



# LANGUAGE POLICY

***"Sermo est index animi."***  
*"Speech is the mirror of the soul."*

(**Marcus Fabius Quintilianus**, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book XI, Chapter 1, Section 30)

***The policy is annually reviewed and revised by IBDP Coordinator, Group Representatives and Faculty members - Current version September 2025***

### **International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) Mission Statement**

"The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."

### **Pierce - The American College of Greece Mission Statement**

"The mission of Pierce is to provide a holistic education to form intellectually independent, morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens. "Non ministrari sed ministrare" ("Not to be served but to serve") defines our institutional character and our aspiration for our students.

## VALUES

Pierce – The American College of Greece aims to form intellectually independent, morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens guided by the motto “Non ministrari sed ministrare” (“Not to be served but to serve”). Anchored in its mission, Pierce ACG aspires to cultivate bilingual learners who are “appreciative of the riches that diversity and equity bring,” and who are prepared to become “socially engaged global citizens.”<sup>1</sup> Our School values bilingualism and multilingualism as pathways to global citizenship and personal enrichment and therefore, language is viewed as essential to cognitive growth, cultural identity, communication, and intercultural understanding. For this reason, students are made culturally aware of American customs and traditions as well as trends rooted in the U.S. social norms while giving roar to events in the rest of the world. Students are encouraged to be active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who appreciate the richness that cultural and linguistic diversity brings.

It is with this background that our students progress into Pierce IBDP, developing into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people with an intercultural understanding and respect for diversity, equity, and different perspectives.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this language policy is to articulate the philosophy and good practices of language teaching and learning as well as language use at Pierce ACG, in line with IB requirements. The rationale of such is to ensure that students become bilingual or multilingual learners capable of functioning confidently in academic, social, and professional contexts and so initiatives integrated in the English Program aim to develop relevant skills. School activities to include exchanges, conference participations, competitions and all other interactions describe how the school supports language development for all students, including native and non-native speakers.

This language policy is transparent, accessible, and reviewed annually by language faculty.

## PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles of this language policy is strictly aligned with the IBDP standards of language use. This means that English is used for all official communication, assignments, projects, and correspondence. All IBDP teachers are language teachers. Each subject integrates language instruction specific to its discipline, abiding to Academic Integrity practices to include consistent use of language conventions (e.g., spelling, referencing) and adherence to IB standards.

While Greek is the official language of instruction under the Greek Ministry of Education, English is the language of instruction for all IBDP subjects except Modern Greek A Literature. Equal value is placed on both languages and they are treated as vital to students' intellectual and cultural development. Students of all language backgrounds are supported to succeed in both languages.

Regular meetings between Greek and English language teachers ensure coherence, curriculum alignment, and diversity in literary works. The policy and practices are regularly revised and informed by feedback and international best practice.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this Language Policy is transparent and conveyed throughout the Pierce IBDP community. The Language Policy is included in the school handbook and shared with parents, students, and faculty. Annual review by the language department and school governance ensures alignment with IB guidelines and evolving needs.

Admission to the IBDP in view of **English Language** includes:

- a minimum grade of 16/20 (18/20 for Non-Pierce students), in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Certificate
- a minimum grade of 16/20 (18/20 for Non-Pierce students), in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester 10<sup>th</sup> Grade report

Candidates who do not meet the predetermined academic criteria—whether they are scholarship applicants or students entering from institutions outside Pierce—are required to take an English language assessment. This diagnostic tool assists in determining readiness for IB instruction, which is delivered primarily in English.

To ensure comprehensive and holistic admissions, all prospective IBDP students participate in an interview conducted by a multidisciplinary panel comprising an English language teacher, subject specialists, a university counselor, a member of the school's leadership team, and the IBDP Coordinator. The interview, conducted in English, serves as an evaluative mechanism to assess both the candidate's communicative competence and their suitability for the demands of the IB Diploma Programme.

English functions as the official language of academic communication within the Pierce IBDP community. It is consistently employed for the dissemination of curricular materials, including assignments, projects, co-curricular activities, and formal announcements, primarily through digital platforms such as Managebac and institutional email. Furthermore, English constitutes the principal language of professional correspondence among educators and in all communications between the IB Coordinator and teaching staff, thereby reinforcing a coherent and linguistically unified academic environment. Nonetheless, in alignment with culturally responsive practices, Greek is occasionally utilized by faculty members in informal or non-instructional contexts—such as pastoral care, student advisory, or unofficial consultations—where it may enhance rapport and offer additional affective support.

