



Language Policy

November 2022

“Safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility”

Verita International Schools is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Our policies, procedures, and safer recruitment ensure students are safeguarded from any forms of neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional harm

Language Philosophy

At Verita International School, we believe that language is the foundation for all learning. We understand that language, our major means of thinking and communicating, is fundamental to inquiry and learning and underpins the whole curriculum. Thus, we offer opportunities that involve not only the acquiring of languages but also learning through and about language. We nurture an appreciation of the richness of language, including a love of literature, and we endeavour to develop a life-long passion for the learning of language.

Language mediates all social interaction, and through the development of languages, especially mother-tongue languages, we value our rich cultural diversity and promote international understanding. At Verita International School, we believe in the development of language and literacy for all learners so that they can realize their full potential and become successful and responsible global citizens.

Language Profile

Verita International School campuses are located in the capital city of Athens, Greece. We are a co-educational EYFS to Year 13 (projected), private, fee-paying international school governed by a School Director and administered by an Academic Director. The school is open for approximately 170 teaching days. The school's student population is multinational, representing approximately 26 nationalities and languages.

Verita International School respects its diverse community by supporting the development of bilingual or multilingual students through offering course options in the host country language, Greek, and selected Modern Languages, by encouraging high levels of proficiency in each student's mother tongue, and by providing a wide range of learning opportunities to ensure all students develop full academic proficiency in English. Verita International School provides programmes for the development of English for those students who do not possess full academic proficiency.

Verita International School's instructional language is English, but English is not a national language of Greece and is not widely used outside the school's grounds. Verita International School recognizes that a variety of forms of English exist but adopts British usage to match its curriculum.

Student language needs at Verita International School are diverse; as a result, all teachers are teachers of language and instructional strategies and consciously differentiate, integrating the communication domains of listening, speaking, writing, reading, viewing, and presenting into the curriculum.

Essential Agreements for the Teaching of Languages

Verita International School believes that all students should:

- be encouraged to communicate fluently and accurately;
- be encouraged to develop a love of international languages and literature;
- be encouraged to maintain and value their mother-tongue and to aspire to balanced bilingual proficiency;
- be given access to support services as appropriate;
- be encouraged to develop a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, respond to and appreciate texts and media messages;
- be encouraged to express themselves, orally and in writing, in a variety of media and situations.

Verita International School believes all teachers should:

- be responsible for literacy in all domains and all disciplines;
- embed responsive language and literacy instructional strategies into units of instruction;
- promote student inquiry and reasoning using extended discourse patterns specific to their grade-level and subject areas;
- utilize appropriate linguistic registers;
- be emotionally supportive of the stresses on ELL students.

Verita International School believes that the school should:

- promote a supportive and inclusive model of language learning;
- ensure that ELL classes are of a small size so the program can be more individualized. ELL Classes should not exceed 10 students.
- ensure that the ELL program connects to the core subject areas and is designed to provide English learners with access to grade-level, content-based curricula;
- promote a challenging and diverse program of modern languages;
- develop a profile of teacher expectations for language and literacy instruction;
- recruit faculty who understand the importance of supporting language development;
- provide internal and external professional development opportunities for teachers;
- assure collaborative planning between classroom and ELL teachers in order to provide high-challenge, high support environments for English learners;
- actively collaborate with parents to develop and maintain the literacy of the mother-tongue;
- conduct focus groups with parents to ensure that its language policy suits the needs of the current cohort.

Language Policies

The English Language

English is the language of instruction at Verita International School. This means educational programmes are taught in English from preschool through high school

If a student enters school in year 3 or above without adequate English skills they will receive English language support in place of the language classes (either Greek in the academic year 2022-2023). At the end of the academic year the child is reassessed as to whether these sessions need to continue the following year.

Greek for Greeks

Verita International School understands the value of maintaining Greek for Greek students; accordingly, the requirements are as follows:

- Greek Language is taught at all levels;
- Greek students are encouraged to take Greek Language at all levels;
- Greek students are permitted, upon entering Secondary School, to continue Greek language study as their primary language or to study English as their primary language and another language as their third language;

Mother Tongue Languages of Non-Greek Students

Recognizing the critical value of literacy in the mother tongue as the most important variable in a second language education, Verita International School supports the Language instruction of all students as follows:

- The school will organize after-school classes in conjunction with parents;

Additional Languages

Verita International School encourages all students to become proficient in more than one language; accordingly, Verita International School:

- follows Greek law in primary teaching Greek to all students 5 lessons per week
- will use a proficiency-based model to place students in appropriate groupings e.g., beginners, intermediates, and advanced;
- uses the 'immersion' instructional model to teach English;

Recommendations

The school must:

- offer a Greek language elective program for non-Greeks;

- implement modern language options in an increasingly global market
- be encouraged to maintain and value their language and to aspire to balanced bilingual proficiency;
- continue supporting teachers through the internal and external professional development opportunities that support student language development.

In addition to the recommendations above, Verita International School has on staff a full-time, school-wide language and literacy coordinator to:

- oversee the implementation of the spirit and goals of this policy in all Verita International School sessions
- promote, develop and coordinate Language programmes for Verita International School students.;
- institute a language-proficiency model by which students' language proficiency and literacy development is monitored systematically;
- stay current with research related to the teaching and learning of languages;
- manage and implement professional development opportunities for classroom and language teachers as needed for the implementation of this policy;
- conduct frequent surveys of the parent community to support the implementation of this policy.

Some students will not attend Verita for more than 2-3 years due to diplomatic, athletic, business or military placements. In these instances, we will relax the language requirements to accommodate these students' specific needs.

Despite this, we expect all students to meet the high expectations set in language learning.