



# Rockridge Secondary School Language Policy

*Language stands at the center of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning.<sup>1</sup>*

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## Rockridge Language Philosophy

At Rockridge we believe that multilingualism opens the world for students, exposing them to opportunities and relationships beyond what one language can provide. We believe that “language study develops international understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth and promotes effective communication” within and beyond cultural groups.<sup>2</sup>

We recognize that the multilingual classroom is the norm at Rockridge. Because language is so integral to personal, interpersonal and cultural development, all Rockridge 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.”<sup>3</sup> The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international

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<sup>1</sup> Corson D. 1999. Language Policy in Schools: A Resource for Teachers and Administrators. Mahwah, New Jersey, USA. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Carson Graham Secondary School's Language Policy. Accessed October 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Stratford Hall. Language Policy. Accessed October 2012.

education that promotes intercultural understanding.

As a component to teaching to the whole child and in all subjects, teachers value and promote understanding of students’ cultural identities and backgrounds. Students are provided opportunities to maintain or obtain language skills – both in terms of language specific to the disciplines, the school’s language of instruction, and their mother tongues.

### The Rockridge Community Language Profile

<b>Languages used in the school community</b>	
languages of teaching and learning	Language of Instruction: English Language Acquisition: French and Spanish and Japanese
languages of communication used in the school and outside the classroom	Host Country Language: English
the range and types of mother tongue and other languages in the community	At the time of writing, the following mother tongues are represented in our student population: Afrikaans, Albanian, Cantonese, French, German, Persian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Ukrainian, Vietnamese.  73% = English 9% = Mandarin 18% = other
<b>Language needs of the school community</b>	
the language needs of the community (including any legal requirements as a result of government legislation)	The Ministry of Education requires that BC public schools teach students a language other than English from grades 5 – 8. Please see Policy and Legality section below.  On average, about 90% of Rockridge students attend post-secondary education. As most large post-secondary institutions in British Columbia require a second language up to the grade 11 level, the community supports multi-lingual teaching and learning.
<b>Language education logistics</b>	
practices relating to the choice and planning of language courses for learners	Rockridge offers French and Spanish for students in Language Acquisition. We also offer Japanese as a Language Acquisition option for students who progress out of the ELL support program after year 3 or who register at Rockridge in Years 4 or 5.
spelling and referencing protocols	Please see the Academic Framework as explained in Rockridge’s Academic Honesty Policy
preferred bibliographic styles	Please see the Academic Framework as explained in Rockridge’s Academic Honesty Policy
rules and expectations about language use around the school	We expect students’ use of language to adhere to the Rockridge Code of Conduct with regards to decency and academic honesty.

## Language Learning

*Major approaches to language planning include language policy [...] as problem solving, and [...] as an interactive democratic practice.<sup>4</sup>*

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Language learning occurs in every classroom and in every subject in the MYP because we recognize that language stands at the center of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning.<sup>5</sup> Because of this reality, teachers attend to the various language needs of their learners.

For those whose mother tongue is not English, our main language of instruction, students may receive classroom support through one or more of the following examples where appropriate from this *non-exclusive* list, depending on the context:

- Use of visuals
- Buddy system for speaking mother tongue
- Access to readings in advance
- Access to graphic organizers
- Adapted tasks so as to make tasks less dependent on large amounts of writing when writing is not the objective
- Checks for understanding in ways that require students to respond with more than a yes, or smile and nod because we know that many cultures view this as being polite and respectful despite the respondent's actual lack of understanding.
- Additional time to complete a task
- Where the assessment is not specific to the language, students may respond in their mother tongue or use language aids like dictionaries or translators
- Descriptive body language alongside verbal explanations
- Tasks designed to empower peers in offering one another feedback
- Tasks designed to discourage the reliance on a digital translation software or program
- Activation of "students' prior understanding, using the mother tongue and other languages when appropriate"<sup>6</sup>
- Consideration of "time and strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson"<sup>7</sup>
- Demonstrations of the learning objective or task
- Learning structures designed to enable students to work in small, collaborative groups

Most of the differentiation strategies listed above will also benefit many other learners – even those whose

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<sup>4</sup> Hornberger, N and McKay, S, (eds). 2010. Sociolinguistics and Language Education. Clevedon, UK. Multilingual Matters. xv.

<sup>5</sup> Corson D. 1999. Language Policy in Schools: A Resource for Teachers and Administrators. Mahwah, New Jersey, USA. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. 88.

