

St. Kristoforo Progymnasium

Language Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this language policy in PYP and MYP is to define the framework and principles that guide language use and development at St. Kristoforo progymnasium. As an institution offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme, we recognize the critical role language plays in communication, learning, and personal development. Language is central to our educational philosophy and is not only a tool for knowledge acquisition but also a means to develop intercultural understanding and lifelong learning. This policy aligns with the IB's core principles, emphasizing multilingualism, language acquisition, and cultural awareness.

IB Mission Statement: IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

The **IB philosophy** is grounded in a belief that education should be student-centered, emphasizing inquiry-based learning, intercultural understanding, and the development of essential life skills. The program focuses on holistic development, nurturing not only the intellectual abilities of students but also their personal and social growth.

Vilnius st. Kristoforo progymnasium **mission:** developing together, taking each student into account, we develop a personality that creates its own values, capable of learning consciously through research and collaboration.

Vilnius st. Kristoforo progymnasium **vision:** by cooperating, we purposefully develop a thinking, responsible and caring, consciously learning personality.

Our **motto** is #everyoneisimportant (#svarbuskiekvienas).

Language Philosophy

At St. Kristoforo progymnasium, we believe in the significance of language as a powerful tool for learning and communication. As a school located in Lithuania, **Lithuanian** is the primary language of instruction, which reflects our commitment to preserving and promoting the national language while also developing global citizens. Language learning at St. Kristoforo progymnasium aims to foster linguistic and cultural diversity, enabling students to engage with the world around them in a meaningful and thoughtful way.

We strive to create an environment that:

- **Promotes multilingualism:** encourages students to learn multiple languages, enriching their academic and social experiences;
- **Supports academic and social language proficiency:** ensures students can thrive in their learning environment and beyond;
- **Fosters cultural awareness and empathy:** using language as a means to understand and appreciate diverse cultures and perspectives;
- **Ensures equity and access:** provides all students with the tools and support necessary to succeed academically, regardless of their language background.

Language Profile and Language of Instruction

St. Kristoforo progymnasium is based in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, and serves a diverse student body. The primary language of instruction is **Lithuanian** (7 lessons per week Lithuanian and literature in PYP, 5 lessons per week in MYP), in accordance with the national education system. However, **English** (2 lessons per week in PYP, 3 lessons per week in MYP) is also a significant language of instruction for certain subjects and language courses, particularly for students participating in the IB programme, where English is often used in the curriculum for subjects such as science, mathematics, and social studies.

Lithuanian, as the national language of Lithuania, carries deep cultural, historical, and social significance. For Kristoforo Progymnasium, offering Lithuanian as the primary language of instruction serves as a crucial way of promoting students' connection to their national identity and cultural heritage. Students who are native Lithuanian speakers benefit from being taught in their home language, which enhances their ability to express complex thoughts, engage critically with content, and participate in academic discussions. Furthermore, for international students or students from bilingual backgrounds, learning Lithuanian can help them integrate into local culture and develop a deeper understanding of Lithuanian society, history, and traditions.

Main instructions are always given in Lithuanian. If we have students or their parents, who are not Lithuanian speakers, we have prepared policies in English. In adaptation period (maximum 1 year) students receive support from teachers. It could be: translated instructions, help from teacher assistant, extra Lithuanian lessons, consultations, possibility to use translator, encouraging classmates to create self-help groups.

Language Learning in the IB Programme

The IB programme offers a structured, multilingual approach to language learning, and St. Kristoforo progymnasium ensures that students have the opportunity to acquire and develop languages in meaningful ways. The following pathways are offered to students:

- **Language A (Literature and Language):** students who have Lithuanian as their first language are encouraged to take Lithuanian as their Language A subject, allowing them to deepen their understanding of their native language and culture;
- **Language B (Additional Language):** the IB curriculum allows students to learn English as the first foreign language and to choose the second foreign languages from French, German, or Spanish as an additional language. The aim of Language B is to develop communication skills in another language and expose students to different cultures. We have 2 times per week English lessons for Primary students and 3 times per week for Middle Year students, from 1 MYP students can choose the second foreign language and learn it 1 time per week, from 2 MYP – 2 times per week. In some other subjects English is used as an additional language;
- **Non-formal Language Support and Development:** we offer non formal hours for our students to learn English and other foreign language.

