Language Policy

The Language Policy at Albanian College outlines goals and actions for language teaching and learning. It is constructed around pedagogical and learning beliefs centred on the principles of the IB programmes and Council of International Schools. The IBO document, *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*, was central in the creation of the AC Language Policy.

Language Philosophy

Albanian College believes in the importance of language as a means to develop internationally-minded, compassionate, creative and intelligent students since it is through language that students can access different cultures, develop perspective and continue a lifelong process of learning (see Mission Statement).

Albanian College recognises that the community places conditions of worth on Albanian language and accordingly, Albanian College promotes Albanian language development among all students, including native-Albanian and non-native-Albanian speakers.

Albanian College recognises that language is central to student identity and plays an essential role in developing the whole child in accordance with the IB Learner Profile attributes.

Albanian College recognises that students learn language best when it is studied within an authentic context, as opposed to an abstract approach.

Albanian College recognises that the community views English language proficiency as an important element for supporting post-secondary studies and success.

Albanian College language instruction is organized into units of study and inquiry-based teaching approaches are implemented, when possible. Language learning takes place in classrooms, through extra-curricular activities, and in all aspects of student life. Albanian College is committed to providing resources of language instruction and acquisition, including, but not limited to, classrooms, a librarian, qualified teachers, textbooks, online resources, journals, media resources, and other materials, many of which are located in the library. The role of the librarian is fundamental to ensuring that students have access to available resources and to support their appreciation of multilingual literacy (see Library Policy and Procedures).

Albanian College is committed to:

- Promoting inquiry-based authentic language learning
- Focusing on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning
- Incorporating the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry

- Developing and interrelating the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting, and media literacy
- Providing for the teaching of additional languages
- Promoting consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of all languages where more than one language of instruction is used.

Adapted from: Guidelines for developing a school language policy, 2008

Essential Agreements

Albanian College recognises that:

- Language is a vehicle for transdisciplinary learning and for learning how language works.
- Every teacher is a language teacher and that all teachers are responsible for language development.
- Required, collaborative planning and reflection occurs on a regularly scheduled basis and takes into account the joint responsibility of teachers for language development.
- From Early Years through Grade 12, language learning is transdisciplinary in nature and takes place across all subjects of study. This is especially so in the Primary Years where all units of inquiry are transdisciplinary and in Middle Years and Grades 11 and 12 where the emphasis is on interdisciplinary connections and units.
- Students come with different language backgrounds and vary in their ability to learn languages.
- Differentiation of instructional approaches is an essential teaching practice to allow all students access to the curriculum. This is especially true when teaching students with varied language profiles.
- All languages are equally valued and may be used as a medium of inquiry.
- The ongoing language development for Albanian College students as the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students.
- Language is taught in context and relates new information to existing knowledge.
- The range of languages within our school presents an opportunity, which allows us to reflect on and celebrate the multilingual society in which we live.
- We are committed to providing appropriate support, training, and other professional development for administrators, teachers, librarians, and other school staff, as needed, to promote consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of all languages.
- We honor the importance of language and the Language Policy, this policy will be featured as an essential element in staff development activities at the beginning of each academic year.
- That Albanian language, as the mother-tongue of the majority of the school population, plays a critical role in communications. Therefore, the school strives to communicate in both English and Albanian through newsletters, notifications of field trips, and email announcements.

- Assessment throughout the school will be conducted in English, with the exception of non-English-language-acquisition courses and Albanian-language courses, in which assessments will be conducted in that language, in English, or in both languages (see Assessment Policy).
- Term reports, except in Albanian language and literature courses, are published in English and translations are offered when possible.
- The Language Policy will be reviewed and revised, as needed, on an annual basis in accordance with the established policy revision cycle (see Policy Revision Policy).

Goals for Language Teaching and Learning

Albanian College's goals for language teaching and learning are:

General Goals

- To develop internationally-minded, compassionate, creative and intelligent students who are adept at accessing different cultures, developing new perspectives, and pursuing a lifelong process of learning.
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - Service learning activities undertaken by students
        - Student reflections
        - Creation of clubs and other activities that promote and celebrate diversity and learning
        - Data gathered during classroom observations
- To teach language in an authentic context.
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - Unit plans that demonstrate connections between language study and real-world contexts
        - Data gathered during classroom observations
- To teach language through inquiry-based teaching methods, whenever possible.
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - Unit plans that demonstrate inquiry-based teaching and learning approaches
        - Data gathered during classroom observations
- For all teachers to embrace their role as language teachers.
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - Unit plans that demonstrate subject-specific language reinforcement activities
        - Data gathered during classroom observations
- To provide all necessary resources to support the implementation of the programme(s).
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - Qualified teachers
        - Library resources

- ■ Classroom teaching tools
- ■ Teacher training and professional development
- To explore opportunities to provide language acquisition support for staff members to learn either English or Albanian, perhaps through Creativity, Activity and Service with students serving as language teachers.