<sup>6</sup> IB. Language and learning in the IB. (2012) 30. [http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g\\_0\\_iboxx\\_amo\\_1109\\_1\\_e.pdf](http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g_0_iboxx_amo_1109_1_e.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> IB. Language and learning in the IB. (2012) 30. [http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g\\_0\\_iboxx\\_amo\\_1109\\_1\\_e.pdf](http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g_0_iboxx_amo_1109_1_e.pdf)

mother tongue is English. This dynamic is especially true when learners of all backgrounds approach discipline-specific terminology. Likewise, communication is a criterion in each subject area of the MYP.

### *Library support of language learning*

The Rockridge Library recognizes the importance of language to the intellectual, creative, and ethical development of students. The Teacher-Librarians work with Language teachers to ensure a wide variety of texts are available to meet the needs of language learners, including English, Spanish, French and Japanese.

The prospect of meeting the needs of our English Language Learners is exciting because it presents an opportunity to embrace an international spirit that values diversity. The Teacher Librarians will build on our collection of international authors, displaying their work, and book talking their stories. The Teacher Librarians will also work in consultation with our ELL students, asking them what their ideal library would look like and the resources it would deliver. The library will display signs in the mother tongues of Rockridge to welcome all students and help them navigate our virtual and physical spaces. The Teacher Librarians will also rely on the advice of our ELL families to deliver mother tongue resources. We will consult with ELL parents and students to get recommendations for novel titles and authors from their home countries.

### **Mother Tongue Opportunities**

In addition to providing structures such as those listed above to support language learners within the classrooms, the school offers many informal opportunities as outlined below to respect and support the language of those whose mother tongue is not English.

Students may join one of the following clubs to support their mother tongue in the following non-exclusive ways:

<b>Club / Structure</b>	<b>Note about how this club or group supports the use and development of mother tongues</b>
Kanata Club	The Kanata club organizes social, cultural activities for the student body including Chinese New Year, International Lunch etc.
Basketball group during lunch breaks	Mr Taguchi plays basketball with International students during lunch hour and many speak in their mother tongues in this environment.

Teachers are encouraged to design learning tasks that require English language learners to interact meaningfully with native English speakers such as the example tasks listed below:

<b>Task</b>
Individual and Societies Year 5 – In a unit about the Great Migration students are assigned to interview an international student as to their reasons for leaving their homes to study in Canada and their experience for having done so to help answer their unit question: what would make someone leave everything they know for the unknown?
Lang & Lit and Individuals & Societies – Students in these 2 classes are paired up with ELLs in a Transitional English or I&S course for the purpose of offering appreciative feedback on a visual or writing tasks.

Lesson on the acculturation process that many international students experience. Used a graph that outlines the ups and downs new ELL students feel in the first 6 months. Led to discussions around being sensitive, compassionate and respectful of others' cultures.

### Language and Literature: English

Understanding a language at a fluent level empowers students to take ownership of their thinking and communicate it clearly to others. The subject is academically rigorous; it equips students with linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that can be used in an interdisciplinary manner across all other subject groups.<sup>8</sup>

### Language Acquisition: French or Spanish or Japanese

In their first year of MYP at Rockridge (which is Year 3 as we do not offer years 1 or 2), students are required to choose either French or Spanish as their Language Acquisition for the rest of their MYP years. Because we recognize the need to experience sustained learning in one language in order to benefit from the exposure, students will not be permitted to switch out of the Language Acquisition course that they initially chose and into the other unless they achieve beyond Phase 4 in their Language Acquisition course, in which case they may choose to begin another Language B.

Students who progress out of our ELL support classes or who progress beyond Phase 4 in their Language Acquisition course, may choose to enroll in Japanese as their Language Acquisition course. This course is open to students who begin a Language Acquisition course in year 4 for the stated reasons or who are new students to Rockridge in Years 4 and 5 of the programme.

Students will be placed in whichever phase is suitable for their language proficiency at the time of enrolment. Students new to Rockridge will complete a language portrait upon selecting their courses. Teachers will determine phase placement for each student based on his or her language portrait. Students currently enrolled at Rockridge will continue with the continuum as per their previous year's learning.

### Host Country Language

Rockridge is responsible for supporting "all students [in reaching] their full potential, [so we must] provide for the language needs of such students so that they can participate fully in the programme."<sup>9</sup> To this end the following course offerings are "designed to help students acquire language skills that will enable them to be integrated successfully into regular, age-appropriate classes. Each English Language Learner will be assessed and appropriate classes selected to meet that student's individual needs."<sup>10</sup> All ELLs take an ELL-normed test. The professional judgment of ELL teachers, test results, and conversations with students will determine recommendations for next year's classes. Landed ELLs have an Annual Instructional Plan (AIP) which is similar to an IEP but which deals specifically with students' language learning needs. Once ELLs are fluent enough to be successful in their courses, students may graduate out of these support classes and into the regular class offerings. This structure aims to create equity between students whose mother tongue is English and those for whom English is not their mother tongue.

