



Ecole Sainte-Anne de Kigali



Language Policy

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1.0 Institutional Framework

Vision

Through the pursuit of human excellence, our ambition is to form citizens of the world and, more specifically, active and cooperative members in the countries of the Great Lakes Region, with a view to making this region a land of reconciliation, a common home of well-being in which families, urban, industrial and agrarian societies, as well as states, live in harmony and peace.

Mission

ESAK is a school offering an education open to all, while respecting everyone's convictions. Its ambition is therefore to:

- Welcome children and young people from all backgrounds and origins, representing the diverse cultural identities of the region, to enable them to experience their learning process together;
- Offer a pathway to self-fulfillment and learning of human and academic skills, with a holistic approach, catering for the body, brain and heart - from 3 to 18.
- Offer everyone an all-round education - intellectual, cultural, artistic, technical and physical health;
- To promote the school as a 'living environment in which every child and adult feels welcomed, recognized and valued.

Values

- **Dignity:** For all our children, whoever they are and wherever they come from, have an inalienable right to take the time to grow up.
- **Compassion:** For every existence and every journey through life is punctuated by failures and suffering that require us to support and care for one another.
- **Harmony:** For men and women are created for happiness and joy. And harmony is nothing other than that climate of relationships and community that enables each and every one of us, with and within our differences, to achieve joy with and through others.
- **Humility:** For we must all recognize that what we are today, we owe essentially to others who precede us (history), who surround us (our parents and our families)... and also recognize what we will have to give for those around us and those who will follow us.
- **Integrity:** For uprightness of thought (the "True"), deed (the "Good") and word (the "Right") are essential if we are to live "in truth" with one another.

UBUNTU "I am because we are" - UBUNTU's 3 fundamental rules

1° Respect for our environment.

Like nature, the school, our home, is a gift to us.

It is everyone's responsibility to respect and care for it.

2° Respect for relationships.

To develop our common humanity,

I look after..., I take care of myself, of others, of us, of living things and of life in general.

3° Respect for error.

Mistakes are not only accepted, they are recognized and celebrated.

When we're learning - and this happens throughout our lives - making mistakes is necessary, inevitable, and normal. Learning from mistakes allows us to grow and progress.

2.0 Linguistic Profile

ESAK is a multilingual learning community where French is the language of instruction in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and English in the Middle Years Programme (MYP). Our students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including those whose mother tongues are neither French nor Kinyarwanda. This diversity enriches the school's learning environment and reflects our belief that multilingualism is both a right and a resource.

In alignment with IB Standard A.7, ESAK is committed to promoting the development of students' mother tongues, the host country language (Kinyarwanda), and additional languages. Language profiles are identified at admission to inform planning and support, and while French is used for formal communication, the school encourages inclusive interactions in other languages where possible.

Our language policy aims to build an inclusive and respectful community that values linguistic diversity and supports each learner's academic and cultural development.

2.1. Language of Instruction in the PYP – French

At ESAK, French is the primary language of instruction in the Primary Years Programme (PYP). All subjects, except for English language classes, are taught in French. English is introduced as a second language from the age of five and is taught as part of the curriculum throughout the primary years.

ESAK embraces an immersive French-language environment, where the language is not only used for academic instruction but also as the main language of social interaction within the school community. This fosters a consistent linguistic context for students while supporting their development of academic French proficiency. In keeping with our values of dignity and inclusivity, French is expected to be the reference language during school-wide interactions to avoid unintentionally excluding members of our diverse community.

However, we also recognize and value linguistic diversity. In smaller learning settings such as group projects, discussions, or reflections, students may use their mother tongues to facilitate understanding and deepen conceptual engagement. Teachers are encouraged to guide students in making thoughtful decisions about language use depending on the context, task, and peers involved.

The linguistic goal of the PYP curriculum at ESAK is to ensure a high level of mastery in French while developing foundational academic English skills. Students who are new to French receive targeted

support through our French as a Foreign Language (FLE) program. The curriculum is supported by a wide range of physical and digital learning resources that include French textbooks, online platforms, language apps, and hands-on activities, in line with IB Standard B2.5 on resource adequacy and learning environments.

2.2. Language of Instruction in the MYP – English

Transitioning into the Middle Years Programme (MYP), English becomes the primary language of instruction for most subjects. This shift reflects ESAK's bilingual vision and prepares students to access global opportunities while maintaining strong ties to their local identity. English is the medium of instruction for all core subjects, with the exception of Language Acquisition and Language and Literature (French), which continue to support students' proficiency in French.