<u>Student-Centred Goals</u>

- For all students to value and learn Albanian language at a level in accordance with their language profile. (See Admissions Policy and Procedures)
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - ■ Native-Albanian-speaking students using Albanian appropriately and effectively in academic and social contexts
        - ■ Non-native-Albanian-speaking students demonstrating growth in Albanian listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and a willingness to put them to use in social contexts
        - ■ Observations of students using Albanian increasingly competently and confidently in social contexts and academic contexts, when appropriate such as in service learning activities including Service as Action as stated in the *MYP handbook of procedures for the Middle Years Programme* and Creativity, Activity, and Service in accordance with the *CAS guide* of the IB Diploma Programme.
- For all students to continually demonstrate growth in their capacity to use English in an academic context.
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - ■ Students studying English as a language of acquisition demonstrating growth and progression through the language development phases in accordance with the *IB MYP language acquisition guide* of the IB Middle Years Programme.
        - ■ All students demonstrating growth in English courses according to assessment feedback reported on term reports
        - ■ Observations of students using English competently and confidently in academic and social contexts
- For students to embrace language(s) as a component of their individual identity as they develop and demonstrate the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:
        - ■ Student self-assessment and reflection
        - ■ Observations of students using a range of languages in academic and social contexts to facilitate
- For students who are proficient in English, the language of instruction, to successfully study an additional language at either the language acquisition or language and literature level.
    - Methods of gathering evidence of achievement:

- Enrollment in non-English acquisition courses
- Students demonstrating growth in language acquisition courses according to assessment feedback reported on term reports
- For students to progress as far as they are capable in keeping with the following statement, "The language acquisition course should provide a linguistic and academic challenge for students in order to give them the best possible educational experience. Students should be given the opportunity to develop their language skills to their full potential, as well as the possibility of progressing through the phases over the course of the MYP."
Source: *Language acquisition guide*, p. 18, 2014

Evidence of goal achievement will be compiled and reflected upon by divisional leadership team members and teaching staff representatives on an ongoing basis with at least one formal reflection session annually which may involve the parents.

Parental Involvement in Language Profile Development and Instruction

As part of the admissions process (see Admissions Policy and Procedures), families will indicate the student's mother tongue and, where choice of language acquisition is available (see English-Language Acquisition sub-section below), which additional language that the student will study at the acquisition level. A conversation about the student's overall programme of language study will also take place as part of the admissions process (see Admissions Policy).

One of the resources used to determine a student's level of English language is the Common European Framework (CEFR). Students will be assessed as part of the admissions process to determine their proficiency level and the results of the assessment will be placed in a CEFR format. The equivalencies for MYP phases, which are used throughout Albanian College to determine language phase level, and CEFR phases appear below:

MYP Phase	CEFR Phase (Approximation across MYP Language Acquisition Criteria A-D)
MYP Phase 1	A1
MYP Phase 2	A2
MYP Phase 3	B1
MYP Phase 4	B2
MYP Phase 5	C1

MYP Phase 6	C2

The Head of Primary and Head of Secondary will be available for follow-up conversations with parents and/or students regarding the student's programme of language study.

Through assessment and reports, a student language profile will be developed and used to determine programme of language study.

English Language Instruction

At Albanian College, English is the primary language of instruction and is learned as an additional language by most students. All subjects, with the exception of Albanian Language and Literature and Albanian History and Geography, and other languages taught at the acquisition level, are taught in English.

Albanian College believes in inclusion and equity in access for all learners to its programmes, including those who speak a mother-tongue language other than Albanian or English. This is ensured through a variety of approaches including full immersion, in-class support from teaching assistants at some grade levels, and dedicated lessons within the regular timetable, where deemed necessary.

The vast majority of resources featured in the library collection are in English to support English-language instruction and acquisition.

Primary Years

In Early Years 1 through Grade 5, the classroom teacher is responsible for supporting English skill development as the language of instruction. Students learn language through the Programme of Inquiry. Each unit of inquiry contains a component of language instruction that meets established hour requirements. Language instruction develops and inter-relates the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and media literacy.

Middle Years

In Grade 6 through 10, all students are enrolled in English language classes. Language instruction develops and interrelates the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and media literacy.

Grades 11 and 12

In Grades 11 and 12, it is recognized that students will have language choices such as Albanian and other Group 2 options. All subjects are taught in English, with the exception of non-English

Group 1 and 2 subjects. Language instruction develops and interrelates the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and media literacy.