<sup>8</sup> IB. Language and learning in the IB. (2012) 18. [http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g\\_0\\_iboxx\\_amo\\_1109\\_1\\_e.pdf](http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g_0_iboxx_amo_1109_1_e.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> IB. Language and learning in the IB. (2012) 18. [http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g\\_0\\_iboxx\\_amo\\_1109\\_1\\_e.pdf](http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g_0_iboxx_amo_1109_1_e.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Rockridge Course Selection Guide. "English Language Learners."

<http://go45.sd45.bc.ca/schools/rockridge/students/Pages/Course%20Descriptions/English-ESL.aspx>. Accessed January 5, 2012.

Our English Language Learner Levels are defined as follows.

**ELL Level 1: *Emerging / Beginning*:** Student is starting to learn English. Direct ELL support is needed in scheduled language support blocks.

**ELL Level 2: *Developing*:** Student is beginning to communicate in simple English with frequent grammatical errors and limited vocabulary. Direct ELL support is needed in scheduled language support blocks.

**ELL Level 3: *Expanding*:** Student can communicate ideas in English with some grammatical errors. Student needs support with content language and vocabulary development (Academic Language). Conversational Language may be strong. Students receive instruction in Language Adapted/Supported English classes.

**ELL Level 4: *Consolidating/Proficient*:** Student's English language proficiency skills are strong enough to enroll in regular-stream classes. ELL support will be given as needed.

English Language Learners will take one or more of the following course – according to the chart on the next page:

**Trans Eng (Transitional English) 1 and 2:** follows the Language and Literature curriculum but with targeted ELL support in years 3/4/5

**ELD 1 and 2 (English Language Development):** provides targeted ELL support for years 3/4/5

**ACL 10 (Academic and Cultural Literacy):** this support block is designed to help students in grade 10 who are ELL Level 1 and 2 so that they can improve their communication skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking in order to succeed across the curriculum. Students will gain cultural knowledge, linguistic competence, and a critical awareness of academic conventions as they explore a variety of genres and develop research skills.

**L&L LA - Language and Literature - Language Adapted 10:** Students will explore a variety of literary texts and forms to support them in their development of written and oral communication. Students will read and study compositions and consider a variety of styles as models for the development of their writing. Students will learn the processes of drafting, reflecting, and revising as well as how to cite sources, consider the credibility of evidence, and evaluate the quality and reliability of the source.

**I&S LA - Individuals and Societies - Language Adapted 10:** This course will focus on the historical, political, social, economic and environmental development of Canada from 1999 to present. Students will receive targeted ELL support through this class.

**WF (Writing Fundamentals) 11:** this support blocks is for students in grade 10 that are ELL level 3 or higher who wish to develop, strengthen and enhance their writing skills in order to write effectively at the level expected of them in Grades 11/12. Student will be introduced to the major component of essay writing, various essay types and the writing process itself.

## Courses by Grade and ELL level

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Gr. 8/9	ELD 1 Trans Eng 1	ELD 1 Trans Eng 1	ELD 2 Trans Eng 2	ELD 2 Trans Eng 2 or Lang & Lit 3/4
Gr. 10	ACL 10  TR ENG10  I&S LA 10	ACL 10  TR ENG 10  I&S LA 10	WF 11  L&L LA 10  I&S LA 10	WF 11  L&L LA 10 or Lang & Lit 10  I&S - 10

### Professional Development

Rockridge recognizes the need for professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching for administrators, teachers, teacher-librarians, and other school staff.<sup>11</sup> When appropriate, we will call on the expertise of our district specialists and our school specialists in language learning to support our professional development as requested. However, we will also offer teachers formalized professional development through related IB workshops and other quality opportunities.

### Parent Involvement

Parents are involved and valued with regard to ensuring the Rockridge library provides a wide variety of texts representative of the linguistic profile of our learning community.

### Language Policy Alignment

Rockridge’s Language philosophy and policy align with our values and policies as outlined below. In all of these policies and positions, the student is central.

#### ... to our mission statement

Part of our mission statement is to nurture “global citizens in a respectful and diverse environment”.<sup>12</sup> Part of being a global citizen is learning how to communicate in a variety of ways and part of being respectful of diversity is understanding the world from different points of view: our language policy works to both of these aims because it ensures that students spend a significant amount of time learning an additional language while modelling respect and support for those whose mother tongue is something other than English.

