



Language Policy

The aim of all IB programs is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. (IBO)

At Lakewood Catholic Academy, we understand the critical role that language plays in acquiring knowledge in all content areas, in communicating, in building relationships, and in breaking down barriers between people. We are committed to developing global citizens who are strong communicators.

In order to develop internationally minded citizens, who “will help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect,” all LCA teachers must be language teachers. Furthermore, our classrooms are designed to provide a rich language environment that will provide students with the opportunity to:

- Have frequent and consistent opportunities to listen, read, write, view and present in all content areas. Students in MYP Years 1, 2, and 3 will participate in language and literature classes every day throughout the school year. Students in MYP years 2 and 3 will have the opportunity to participate in weekly Communications classes intended to develop competency in a wide variety of contexts.
- Learn and master content area vocabulary to ensure that students have the necessary tools to establish a solid foundation in every discipline and to effectively communicate their knowledge. Teachers will provide direct instruction of vocabulary and employ a variety of techniques and strategies that appeal to various learning modalities in order to ensure that all students have access to the content vocabulary. Unit plans will include content area vocabulary that will be used throughout the unit.
- Be exposed to a broad range of literature and literary genres that reflect a variety of cultures, perspectives, and historical periods. A minimum of one unit of world literature will be taught each year of the program.
- Develop critical literacy by focusing on the Approaches to Learning skills at increasing levels of complexity throughout the MYP years. Students will be called upon to analyze, organize and produce text, and to use language appropriately in order to meet the objectives of the language and literature curriculum.

- Honor the diversity of language within our community. While the vast majority of families speak English as their first language, a significant portion speaks an additional language in the home. In a global community where multilingualism is a fact, a right and a resource for learning, students will be invited to share linguistic and cultural connections during certain units as well as during whole school celebrations.
- Be exposed to a second language throughout their years at Lakewood Catholic Academy. The focus of the language acquisition program will range from learning simple vocabulary, songs, and dances in the early years to a more formal study of the structure and grammar of a second language during the Middle Years.
- Have access to resources in other languages as well as resources that represent a wide variety of cultures.

Language Acquisition

Language acquisition classes are offered beginning in kindergarten and continue through eighth grade. We believe that this early exposure to a second language furthers our goals to promote international mindedness and consider different perspectives.

Students in Kindergarten through fourth grade attend weekly Language Exposure classes consisting of introductory vocabulary, songs, and cultural traditions.

Students in grades five through eight attend Language Acquisition classes multiple times per week. The goal of these courses is for students to develop listening, reading, speaking and writing proficiency in the acquired language.

Support for Struggling Language Learners

Recognizing that a strong foundation in language is critical to all content areas, LCA provides assistance to students who struggle with language learning. These services range from tutoring sessions with a classroom teacher to intensive intervention services with education specialists. Please reference Inclusion Policy.

Support for English Language Learners

Historically, the LCA community has been enriched by the presence of students who are non-native English speakers. Accommodations are made in the classroom to ensure a smooth transition to an English speaking environment, to honor the mother tongue, and to promote educational success. LCA teachers, administrators, and, if needed, education specialists meet with families to plan and implement appropriate support.

Assessment

Teachers will use the required MYP assessment criteria in the Language and Literature Guide as well as Language Acquisition Guide in designing both formative and summative assessments for students in grades 6 through 8. Please reference Assessment Policy. These assessments will vary throughout the school year and may take the form of projects, essays, written tests, performances, or other evidence of learning appropriate to the content.

Summary

Lakewood Catholic Academy is committed to promoting language proficiency and fostering a love of language, including acquired language. As an internationally minded community, LCA also values and supports families with diverse language backgrounds. In the spirit of continuous growth, this policy will be reviewed annually by teachers, administrators, and members of the community.

Bibliography

MYP: From Principles into Practice. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2022

Program Standards and Practices. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020.

Middle Years Programme Language Acquisition Guide. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020.

Middle Years Programme Language and Literature Guide. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014.