

HVAH Language Policy

Philosophy

HVAH is committed to supporting multilingualism as a fundamental part of increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

HVAH recognizes that the study of language is central to all learning and that all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with core responsibilities to facilitate written and oral communication skills.

HVAH recognizes that language study (in both English and Language Acquisition) reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth and promotes effective, independent thinking and communication.

HVAH supports the IBO mission of developing global awareness and recognizes that the skills to live and work with others, both locally and internationally, are enhanced by the development of more than one language.

HVAH values differentiated and varied instruction which integrates the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. We encourage authentic and meaningful learning experiences that include cross-curricular lessons (when possible) as well as exposure to literature, non-fiction writing, grammar and various forms of language. Specific references to language instruction and assessment are extremely relevant, and should be found in both individual scope and sequence curriculum maps and course syllabi.

HVAH recognizes the need to support recognition and appreciation of the 16 diverse mother-tongue languages represented within our school community. We provide academic support for ELLs, distinguished separately from students with other academic needs.

School Language Profile

The IB Diploma Program is a building program that functions within the Harlem Village Academies network of schools in New York City. HVAH is ethnically rich, but less diverse than the larger city, as most students are African-American and Latino (using US federal race categories). Due to state high school graduation requirements, very few students request Language A1 self-taught.

The language of instruction is English, and the school offers three Language Acquisition levels: Spanish ab initio, Spanish SL, and Spanish HL. IB diploma classes are open to all HVAH students, regardless of race, gender, or access to economic resources. Network students are granted automatic entry into HVAH by choice, and other NYC district students may request a placement into HVAH from any other district middle or high schools. Currently, all incoming transfers are on hold, as HVAH is at capacity, so students can only gain access if current students leave the school.

Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act requires states to assess the English language proficiency of students receiving English language development services at school. New York State uses the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) as the only assessment instrument for measuring the English Language proficiency of students who may be an English Language Learner (ELL). In addition, New York State uses the “New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test” (NYSESLAT) to determine if an ELL continues to be limited in their English proficiency.

When ELL students arrive at Harlem Village Academies, they are evaluated using the NYSITELL assessment. The NYSITELL assessment results are reported in raw scores, scale scores, and performance levels. Results from this test determine which students are eligible to continue receiving ELD services. As of 2019, the NYSITELL reports a continuum of five performance levels: Entering (0), Emerging (1), Transitioning (2), Expanding (3), and Commanding (4) in the dimensions.

We use multiple criteria to determine when a student is ready to be placed in non-ELL English classes, including scores and class performance. The next placement is IB Language and Literature HL as their primary English class in Grades 11 and 12. When this occurs, they are placed with a support Inclusion instructor for additional support. This teacher regularly collaborates with the IB course instructor on differentiation and support. All of the students who are in the IB Diploma Program have a basic proficiency in English, and most ELL students who are participating in courses at Grade 9 have experience with the English language.

It is a core responsibility of each teacher to assess language proficiency needs and to adjust curriculum accordingly. There are many students who tutor in various subject areas as part of their CAS activities.

Overview of HVAH Languages

- English is the language of instruction.
- English, as a subject, is taught through:
 - Language A1
 - Language A2-self-taught (by arrangement, for IB exchange-students)
- Language Acquisition languages (Language B):
 - HL courses: Spanish
 - SL courses: Spanish
 - Ab Initio: Spanish (offered as needed)
- Linguistic Cultural Opportunities
 - The school offers a multitude of opportunities to gain exposure to various languages and cultures through music, art, festivals, assemblies, multicultural clubs and curricular units. Several student groups lead these efforts.
 - CAS opportunities exist within the community that focus on the ethnic diversity of the community and would allow for the practice of world language skills.
 - Students whose fluency in English needs practice may access materials in the school library or request tutor assistance. Teachers differentiate curriculum and learning, as needed.
 - Parent-student-school community evenings are held to celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity and provide school information.
 - The school library has access to public domain articles in a variety of languages, periodicals in Spanish, history videos in Spanish, and literature and poetry in a variety of languages. In addition, our online library (SORA) has books available in both English and other mother-tongue languages. The library has also circulated a variety of resources to the Language Acquisition/World Language department.
- Support for Community / Family Interaction in Mother-Tongue Language
 - Real-time translators are provided by the network for all parent-student-teacher meetings, upon request.
 - All district and school communication is available in English and can be translated using the Google Language plug-in to support all mother-tongue languages for families. Our school website is compliant with state and federal law.
 - The network introduced ParentSquare, a tool that unifies all teachers/school communication into a single portal that can be accessed by parents in their mother-tongue.

- o All family communication regarding grades and assignment progress are reportable to families in their mother-tongue, using ParentSquare. Other features include:

- Classroom Communication
- Forms and Permission Slips
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Invoices and Payments
- Calendar and RSVP
- Volunteering and Sign Ups
- Polls
- Secure Document Delivery

- o As all communication is sent across the web, student/parent emails are translatable across the Google platform of supported languages.
- o The school and network support live transcription and translation for families in other languages.

Essential Agreements for the Teaching of Language

All students are:

- encouraged to maintain and value their own native language and to respect the native language of other students
- taught language skills (to read, write, analyze and reflect) by all members of the HVAH faculty in each course, regardless of discipline
- encouraged to become fluent in more than one language
- introduced to a variety of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and respond to a variety of media and non-fiction sources
- exposed to a wide range of literature reflecting a variety of cultures
- given time to reflect on their learning and to apply remediation strategies
- encouraged to share and develop their work in a social context
- given constructive and specific feedback from teachers and peers
- given access to, and are taught through, a variety of technological and informational sources
- given the opportunity to become active language learners through inquiry and authentic real-life applications
- encouraged to view language as a tool for life-long learning
- encouraged to include parents, peers and the community in their development of language skills