## SUPPORT STRUCTURES

### **A. Learning in a Language other than the home language**

Pierce ACG High School has long recognized the central role of language development in fostering cognitive growth and academic achievement. Historically, students entered the institution at Year 7 and continued through to Year 12. However, as of September 2022, Pierce expanded its educational provision to include Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Primary levels. These new divisions are guided by the same pedagogical principles that underpin language instruction across the school, thereby enabling the cultivation of linguistic proficiency through sustained and developmentally responsive engagement from an earlier age.

The English and additional language departments collaboratively design curricula that are developmentally appropriate, intellectually stimulating, and sufficiently rigorous to promote continuous progression across year levels. While Pierce ACG operates under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Education—with Greek serving as the official medium of instruction for all subjects—the school concurrently offers a robust English language program. This program functions autonomously from ministerial constraints, providing students with a minimum of six instructional periods per week in English. The curriculum emphasizes both language acquisition and literary analysis, utilizing materials designed for native speakers and aligned with a skill-building, inquiry-based framework.

Within the context of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), over 90% of enrolled students transition directly from Pierce’s high school. In accordance with IB regulations, all courses—excluding Modern Greek A—are delivered and assessed in English.

Each IB subject teacher holds a dual responsibility: to deliver disciplinary knowledge and to facilitate the development of academic language and communication skills that are intrinsic to their subject area. In accordance with the IB assertion that “every teacher is a language teacher,” educators across all disciplines are to provide explicit instruction in the linguistic structures, conceptual vocabulary, and methodological conventions that define their academic field. This includes, for example, teaching the principles of scientific or mathematical writing, argumentative structuring in humanities, or subject-specific terminology in the arts and sciences.

Such an integrated approach to language instruction reflects the IB’s transdisciplinary emphasis on language as a tool for thinking, learning, and constructing meaning. It also aligns with the *Approaches to Teaching and Learning (ATL)* framework, which encourages the development of communication and research skills across the curriculum. By fostering students’ ability to navigate and produce academic discourse across subjects, teachers contribute to the formation of learners who are not only linguistically competent but also capable of transferring knowledge between contexts—one of the hallmarks of an internationally minded, lifelong learner.

## i) Teacher Planning

Dedicated time is formally allocated for structured teacher collaboration within the IB Diploma Program. These sessions serve as a cornerstone for pedagogical alignment and academic coherence, facilitating joint decision-making on curriculum planning, literary text selection—tailored to the interests and linguistic needs of the student cohort—as well as the design and scheduling of both formative and summative assessments.

Group 1 teachers of Greek and English convene annually at the close of each academic year to strategically plan their syllabi and to ensure thematic breadth, balance, and the avoidance of content redundancy. Regular monthly meetings are also held throughout the academic year to encourage reflective dialogue, the exchange of effective teaching strategies, and the monitoring of student progress in preparation for internal and external assessments. These ongoing professional dialogues contribute to a reflective teaching culture and reinforce the alignment of instruction with the expectations of the IB Diploma Program.

The Group Representative plays a pivotal leadership role in this process, ensuring vertical and horizontal articulation across the curriculum, overseeing the consistency of assessment practices, and guiding the integration of IB core elements such as TOK, CAS, and ATL. As both a pedagogical mentor and liaison to the IB Coordinator, the Group Representative is instrumental in upholding the integrity of collaborative practices, fostering professional growth, and ensuring alignment with IB Program Standards and Practices.

## ii) Course Selection

Pierce offers both English A: Language and Literature and English B at Standard and Higher Levels, adhering closely to the pedagogical framework and assessment principles outlined by the International Baccalaureate. Instruction is guided by IB aims and approaches to teaching and learning, with a strong emphasis on inquiry, conceptual understanding, and critical engagement with language across diverse contexts. The overarching objective is to cultivate articulate, reflective, and linguistically confident learners who demonstrate advanced proficiency as readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and presenters.

A key component of the English curriculum is the strategic exposure of students to a wide range of linguistic registers and communicative contexts. Such immersion is recognized as a catalyst for developing nuanced language competence and fostering versatility in real-world communication. These contexts are often embedded in authentic, performance-based learning experiences, including structured debates, speeches, simulations (e.g., mock trials), interdisciplinary projects, oral interpretations, and engagement with a diverse array of literary and non-literary texts.

In accordance with national educational legislation, all Greek nationals enrolled in the IBDP are required to undertake Modern Greek A: Literature in order to fulfill Group 1 (Language A) requirements and to obtain recognition of the IB Diploma as equivalent to the Greek *Apolytirion* (High School Diploma). Additionally, all IBDP students must enroll in an English course commensurate with their linguistic proficiency. Placement

in either English A: Language and Literature or English B is informed by students' academic performance in English during Year 9 and the first semester of Year 10.

