio, IB French 11, French 12, or IB French 12 at Garibaldi. Further details about Diploma Program language options are outlined below.

Inclusion Policy and language acquisition

At the start of the year, we require all Grade 8-10 students to enroll in a 100-hour Language Acquisition class (French). In some cases, students on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), may unenroll from a Language Acquisition class and instead have a support block with an Inclusive Education teacher, as outlined in our *Inclusion Policy*. This is done if the adaptations and modifications, included in the student's IEP, specify exemption and is typically limited to students with language-based specifications. Exemption can also occur if recommended by our School Based Team. The IEP only recommends removing a student from Language Acquisition if it is in the best interest of the student, and this occurs after discussion with specialists, parents, and inclusive education teachers. Our *BC Government Language Education Policy* supports this:

"All students must take a second language as part of the curriculum in Grades 5 to 8, **except** the following two situations: A student has been identified as having diverse needs **or** is receiving English Language Learner (ELL) services and is unable to demonstrate learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes of the second language course (Government of British Columbia, 2004)."

Home language support and support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction

At GSS, home language is respected as it is important in defining one's cultural identity. The respect for a person's home language is in line with the policies and practices of School District 42 which values diversity and inclusion. The IB Programme stresses

international mindedness as a value and therefore, cultural and linguistic diversity. Diversity in linguistic backgrounds may sometimes have an impact on learning if students are hindered by a lack of fluency in the language of instruction. English Language Learning support is available at our school to support these students.

Garibaldi Secondary School educates students from a variety of cultures and language backgrounds. In fact, it is one of the English Language Learning Centers in the Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows School District. We have International students (Grade 8-12) every year, coming from countries such as China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, France, Germany, and Italy. One of the major reasons parents of international students choose GSS is because they want their children to develop English skills. Some of these students stay for the entire year and then return home, while other students stay for only part of the year; some students come and complete all graduation requirements. Student intentions are not always clear when they first arrive at school, and many students opt to stay longer than originally planned. In addition, we do have some resident students that are English language learners. This number has traditionally been quite low but is currently growing each year across all grades. These students are assessed at intake with an oral interview, English structure-test, reading-comprehension test, and a writing test.

When our international students arrive, their English skills are assessed, and a student timetable is created that will target the learning needs of individual students. Some of these students will move directly into a full course load with no support block (either MYP, or full or partial DP); other students will pick up 1-2 English Language Learner (ELL) support blocks. The ELL support block is in place of a French Language Acquisition class and if an additional block is needed, a Design or Fine Arts Course (as allowed by BC Ministry of Education Language Policy, see above). Once students are fluent enough, they may move out of their ELL blocks and into a full schedule. ELL teachers also work with classroom teachers to develop strategies and to help differentiate for individual students, including adapting assessments and workload for ELL learners.

As we have a large population of international students, there are many opportunities for students to speak to one another in their home language. This is encouraged by our ELL teachers, especially in explaining school routines and expectations at the beginning of the year or when they first arrive. District staff are available to ensure code of conduct and expectations are explained in the student's home language. Once at GSS, older students are often paired with younger students to facilitate this process, and students socialize and converse regularly in their home language during lunch or after school. The international students have agents from various organizations, from their home countries, that they also converse with in their home language. Students involved in various private after school

programs have additional opportunities to converse in their home language. Additionally, the school provides opportunities for students to actively use their home language in school activities, such as various performances.

Library Learning Commons

Our Teacher Librarians are committed to working with students and teachers to support a student's home language. The GSS library webpage *Languages tab* (Garibaldi Secondary School, 2026) has links to numerous language resources. This resource includes links to online books and a listing of teachers fluent in languages other than English able to support students. *World Book* is available in French; as well as several online French language magazines at various reading levels. Many of the online databases have translation options. For example, *Explora* and *Ebsco* can translate into over 30 languages. The GSS library webpage also links directly to our local Fraser Valley Regional Library which provides students with options of books in various languages. When students search the library catalogue and/or databases students have the option to search in English, Spanish or French and can search for reading material in their home language.

Diploma Program Language

At GSS, we have several options for DP students to meet their language requirements. We offer *French Ab Initio* for students who have limited French instruction and *French Language B SL* for students coming out of the MYP. In addition, students may choose to take a self-directed language course - *School Supported Self Taught (SSST) Language A*. This replaces French Language B for those students whose home language is not English. Some students earn Language A in their home language and a Bilingual Diploma. These students are supported by a DP Language A teacher. Furthermore, SSST students have a tutor who speaks their language. This allows students to work on their course in their home language, guided by an experienced Language A teacher and supported by a tutor in their language.

Policy Review Protocol

The *Garibaldi IB Language Policy* is a working document. Since the needs of our student population are not static, this policy will be reviewed and revised every 3 to 4 years or as needed.

References

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