English Language Acquisition / English as an Additional Language (EAL) Instruction

It is recognised that the majority of Albanian College students will speak English as a language of acquisition and that Albanian language will be the mother-tongue of most students based on the Mission Statement of Albanian College (see Mission Statement). Therefore language support is needed throughout the Primary and Secondary schools. Each division of the school addresses these needs differently.

The vast majority of resources featured in the library collection are in English to support English-language instruction and acquisition.

Primary Years

An immersion model is followed in the Primary. All classrooms in Early Years 1 through Grade 5 are assigned an Albanian-speaking teaching assistant. The teaching assistant assists students in acquiring English language skills and knowledge. Methods employed will shift throughout the academic year to meet the changing needs of the students. As students gain proficiency, teaching assistants reduce the amount of English-language support offered to allow students to encourage English language independence.

In recognition that inquiry often takes place in a student's mother tongue, it is to be expected that the students will sometimes need to speak with each other in Albanian and other languages.

Instruction in English as an additional language may be available on a case-by-case basis and will be allocated according to pre-determined language development criteria. Eligible students would typically be those demonstrating skills at a level of phase 2 or below according to the *Language acquisition guide* of the IB Middle Years Programme. Students who demonstrate proficiency at a phase 3 level or higher are eligible to study a third language.

Additionally, depending on phase level, after-school activities may be offered and/or made mandatory for some students.

Middle Years

Students in Grades 6-10 study English Language and Literature with the potential exception of students in MYP language phases 1 and 2 (see below). Due to varying language skill levels in the language and literature classroom, teachers will differentiate instruction.

In Grades 6-10, students in phases 1 through 3, according to the *Language acquisition guide* of the IB Middle Years Programme, receive English language acquisition instruction in the place of another language acquisition course. Students demonstrating proficiency in phase 4 or higher will be enrolled in a non-English language acquisition course.

Additionally, depending on phase level, after-school language-acquisition-related activities may be offered and/or made mandatory for some students.

Students in Grades 6-10 whose language acquisition skills are phase 2 or below may benefit from small group and/or individualised instruction beyond the standard course offerings. Identification of these needs will be determined through assessment results based on the Common European Framework (CEFR) and/or performance on MYP assessments. Any additional support will be managed on a case-by-case basis (see Inclusion Policy).

Grades 11 and 12

Students in Grades 11 and 12 may study English as a Group 1 or Group 2 subject of study. Phases of language are based on the *Language acquisition guide* of the IB Middle Years Programme. Students in phases 2 through 4 are eligible for English Language B while students in phase 5 may be enrolled in English language and literature. Students in phase 6 are not permitted to enrol in English Language B.

Students in Grades 11 and 12 in phase 1 English will not be able to successfully access the curriculum offered, therefore, these students will not be enrolled or re-enrolled, in the case of current students (see Admissions Policy).

Albanian Language Instruction

Albanian is the language of the host country and is the mother-tongue of the vast majority of Albanian College students. Albanian College is committed to promoting and valuing Albanian language as it is a fundamental component of student identity and host-country culture. Additionally, non-native-Albanian speakers are required to study Albanian as an ab initio course in order to further promote its value within the learning community.

In order to encourage a transdisciplinary route to language learning and achieve differentiation, Albanian language, history, and culture are introduced where appropriate throughout the curriculum.

While the vast majority of resources featured in the library collection are in English, resources are also available in Albanian, French, and other languages. The school is committed to expanding the breadth and depth of this collection on an ongoing basis.

Albanian for Native Speakers / Mother-tongue Support

The Albanian language programme at Albanian College is taught at every grade level. Inquiry-based learning provides authentic challenges and stimulation to develop and interrelate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Primary Years

In Early Years, teaching assistants teach Albanian language in five discrete lessons each week for all students, regardless of mother tongue. In Grades 1 through 3, Albanian mother-tongue students receive 5 lessons of Albanian language instruction weekly. In Grades 4 and 5, Albanian mother-tongue students receive 4 lessons of Albanian language instruction weekly.

Middle Years

In Grades 6 to 10, Albanian mother-tongue students receive 4 lessons of Albanian language instruction weekly.

Grades 11 and 12

In Grades 11 and 12, Albanian mother-tongue students receive 4 or more lessons of Albanian language instruction weekly, depending on whether a student takes Albanian at higher or standard level.

Albanian Ab Initio for Non-native Speakers

Albanian College celebrates the host-country language by requiring non-native Albanian speakers to take Albanian ab initio in Grades 1 through 10. Additionally, the school is exploring the possibility of offering Albanian ab initio for Grades 11 and 12 when appropriate.

Primary Years

Students in Grades 1 to 5 receive dedicated time during the week to develop their Albanian-language skills. They receive at least two instructional lessons per week from an Albanian language teacher within the regular timetable.