Bilingual students are strongly encouraged to consider enrolling in English A: Language and Literature as an additional Group 1 subject, particularly when this choice aligns with their intended field of university study. Conversely, students whose English proficiency is not yet sufficient for success in a literature-based course—or those whose academic pathways do not prioritize the humanities—are advised to pursue English B at Higher Level, which offers rigorous language development within an appropriate framework of challenge and support.

The process of course selection at Pierce IBDP is conducted collaboratively by the University Counseling team and the IB Diploma Programme Coordinator. Students are advised in alignment with the specific entry requirements of prospective university programs, ensuring that subject choices are strategically aligned with their academic and career aspirations. The IBDP Coordinator also provides guidance on institutional policies and regulations, referencing the 2017 IBO curricular guidelines and the Pierce Handbook of Policies and Procedures (2020–2021) (see Appendix).

### iii) School Actions & Activities

The IBDP English program is fully integrated with the broader academic and co-curricular framework of the school, offering students the opportunity to pursue their interests and expand their communicative repertoires through active participation in extracurricular initiatives conducted in English. These include Model United Nations (MUN), the Forensics Club (covering debate, duet-acting, oratory, impromptu speaking, and group discussion), the English Drama Club, the European Youth Parliament, and a range of cultural celebrations such as Holocaust Remembrance Day, Thanksgiving, Halloween, and themed days focused on English-speaking countries (e.g., Wales, Australia, Ireland). These initiatives not only enhance students' public speaking skills but also promote intercultural awareness, global perspectives, and appreciation for diverse values. Additionally, the annual publication of the *Sunny Days* school magazine—featuring student contributions in the form of articles, interviews, surveys, and creative writing from Grades 7- 12—serves as a platform for authentic expression and reinforces written language fluency in meaningful, student-driven ways.

## **B. Support of home language**

Greek is the native language of the entire Pierce IBDP student cohort. In fulfillment of Group 1 (Language A) requirements within the IB Diploma Programme, all Greek nationals are enrolled in Modern Greek A: Literature, a course that aligns both with IB curricular objectives and national educational policy.

For Greek students seeking national recognition of the IB Diploma as equivalent to the Greek High School Diploma (*Apolytirion*), compliance with domestic legislative criteria is essential. According to Greek Ministry of Education regulations, equivalency is granted when the IB Diploma is supplemented with coursework in three nationally mandated "Isotimia" subjects: Greek language, Greek literature, and Greek history. At Pierce, Modern Greek A: Literature is considered to fulfill the first two components

of this requirement. Consequently, all Greek nationals are expected to undertake this course. Additionally, students receive instruction in Greek History once per week (comprising two teaching periods), using the same curriculum and textbooks prescribed for Greek Lykeion students. Assessment is conducted biannually through internally administered examinations, and grading adheres strictly to standards established by the Ministry of Education.

Beyond compliance, the study of Modern Greek literature offers profound academic and cultural value. Through the close reading of canonical texts and sustained engagement in interpretive discussion, students develop a nuanced understanding of Greek cultural narratives, belief systems, and historical consciousness. This process nurtures a deeper sense of personal identity and cultural heritage while reinforcing their expressive capabilities in their mother tongue. The ability to articulate complex ideas and emotions in their native language significantly enhances both their communicative confidence and their interpersonal skills.

As native speakers, students possess a cognitive and linguistic advantage in navigating figurative language, idiomatic expression, and rhetorical nuance—elements that are more readily accessible in one’s first language. Mastery of their mother tongue also facilitates the transfer of higher-order cognitive strategies, thereby enriching their learning experiences across other languages and academic disciplines. In this way, the cultivation of native language proficiency serves as both a foundation for academic excellence and a bridge to multilingual competence.

The Modern Greek Academy offers additional support in academic Greek writing and communication while libraries provide access to extensive Greek resources, databases, and academic honesty tutorials. Students are also encouraged to use their native language with their peers socially to feel comfortable in their learning environment and with teachers in the case that they wish to express a personal matter which requires a degree of intimacy where their native language will give them the convenience to express themselves openly with confidence.

### **C. Teaching of a second language**

The language study of German, French, Spanish, or Italian is introduced in specialized cases and is accommodated accordingly. Currently there are no provisions for these languages to be offered as IBDP Subjects in Pierce.

### **D. Student Support**

At the commencement of the first year of the IB Diploma Program, students are systematically introduced to the academic resources and research infrastructure of both the DERE and Pierce libraries. This orientation is designed to support their engagement with the full range of IB assessments, including research papers, oral presentations, the Individual Oral (IO), the HigherLevel Essay (HLE), and the Extended Essay (EE). Emphasis is placed not only on access to information but also on the development of advanced research literacy and academic integrity.

