The School at St. George Place
Language Policy

School Language Philosophy:
The School at St. George Place operates under the belief that language is what helps us connect to one another and to the world around us. As an International Baccalaureate World School, we recognize that multilingualism is a strength to our programme because it allows for a better understanding and mutual acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds. We promote the development of the language of instruction (English), the mother tongue, and the Mandarin Chinese language across our campus and throughout our curriculum.

Our campus staff employ a variety of strategies to model and reinforce language usage and appreciation for the cultures that these languages originate from. Language is the vehicle for learning on our campus; as such, we believe it is essential for students to interact with one another and with teachers to develop their language abilities. In addition, we believe all stakeholders have a role in the continued development of language for our students and seek to include them in the process.

Oral Language:
Oral language is the foundation of constructing meaning. Students on our campus are given numerous opportunities each day to collaborate and communicate with one another through oral communication. Students are encouraged to take risks and make mistakes throughout this process. Teachers employ strategies such as conversations, discussions, and questioning strategies to promote oral language development. In addition, our inquiry-based teaching approach provides students with real-world issues and scenarios to discuss; this increases engagement and allows for students to continue developing the lifelong skill of oral communication.

Written Language- Reading and Writing
The School at St. George Place uses a balanced literacy approach to ensure that students are also constructing meaning through reading and writing. Teachers on our campus use a variety of strategies to provide challenging, rigorous, personalized instruction to our students in reading based on multiple data points. The Reader's Workshop model allows students to participate in the reading process in a variety of ways, from small, flexible guided reading groups with the teacher to independent reading in a student-selected text. Workstation activities are also provided to allow students to develop their literacy skills, and students are invited to make choices about which activities will be most beneficial to them as learners and thinkers. Students who perform below grade level in reading are provided with specific, targeted interventions to ensure their continued growth and success.

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Our campus also prioritizes writing as a lifelong skill that all students should develop. Teachers utilize the Writer's Workshop model in order to give students time to see and practice necessary writing skills. In addition, teachers create writing tasks that are engaging by connecting them to real-world contexts to allow for an authentic learning experience. Students are encouraged to use writing as a way to express themselves, communicate their ideas, and reflect on their learning. Teachers confer with writers to set individual goals and track progress in written communication.

Visual Language and Digital Resources:
We recognize that visual language is also part of the development of children. On our campus, we promote visual language development by making learning visible through print rich classrooms. Students are able to use their environment to develop their ability to process information and communicate with one another. Students are also encouraged to develop their media literacy through interaction with digital tools. Students on campus regularly use iPads, Chromebooks, and classroom technology to access resources such as iMovie, MyOn, BrainPop, and other sources. This allows them to grow as learners in the digital age and to develop their understanding of language through digital platforms.

Developing the Mother Tongue:
At the School at St. George Place, we celebrate the identities of each individual student, and we recognize that language is an integral part of what makes people who they are. In our school library, we have sections dedicated to the languages spoken by the students at our school. We also ensure that each teacher's classroom library is diverse in its representations of the people and cultures of our world. Teachers intentionally utilize texts highlighting people of different cultures to develop and broaden students' perspectives about the world around them. Through exploration of these texts, students are able to develop as internationally-minded, global citizens. Students who speak languages other than English are encouraged to continue developing their home language and share that with their classmates.

Supporting English Language Learners:
Our teachers and staff provide support for students learning English as their second language. All teachers are English as a Second Language (ESL) certified by the end of their first year on our campus; in addition, teachers complete professional development activities to learn strategies to support their English language learners. All students at our school are placed in English-speaking classrooms where 100% of instruction happens in English. Teachers are equipped with tools to strategically support those students who need extra assistance in learning English. Instruction is differentiated to align with students' language proficiency and scaffold their growth.

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Social interaction is also a key part of language development for all of our students, and especially our English language learners. Teachers allow students to communicate with one another in both academic and social contexts. This allows students to practice the language in a variety of ways and to build relationships with their peers. Collaborative activities and discussions are used consistently in our classrooms to promote students' abilities to listen, speak, read, and write in English.

Each Spring, our English language learners participate in the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) exam to assess their abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. We are able to track the growth of our students and see their development in the English language as they move through our program.

Language B- Mandarin:
Beginning in Pre-K, students on our campus are exposed to Mandarin Chinese through our Enrichment program and other classroom activities when appropriate. Students are instructed in Mandarin once per week by our Mandarin enrichment specialist; this class uses songs, stories, research, games, and other components to promote students' development of the language in multiple contexts. They are also encouraged to explore the Mandarin language and Chinese culture through the units of inquiry when applicable. On our campus, we understand that building an appreciation for the language and culture of other countries will encourage our students to become more globally-minded.

Parent Involvement:
While our teachers provide language instruction during the school day, we also know that parents play an integral role in each child's language development. Parents and guardians are encouraged to model listening, speaking, reading, and writing at home for students. Our campus provides access to resources for families by hosting Literacy Night events and the school book fair each year. In addition, our school encourages families to share their language and culture through our annual International Festival.

Parents are expected to engage students in a minimum of 20 minutes of reading per night, in addition to supporting students in other tasks as needed. Parents are also encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences to keep up with their students' growth in the classroom and to receive information and resources as needed. Digital resources such as Imagine Literacy, BrainPop, MyOn, and IXL are available for families to access outside of school to continue to promote language development.

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