

**Holmes High School**  
**SBDM Council Policy**

**LANGUAGE POLICY**

**Philosophy:**

Holmes High School believes that language forms the basis of all learning and all teachers at Holmes High School are in effect language teachers. Through language, students are able to explore areas of interests, become lifelong learners, and communicate in a diverse, multicultural world. Being able to speak and write effectively in all classes, including the core IB components of CAS, Extended Essay, and Theory of Knowledge, is a high priority for our IB Program.

English is the main language of instruction for all students and teachers at Holmes High School with the exception of the foreign language classes of Spanish. We also have a growing ELL student population, with a growing ELL staff department.

**Practices:**

Admissions: Holmes High School is a public school, so proficiency in English is not a requirement for admission. When a student enrolls, he/she completes a Home Language survey, and if a language other than English is spoken in the home, the student takes the W-APT screener assessment, to see if the student qualifies for ELL services. Every January, all ELL students take the ACCESS assessment, which assesses listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To exit from ELL services, a student must score a 4.0 or higher in Literacy and an overall composite of 5.0 on either Tier B or Tier C of the assessment.

The IB Program at Holmes High School accepts all students who would like to be part of the program. It is the goal of all of the teachers in the IB Program to provide a caring environment for all students admitted to this program regardless of language proficiency.

Language A: We acknowledge the importance of including the teaching and learning of language continuously throughout the program. It is through language that crucial connections are made by students across the curriculum. Language A is limited to the English language and students are taught English syntax, grammar, and communication skills in all classes. All students are involved in Language A learning from grades nine through twelve and it aligns with the requirements of Covington Independent Public Schools, Kentucky standards, and the International Baccalaureate Language A objectives.

Language B: All Holmes students are encouraged to pursue proficiency in a non-native language. We recognize the importance of students becoming culturally and

linguistically proficient. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are all vital parts of language development. Students enrolled in the IB program at Holmes can work along a continuum of Language B instruction from grades nine through twelve. Emphasis on grammatical structures, verbal and writing skills, and vocabulary development help students develop the tools they need to become effective, multilingual communicators. The Language B courses are assessed using the assessments required by Covington Independent Schools, Kentucky standards, and the International Baccalaureate Language B objectives and assessment tools.

Language Development and Support across the curriculum: The following practices impact language development across the curriculum:

Reading takes place in all subject areas. Teachers are encouraged to help students develop language skills by reading in all classes while paying attention to student progress in reading comprehension and evaluating text complexity. Teachers use a variety of practices and tools such as word lists and graphic organizers to differentiate instruction for all levels of language proficiency.

Students are encouraged to read outside of the classroom. Students are encouraged to read for information and for pleasure. Students are encouraged to incorporate reading in their forms of communication by reading aloud, reading in groups, and reading expressively. Students are also exposed to a variety of genres, including but not limited to fiction, poetry, plays, trade books, short stories, newspapers/magazines, and informational texts.

Students are encouraged to develop their language skills through writing in all subject areas. Writing skills are fostered by giving students real purpose for expressing themselves through writing. They are exposed to varied, challenging, and meaningful opportunities to write that correspond to the requirements of the subject area. A variety of genres are used to develop student writing skills including but not limited to journaling, essays, blogging, and writing lab reports. Students receive skill-building feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults who are providing instruction and modeling the correct usage of written and oral language.

Students are provided ample opportunities to develop and utilize oral language across the curriculum. Beyond their daily conversations, students develop skill through oral presentations, debates, speeches, poetry recitations, songs, and dramatic readings. Teachers model the correct language usage in conversations and instructional presentations while maintaining sensitivity to the students' language proficiency and cultural background.

All students working towards the IB Diploma are actively involved in CAS activities and projects through the diploma years. Many of the projects and activities provide student opportunities to use the language of their heritage and develop their communication

skills in both their mother tongue and English. Students are encouraged to select activities and projects that have personal deep meaning and many select projects that give back to the countries and cultures that their families represent.

### **Language Support:**

Even though the majority of the students at Holmes High School are considered English speakers, within the student body are many students who are English Language Learners, bilingual, and multilingual. These students are given opportunities to use the language of their heritage in many ways. Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue to enhance class discussions and presentations. During class, students are encouraged to bring in their own language experiences and cultural observations to share with all students. This practice supports the students' mother tongue while helping to promote a global mindedness among our students. Spanish speaking students are encouraged to help the Language B teachers of their respective mother tongue by working with students to develop proper accents and pronunciation of words. Teachers often select literary works that represent the cultural background of some of our students. This practice enhances the class discussions and helps all students develop an open mind about those cultures that are different from their own. This practice is supported by the IB Mission Statement that says "people, with their differences, can also be right."

The bilingual and multilingual students receive support from several areas such as media services, and English Language Learners program (ELL). The media center contains a wealth of resources that support the development of mother tongue languages. Holmes High School has an ELL team which oversees the language development of many of our students and assists the teachers in meeting the language needs of our students.

Promotion of other languages: The IB Program at Holmes High School actively looks for opportunities to expand the Language B offerings. It is the desire of the steering committee and the school administration to offer other languages when applicable. Until then, students who want to learn a third language or formally study their mother tongue are encouraged to pursue options through Gateway and/or Apex resources.

The IB Program at Holmes High School is knitted into the culture of our school therefore, all teachers, IB or Non-IB, are encouraged to uphold high standards. Meeting student needs and student learning is paramount in the daily planning and goals of all teachers. All teachers are aware that each student is a unique individual, and each student is a future productive member of the global society. It is our hope that the interactions between different cultures represented in the student body will encourage all students to be life-long learners and inquirers who can communicate and be open minded about the differences in our world.

Date of First Reading: 10-10-16

Date of Second Reading: 11-14-16