The **MYP Language Acquisition** criteria are structured around the development of skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with an emphasis on communication, understanding. Criteria for **language acquisition** are divided into **four main strands**, and these are used to assess student progress in learning an additional language. Teachers give evaluation test and oral task to

evaluate their language skills. All student, when they starts MYP, are divided into classes, where are two level groups. Students language evaluation is organized two times per year. After that students can change their group which is dependent on their test and oral task results. In a one class student are divided into two grades: 5 class – 1 or 2 grade, 6 class – 2 or 3 grade, 7 class – 3 or 4 grade, 8 class – 4 or 5 grade. All the time students can use consultations systems: they can go to their teacher to deepen their knowledge and skills.

Language as a Tool for Inquiry and Learning

At St. Kristoforo Progymnasium, we recognize that language is the foundation for learning across all subjects. Language proficiency is integral to developing inquiry skills, critical thinking, and communication abilities. Teachers use language-rich strategies that support students' overall academic success:

- **Collaborative Learning:** language is used to promote collaboration in class. Students engage in discussions, debates, and group work, developing their speaking, listening, and writing skills;
- **Concept-Based Learning:** language is a tool for exploring overarching concepts across disciplines. This approach allows students to engage with content meaningfully while strengthening their language abilities;
- **Differentiation:** we offer differentiated instruction to meet the diverse language needs of our students. This ensures that students at different proficiency levels are supported in their language development, whether they are native speakers or non-native speakers of Lithuanian or English.

Support for Multilingualism and Home Language

St. Kristoforo Progymnasium places great value on supporting multilingualism throughout the school community. In addition to formal language classes, the school provides opportunities for students to explore different languages and cultures:

- **Europe Language Week:** The school organizes an annual Language Week, celebrating the diversity of languages spoken in the school. This event allows students to participate in workshops, presentations, and activities that encourage the exploration of languages;
- **The Day of Tolerance:** Students have possibility to organize and participate in some activities in a diversity topics;
- **Projects of the Year:** Students can choose to research and to write a project of the year in English, Spanish, German or French;

We emphasizes the importance of home language development as part of its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and global citizenship. We support students in maintaining and developing their home languages while ensuring they succeed in their academic journey. The school offers resources and encourages students to participate in activities that allow them to connect with their cultural backgrounds while strengthening their language abilities:

- **Language Mentorship:** Pairing students with peers or older students who speak the same home language could help them with language development, cultural integration, and understanding curriculum content;

- **Multilingual Resources and Literature:** Library of Progymnasium has books, educational materials, and online resources in various languages that represent the home languages of their students. These could include reference materials in different languages (for example, bilingual dictionaries, translated texts, etc.);
- **Language Support during tests in adaptation period:** We allow students to use dictionaries or other resources that help bridge gaps between their home language and the language of instruction during assessments, particularly when writing or oral tasks are involved;
- **Language in Context:** Teachers can use students' home language as a bridge to help them understand certain linguistic or cultural contexts, encouraging them to explore parallels between their home language and the language of instruction;
- **Parent-Teacher Partnerships:** We work with parents to support home language development. Regular communication with parents about their child's language progress can help ensure the student's linguistic needs are met both at home and at school.

Assessment of Language Proficiency

Language proficiency is assessed in various ways to ensure that students' language skills are effectively developed and evaluated. The methods of assessment include:

- **Formative Assessment:** teachers use a range of ongoing assessments such as class discussions, presentations, group projects, and written work to monitor students' language development;
- **Summative Assessment:** formal tests and assignments are used to evaluate students' proficiency in Lithuanian, English, and any other languages they are learning. These assessments align with the IB standards and focus on students' ability to use language for academic purposes;
- **Self-Assessment and Reflection:** students are encouraged to reflect on their language learning, identifying their strengths and areas for growth. This helps them take ownership of their learning and develop lifelong language learning skills.

Professional Development for Staff

St. Kristoforo progymnasium is committed to the professional development of its staff in the area of language instruction. Teachers receive ongoing training in language teaching strategies, best practices for language acquisition, and ways to support multilingual learners. This ensures that teachers are equipped to meet the needs of all students and to implement the school's language policy effectively.

Conclusion

Language is central to the educational experience at St. Kristoforo Progymnasium. Through our commitment to fostering multilingualism, supporting language development, and promoting cultural awareness, we aim to prepare our students for success in a globalized world. This language policy provides a framework for supporting students in their linguistic journey and ensuring that they have the skills and confidence to thrive academically and personally.

By prioritizing language learning in all aspects of our curriculum and community life, we continue to provide an inclusive, language-rich environment that allows students to grow, succeed, and become global citizens who value and embrace linguistic and cultural diversity.

References:

- Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy, 2012.
- Guidelines for developing a school language policy, 2008.
- Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes, 2008.
- Primary Years Programme: From principles into practice, 2015
- Programme Standards and Practices, International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014.