A vast array of physical and digital resources is made available to both students and faculty. These include a collection of over 35,000 Greek and English-language print volumes, 27 research databases containing more than 420,000 e-books and 38,000

academic journals, as well as 75,000 educational videos, 3,500 plays and audio plays, and approximately 20,000 curated viewpoints and editorial commentaries. These resources are accessible both on campus and remotely, ensuring equitable access for all members of the learning community.

Moreover, through interlibrary loan agreements with the John S. Bailey Library at DERE College and the Alba Library, students and faculty have extended access to supplementary print materials. Additional document delivery services are provided via major international platforms such as OCLC and the British Library, further enhancing the academic breadth and depth of available content. The library also plays a proactive instructional role. It offers dedicated workshops and tutorials on critical research skills, including citation styles, note-taking strategies, source evaluation, and academic honesty—principles explicitly aligned with the IB Academic Integrity Policy. These sessions are often framed through the lens of the Extended Essay, providing students with concrete, scaffolded examples of scholarly research expectations.

Students are strongly encouraged to utilize the library as both a quiet space for individual inquiry and a collaborative environment for peer learning and project development. It serves as a hub of academic culture, reinforcing independent learning and intellectual curiosity—key attributes in the IB Learner Profile.

In parallel with academic support services, students in both IB1 and IB2 receive structured tutoring in areas critical to success in the Diploma Programme. These sessions address a broad spectrum of student development, including time management, stress regulation, metacognitive study strategies, and work-life balance. All tutoring is delivered in English, thereby also serving as an opportunity for students to reinforce their language proficiency in authentic, applied contexts that support both academic and social development.

## **E. Professional Development**

In alignment with IB Programme Standards and Practices and the principles of inclusive education, the school ensures that all language teachers engage in ongoing professional development. Faculty members have participated in workshops on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and academic accommodations. Notably, Pierce language educators have received specialized training from globally recognized institutions, including Harvard University, Columbia University, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. This ensures that instruction is informed by the latest research in inclusive pedagogy and that all students—regardless of learning profile—are supported in accessing and engaging with the curriculum meaningfully.

Language educators at Pierce are systematically encouraged to engage in ongoing professional learning through a combination of internal and external workshops and seminars. Over the past two academic years, faculty members have participated in virtual and in-person development initiatives offered by internationally recognized institutions and professional networks, with a focus on contemporary methodologies, inclusive education, and evidence-based pedagogical practices. In addition to these global opportunities, the school provides in-house professional development tailored to emerging instructional priorities and institutional goals.

In alignment with the IB Program Standards and Practices and grounded in the principles of inclusive education, Pierce ensures that all language teachers receive continuous training to support diverse learner profiles and foster equitable access to the curriculum. Notably, several members of the language faculty have pursued advanced professional development through esteemed institutions such as Harvard University, Columbia University, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, with a focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and academic accommodations. These initiatives strengthen the school's commitment to pedagogical integrity, professional excellence, and inclusive practice.

Curricular planning and resource adoption are collaborative and student-informed. All language teachers are consulted annually on the selection of course texts and digital platforms, and student input is actively integrated through a 'voice and choice' approach in the selection of classroom reading materials, based on relevance, accessibility, and engagement. This model reflects the IB's emphasis on learner agency and meaningful curricular engagement.

To further enhance teaching and learning, the school invests in high-quality subscription platforms such as ThinkIB and eNotes, which offer comprehensive pedagogical resources aligned with IB subject guides and assessment practices.

#### **F. Spelling and Referencing Tools**

At Pierce IBDP, both American and British English spelling conventions are accepted in student coursework, provided that spelling is applied consistently throughout a given piece of work. Students are expected to adhere to recognized standards of academic referencing in all research-based assignments and presentations, with consistency of format being the primary requirement, regardless of the chosen citation style. While a variety of referencing methods may be employed, Modern Language Association (MLA) style is explicitly recommended by both English and Greek language faculty, as it aligns with disciplinary conventions for writing in the fields of language and literature.

#### **G. Review Cycle**

This language policy is regarded as a dynamic and evolving document, subject to annual review by the language faculty to ensure its continued relevance, responsiveness to community needs, and alignment with the guiding principles of the IB. It is formally incorporated into the School Handbook of Procedures, accessible to all stakeholders within the school community.

The policy is intended to be transparent and widely disseminated among all participants in the educational process—including students, parents, teaching staff, and the high school administration. Constructive feedback is welcomed as part of a collaborative and reflective process. The school actively encourages ongoing dialogue through structured faculty discussions and meetings of the governing council, in order to address emerging needs, refine language development strategies, and promote inclusive, research-informed linguistic practices across the institution.

## References

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