

## Pierce Language Policy

*Revised 20th of July 2016*

Pierce-The American College of Greece offers a vastly enriched education based on the best of US educational practice, along with the Greek National Curriculum. The school is also an official candidate school for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme which the school wishes to implement as an option beginning in September 2016. Language acquisition and development is a powerful and crucial part of each and all of these educational elements.

### *Rationale:*

At PIERCE, the rationale behind our language policy complies with the overall philosophy of our school; our school's mission is *"to provide a holistic education to form intellectually independent, morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens."*

Therefore, all language courses strive to acquaint the learner not only with linguistic elements, but also with the culture that is expressed through that language.

Students have a bilingual education conducted in Modern Greek and in English. Students who come to PIERCE at age 12 or later already have competence in English and are typically Greek native-speakers. The English program is divided into differentiated levels in each year which reflect the respective proficiencies of the students. Typically by age 16, the student is functionally bilingual. The Greek language offering includes both Modern and Ancient Greek in all years, but Ancient Greek is particularly emphasized in the Gymnasium with the 12 to 15 year-old students. Classical Greek works of literature are also studied in Modern Greek translations.

Also in the Gymnasium, a third language is compulsory. The students typically have a choice of German, Italian, French or Spanish. Third language studies can be continued on an elective basis in the Lyceum in the final year. The emphasis on languages and works in translation from around the world reflects the international perspective of the school. Profoundly American in its heritage, it is at the same time quintessentially Greek and international-- and this reality is reflected in the breadth and depth of its language policy and practices.

In particular, the philosophy behind the English programme, where English is taught as a second language, is that a language is more than just a means of practical communication between people; it is most importantly the bearer of the values entertained by the people speaking that language. As a result, learners are encouraged to look beyond the linguistic code and to search for values that are unique to the language they are studying or for values that their culture, too, might share with the culture under study. This way, our mission to *form [...] morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens* materializes as our learners become aware of the variety of perspectives that exist in our world.

*Practice:*

Apart from the Greek curriculum where learners are exposed to the ancient Greek language and its philosophy, the above aim is achieved through the daily teaching of English as a second language (5 to 7 hours weekly). Furthermore, our learners are also given the opportunity to study a third language of their choice (French, German, Italian, or Spanish).

The study of both mother tongue and English entails studying authentic, adapted or translated literature in all of our classes and levels. Furthermore, in an effort to teach culture experientially, a variety of events are organized in English, for instance, where the emphasis is on the cultural products of English-speaking cultures (e.g. Thanksgiving, Halloween, etc.). Moreover, trips are organized with a cultural focus (e.g. trip to England with a focus on Shakespeare's life and his works; trip to France with a focus on French cuisine; trip to Italy with a focus on the arts, etc.), while clubs centering on the third languages and the cultures they communicate are offered as part of the PIERCE curriculum. Finally, an effort is made to collaborate between language departments in such activities, as is, for example, European Languages Day.

*The policy is annually reviewed and revised – current version 20 July 2016*