Students who transition from ESAK's PYP into MYP typically begin MYP 1 in French Language Acquisition at Phase 3 or 4. This reflects the language competencies they have developed during their primary education and ensures continuity in their bilingual development.

This model supports IB Standard A.7.a, which emphasizes the importance of providing students with the opportunity to learn an additional language. ESAK is committed to enabling every student to achieve proficiency in both French and English, though the extent of proficiency will differ. Some students may attain bilingual fluency, while others may reach functional communicative competence depending on individual learning pathways.

2.3. French Language Acquisition in the MYP

French remains an essential component of the MYP through the Language Acquisition subject group. Students build on their foundational knowledge from the PYP and continue to develop their academic and communicative proficiency in French. ESAK provides differentiated instruction and tailored support within the classroom, recognizing the diverse language backgrounds and learning needs of MYP students.

The learning environment is intentionally designed to be inclusive, low-pressure, and respectful of individual progress. As part of ESAK's commitment to the IB Standard A.5 on promoting responsible action within and beyond the community, students are encouraged to use their growing French skills in authentic contexts, thereby reinforcing both local identity and intercultural understanding.

2.4. Mother Tongue and Host Country Language – Kinyarwanda

Research confirms that a strong foundation in one's mother tongue supports additional language acquisition and cognitive development. ESAK encourages students to maintain and develop their mother language alongside French and English. Within classrooms, students may use their mother language strategically to support comprehension, research, and collaboration, especially when working on complex tasks.

In addition to supporting students' mother tongues, ESAK promotes the learning of Kinyarwanda, the national language of Rwanda. This enhances students' connection to the host country and contributes to their intercultural awareness and respect for local culture. All students, regardless of background, are encouraged to engage with Kinyarwanda both as a means of communication

and as a way to deepen their understanding of the social and cultural environment in which they live.

3.0 Purpose of the Language Policy

This language policy is a working document developed by staff and administration. This policy is consistent with the standards and practices stipulated in the IB program. This document outlines the linguistic and academic goals of ESAK and defines the program designed to help our students achieve these goals.

This policy aims to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at ESAK that permeates the entire curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment. Our policy is a statement of agreement, to which ESAK staff and community are invited to commit so that our school can achieve its mission.

Our aim is to encourage appreciation of the richness and diversity of language. Language does much more than promote cognitive development; it is crucial to the maintenance of cultural identity and emotional stability. Acquiring more than one language and maintaining one's mother language enriches personal development and helps facilitate international understanding. As language, by its very nature, is integrated into all areas of the curriculum, every teacher at the school is considered a language teacher.

At ESAK, we aim to develop students' ability to think and express themselves accurately, clearly, confidently and imaginatively in at least two languages. Linguistic development in more than one language enriches personal growth, offers cognitive advantages and is essential to the development of an international mindset. We strive to integrate students' cultural and linguistic heritage throughout the curriculum.

4.0 Overview of the Language Policy

4.1. Pedagogy

At ESAK, we recognize that all teachers are also language instructors who are responsible for facilitating language acquisition and promoting communication skills within the framework of their grade levels and courses.

4.2 Assessment

Although the acquisition of a language follows distinct stages, the pace of acquisition varies considerably from one individual to another. Consequently, language teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening, usage of language and speaking), differentiating regularly by learning support or extension where necessary. In-class formative and summative assessments provide information on language development. Language teachers apply fairness standards regularly when marking students' work to ensure fair application of assessment criteria.

Standardized tests and external examinations also provide information on language acquisition levels.

4.3. Professional development

As all teachers are expected to be language teachers, ongoing training in integrated language teaching will be offered throughout the year. The school is committed to providing integrated professional development for language learning throughout the IB program.

5.0 Reviewing the Policy

At ESAK, we believe that language learning is a living, evolving journey—one that must grow alongside our students. That's why, each year, we take time to reflect on our language policy to make sure it still meets the needs of our learners. In line with IB expectations (Standard B1.5.a), this review involves looking closely at how our students are progressing in the languages they're learning and speaking. We also gather input from teachers, students, and families to better understand how language use is developing in our classrooms and community. If we find areas that need adjusting—whether it's the support provided for mother tongue development, second language acquisition, or promoting local language and culture—we make thoughtful updates to keep the policy meaningful and relevant. This helps us stay true to our mission of supporting multilingual learners and honoring our rich cultural diversity, especially through the inclusion of Kinyarwanda.

References

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