#### ...to the IB Learner Profile Traits

Rockridge’s Language Policy reflects the learner profile trait of communication because we require students to learn a language in addition to their mother tongue thereby inviting them to broaden their opportunities for communication. Our language policy supports the IB’s holistic approach to education as it honours and

<sup>11</sup> IB. Language and learning in the IB. (2012) 32. [http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g\\_0\\_iboxx\\_amo\\_1109\\_1\\_e.pdf](http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g_0_iboxx_amo_1109_1_e.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Rockridge Handbook. (2012) “Mission Statement.” 4.

supports the linguistic background and knowledge of our students and community. Finally, our language policy supports the philosophy of international education as it supports the idea of working across boundaries – cultural and national – to gain understanding of alternative perspectives.

#### **...to our Academic Honesty Policy**

Our language policy aligns with our Academic Honesty policy in that students are supported, where possible, in learning through their mother tongue; this flexibility decreases the pressure students might otherwise feel to copy and paste information from English language sources when conducting research. Instead, students can choose (where possible and appropriate) to work from multilingual sources without feeling badly about doing so. We also provide support for our English Language Learners in this regard (please see the language policy for details of this support) as there may be differences in cultural understanding of academic honesty that need to be bridged.

#### **...to our Admissions Policy**

Our Language policy aligns with our Admissions policy to welcome all types of students within our catchment first and then from without because we aim to support students' language learning regardless of their linguistic background.

#### **...to our Special Education Policy**

Our Language policy aligns with our Special Education policy in that we require all students to enrol in a Language Acquisition unless their Individual Education Plan specifies otherwise. An IEP would only suggest otherwise if such a plan were in the best interests of the student under recommendation by the relevant specialists.

#### **...to our Assessment Policy**

Our Language policy aligns with our Assessment policy because our Assessment policy is directly applicable to all of our learners – regardless of their linguistic background. Flexibility is built into our Assessment policy to recognize and allow for when students' lack of vocabulary hinders their communication of their understanding.

### **Policy Review Protocol**

The Rockridge 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.”<sup>13</sup> 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.

The policy's effectiveness will be evaluated as part of the review process. The coordinator will gather ELL data from our ELL support teacher each Spring and Fall and this data will inform our review.

### **Communication of the Language Policy**

The Language Policy will be listed with the other school policies on our public website.

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<sup>13</sup> IB. Language and learning in the IB. (2012) 33. [http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g\\_0\\_iboxx\\_amo\\_1109\\_1\\_e.pdf](http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents/general/g_0_iboxx_amo_1109_1_e.pdf)

## Language Policy Legality

This language policy abides by the *BC Ministry of Education's Language Policy*<sup>14</sup> as articulated in Section 5 of the *BC School Act*<sup>15</sup>:

The Government of British Columbia expects all students to achieve proficiency in the English language. Francophone children whose parents qualify for minority language rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* are eligible to receive French as the language of instruction. All students, especially those of Aboriginal ancestry, should have opportunities to learn an Aboriginal language. The Ministry of Education encourages opportunities for all students to learn languages that are significant within their communities.

English and French will be taught as first languages, all other languages will be taught as second languages.

All students must take a second language as part of the curriculum in Grades 5 to 8, except where students are:

- identified as having special needs or are receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) services; and,
- unable to demonstrate their learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes of the second language course; or,
- enrolled in late French Immersion in Grade 6.

School boards will choose which second languages will be offered. Core French will be the language offered if the Board of Education does not offer an alternative.

Only second language curricula, which have Education program guides listed in Ministerial Order 333/99, the Educational Program Guide Order, are eligible to meet the second language requirement for Grades 5 to 8.

School boards may develop their own second language curricula for elective or additional language studies as permitted under Ministerial Order 285/04, the Board Authorized Course Order. School boards may apply to the Ministry of Education to have their locally developed second language curricula given provincial approval. (A locally developed second language curriculum that has received provincial approval is eligible to meet the second language requirement for Grades 5 to 8.)

The exceptions to this rule are for students who

1. in accordance with the *BC School Act*, are “identified as having special needs” and are “unable to demonstrate their learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes of the second language course” due to learning disabilities as explained in their Individual Education Plan.<sup>16</sup>
2. or who come to Rockridge with a mother tongue other than English, as describe above.

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<sup>14</sup> BC Language Policy: [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/language\\_educ.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/language_educ.htm)

<sup>15</sup> BC School Act: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> BC School Act: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf>