

# Cholla High School International Baccalaureate Diploma and Career-Related Programmes Language Policy

The Cholla High School Language Policy is written for teachers, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders of the learning community. This policy is a fluid document that reflects our school's language needs. This language policy applies to the IB Diploma and Career-Related Programmes (DP/CP) at Cholla High School. It is directly linked to the International Baccalaureate Organization's (IBO) and to our vision and mission statement, as well as our assessment, academic honesty, and exceptional education policies.

## Vision

*Charging Fearlessly Toward Academic and Personal Excellence*

## Mission

Our Commitment as Cholla *Chargers* is to:

- Take risks in learning and respect the learning of others
- Practice persistence
- Demonstrate responsibility
- Embrace international-mindedness
- Build leadership in ourselves and others

## PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY: WHAT DO WE BELIEVE AND WHAT ARE THE DESIRED RESULTS?

Our long-term goal for our students is fluency in two languages. The purpose of our language program is to give each student at least two languages in which to communicate socially and academically. Language is the primary vehicle by which we learn and engage with our world. All teachers, therefore, are teachers of language because they use language as the primary tool to teach and to help students learn.

We define "native language users" as those who learned a language through a process of natural acquisition. While their level of formal study of that language may vary, they can speak and understand it with fluency and usually prefer its use when making themselves understood. We value whatever skills they bring with them and build on them through native language courses in English and Spanish. We will make every effort to develop native speakers in languages other than English and Spanish.

We know that literacy skills in one language transfer to another. Non-native language users, on the other hand, need to be taught the rules of a new language more explicitly. The more exposure and reinforcement they receive in their second language, the quicker they will learn. In our second language classes, we give equal attention to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We strive to teach and understand language in the context of culture, and to integrate global awareness into the language learning process.



**PRIMARY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROFILE:  
WHAT LANGUAGES DO PEOPLE USE IN OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY?**

English is our primary language of instruction. It is the dominant language of our student body. Spanish is the second most dominant language in our student population. Many of our students are of Hispanic heritage; however, their levels of proficiency in the Spanish language vary widely. Some of them speak and understand no Spanish; others speak and understand a few words and phrases; still others speak and understand it fluently, but vary widely in their reading, writing, and academic language skills. Other languages spoken within our school community include German, Arabic, Yaqui, and Tohono O’odham. A large portion of our parent population is dominant in Spanish.

**MOTHER TONGUE MAINTENANCE, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT:  
HOW IS LANGUAGE USED IN OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY?**

Students in the Diploma and Career-Related Programmes are encouraged to take English A. We offer Spanish, German, and Arabic as Language B subjects. Students who are native Spanish speakers may choose to take Spanish A (native), or pursue studies in German or Arabic. Content area courses also play a vital role in supporting English language development. We will make every effort possible to provide the option for students fluent in a native language other than English to take a Language A: self-study course.

**LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING MODELS**

As teachers of language, we will:

- Use and build on language that students already know (prior knowledge)
- Positively affirm students’ existing identity
- Provide tools and support for students to learn new skills, until they can demonstrate those skills without teacher support (scaffolding)
- Use a variety of formative and summative assessments to measure learning and guide instruction
- Spark inquiry and extended learning to encourage higher levels of sophistication with language
- Provide peer language modeling so that students learn from one other, not just from the teacher
- Group language students in classes by language proficiency (zone of proximal development)

**READING AND WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

Our teachers will:

- Include a variety of texts in their content areas at a range of difficulty levels
- Give special attention to academic vocabulary
- Devote time to the teaching of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, both in terms of what is taught and what is assessed
- Recognize that language learning is ongoing and is further fostered by reading and writing in all content areas.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs):  
WHAT DO WE DO FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH?**

Cholla is required by the state of Arizona to provide English Language Development (ELD) classes for any student still developing proficiency in English as a second language. A passing score on the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) is required to exit the ELD program. In addition to the literacy/language block class, two content area teachers, in conjunction with the ELD teacher, complete an Individualized Language Learner Plan (ILLP) on a



quarterly basis for each ELL. The ILLP will identify target objectives from the State ELL standards to be covered in content courses for that quarter. A copy of this plan will be available for review in the student's cumulative folder.

To meet state requirements for the ELD program, ELL students in the Diploma and Career-Related Programmes may be course students.

**LANGUAGE POLICY LOGISTICS: WHAT DO WE DO TO COMMUNICATE THIS POLICY TO OTHERS AND HOW WILL IT BE USED IN OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY?**

Copies of this language policy can be accessed on our school website, and in our IB Programme handbook, which are kept in the office and in the library. It is the responsibility of all teachers to be aware of this policy, align their everyday teaching practice to it, and include it in the reflection process. Families will receive a copy of this policy when they receive their IB handbook upon registering their student for classes. The faculty will periodically review practical elements of the language policy during professional development meetings.

**REVIEW OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY**

The language policy will be reviewed every two years and revisions made as necessary to comply with both district and state mandates.

*Reviewed September 2023*

