



Abbotsford Senior Secondary School
I.B. Diploma Programme
Language Policy
Last Revised: May 2026



Our language policy practices, supports, and reflects those of the Province of British Columbia Ministry of Education and School District 34 Abbotsford.

Our School's Language Philosophy

At Abbotsford Senior Secondary School (ASSS), we recognize that the multilingual classroom is the norm. Since many students come to us with the ability to communicate in at least one language, which is not always 'English', we recognize and foster the diversity of languages within our culture. Therefore, it is our belief that multilingualism opens the world to students, exposing them to different languages, cultures, opportunities, and relationships beyond which one language can prove. We believe that language study develops international understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth and promotes effective communication within and beyond cultural groups. It is also our intent to promote the development of transferable learning strategies.

Language is a transferable skill between all subject areas and forms the thread that holds the multidisciplinary quilt of communications. We strive to develop students who will build a better world through intercultural understanding, global contexts, and respect.

Because language is integral to personal, interpersonal and cultural development, all teachers are language teachers. Ideally, the acquisition of language is an active process taught through authentic experiences with the goal of developing listening, speaking, reading, writing, presenting, and viewing skills through a culture of inquiry. The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding.

At ASSS, if we have the available resources, we may elect to offer an incoming IB Diploma student the option to complete their Studies in Language and Literature in their mother tongue, as a Self-Taught course. This option is only available to select students who meet the requirements.

Our Support for Students Who Are Not Proficient in the Language of Instruction

Students are provided with the opportunity to develop a wide range of strategies to become competent readers, writers, and communicators. They have access to a range of printed, digital materials, and software. They also learn from staff who model language skills, such as pronunciation and intonation. Students are also offered support from our English Language Learning department here at ASSS.

Example From Language Acquisition

While our policy is geared toward inclusion, in that all IB Diploma students enroll in a language acquisition course, there are occasionally exceptions to this rule.

At ASSS, English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) students, wishing to complete the full IB Diploma, would have the option of completing the French ab Initio course. If they are interested in particular IB courses (not full Diploma programme), students are encouraged to pursue their areas of passion and/or strength.

Our Support of Learning the Host Country's Language and Culture

In our province and school district, there is a two-tiered system. All ELL students participate in a School District assessment, Individual Proficiency Test (IPT), in order that their level of literacy in the English language may be assessed.

At ASSS, all international students assessed at Levels 1, 2, or 3, according to the IPT results, must take an ELL support block. These students continue in regular Global Connections or Diploma courses for the remaining 7 periods. Those students who surpass Level 3 are enrolled in as many Global Connections or IB courses as they wish. Should a non-English speaking student enroll at ASSS but has not sat the IPT at the Board Office, they will sit the exam at ASSS once they have been identified.

Our international students are supported by District personnel. Our District Coordinator and Itinerant International Student Liaisons (ISLs) are at the school and their role is to be the liaison between the school and host families, provide learning support and cultural adjustments, and offer cultural activities and excursions to immerse the students in the Canadian culture.

As educators, we teach language through context and relate new information to existing knowledge via a variety of teaching strategies, activities, and differentiated instruction. We do our best to keep current with the most recent language acquisition research by either reading and/or attending relevant workshops and we depend upon the support provided by the ELL teachers and district specialists.

We provide language support beyond the classroom via the Learning Center, the ISP Help Center, Peer tutoring, and Learning Assistance. Language acquisition is the responsibility of all teachers, students, and parents as successful language learning occurs when there is an extensive support system in place.

Finally, private ELL tutors are available through either the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) or through the Abbotsford Teachers Union (ATU).

Our Strategies to Support All Teachers in Their Contribution to the Language Development of Students

In addition to the District ELL support, there are ELL specialist teachers within our school. Their role is to assess, monitor, and work directly with ELL students to develop their English language skills. Additionally, the ELL specialist teachers assist the teachers and learning support staff by providing resources, strategies, and individual learning support. For reporting purposes, the ELL specialist teachers provide Annual Instructional Plans (AIPs) for all ELL students.

Tutorial time may also be used to address ELL students and their needs. If tutorial time does not work for everyone's schedule, meetings may occur before school, during lunch, or after school hours.

ASSS recognizes the need for professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching for administrators, teachers, teacher-librarians, and other school staff. When appropriate, we will call on the expertise of the specialists. However, we will also offer teachers formalized professional development through related IB workshops and other Professional Development opportunities.

Concluding Comments

The ASSS language policy is a working document. Since Language is “not static, a language policy needs to be dynamic and flexible so that it can evolve with the changing needs of the school population”. This policy will be reviewed and revised as needed each Fall through the curriculum coordinators in consultation with departments, students, and the parent community via the school planning Council. This policy was last reviewed and revised in May 2026.

We recognize and support first and additional language, because we know that bilingualism has a positive effect upon the students' linguistic and educational development.