Middle Years

Students in Grades 6 to 10 receive dedicated time during the week to develop their Albanian-language skills. They receive at least four instructional lessons per week from an Albanian language teacher within the regular timetable.

Grades 11 and 12

The school will offer non-native Albanian-speaking students the option of studying Albanian ab initio. Students would need to meet the following criteria in order to enrol:

- Have little or no prior experience with the language
- Have less than one year's experience with the language in the last five years

Additional opportunities to learn Albanian may be available during advisory time or after school.

Additional Non-English Language Acquisition Instruction

Students in Grades 2 through 5 who demonstrate English-language proficiency of phase 3 or above and students in grades 6 through 12 who demonstrate English-language proficiency of phase 4 or above according to the *Language acquisition guide* of the IB Middle Years Programme will study languages other than Albanian as part of their regular coursework.

In the Middle Years, once a student begins to study an additional language, they must continue to study that same additional language in each year of the Middle Years until they demonstrate satisfactory phase 4 proficiency, as determined by criteria established by the school, at which point they may be permitted to study a different additional language in the next school year.

While the vast majority of resources featured in the library collection are in English, non-English resources are available in other languages such as Italian, French, and Albanian. The school is committed to increasing these resources and acquiring resources in other languages as well, such as Chinese, Russian, and others.

Non-Albanian, Non-English Mother-tongue Instruction and Support

Use and maintenance of a student's mother tongue is central to his or her cognitive and cultural development and identity. The school encourages development of mother tongue languages by providing time and resources, where possible, to address individual needs.

Albanian College provides opportunities for students to read, write, and speak in their mother tongue in situations where we believe this will enhance the quality of teaching and learning and consequently, student understanding. To this end, our library continues to build substantial sections that host works in Italian, Albanian and other languages, as needed, to offer relevant support.

Incoming students will be required to indicate their mother tongue during enrollment procedures (see Admissions Policy and Procedures) so that the school will be able to plan to support their mother tongue. The student's programme coordinator will work with the parents regarding mother-tongue support, in keeping with the Language Policy. This support will include online and print resources, as well as potential instructional time.

Mother-tongue data will be compiled as a student language profile document which all staff may access and meet the student's language needs in English, Albanian and/or preferred home-language. Parents will be provided with contact details for mother-tongue language support, such as locally-available resources and learning groups across Albanian College, where these exist.

While the vast majority of resources featured in the library collection are in English, non-English resources are available in other languages such as Italian, French, and Albanian. The school is committed to increasing these resources and acquiring resources in other languages as well, such as Chinese, Russian, and others.

Primary Years

Students in Early Years 1 to Grade 1 are encouraged to study their mother-tongue languages beyond the school day. When appropriate, the school will assist families by helping locate external teachers and putting speakers of the same language in contact with each other to facilitate the creation of same-language groups. The school will provide classroom space for after-school instruction opportunities that parents may wish to create and/or fund. Albanian College will not provide financial support for these lessons.

Depending on parent choice and support, students in Grades 2 to 5 may receive dedicated time during advisory lessons to further develop their mother-tongue skills. This may come in the form of online and print-based resources, dedicated reading time with resources provided by parents, outside teachers, or the school. The school will provide space for any outside lessons and supervision for students participating in independent learning activities. In many cases, the school is able to provide resources in the library to facilitate this learning and provide space for non-Albanian, non-English language reading materials supplied by families and/or language institutes. After-school activities may be offered, when possible, to further support mother-tongue development.

Middle Years

Depending on parent choice and support, students in Grades 6 to 10 may receive dedicated time during advisory lessons to further develop their mother-tongue skills. This may come in the form of online and print-based resources, and dedicated reading time with resources provided by parents, outside teachers, or the school. The school will provide space for any outside lessons and supervision for students participating in independent learning activities. In many cases, the school is able to provide resources in the library to facilitate this learning and provide space for non-Albanian, non-English language reading materials supplied by families and/or language institutes. After-school activities may be offered, when possible, to further support mother-tongue development.

Grades 11 and 12

Students in Grades 11 and 12 whose mother tongue is other than English or Albanian should consider studying the language as a school-supported, self-taught literature course as their Group 1 language option. Any costs associated with additional language support outside of school, such as additional language lessons or online course fees, will be the responsibility of the family.

Non-Albanian Ab Initio Instruction

Albanian College is exploring the option of offering ab initio courses in non-Albanian languages to students in Grades 11 and 12. This may take the form of online or face-to-face courses.

Expectations of Language Use

Social Language

We encourage students to use social languages that are inclusive and allow for free participation of peers in social activities. We encourage students to understand the power of language and the risk of bringing about psychological and/or emotional harm either intentionally or inadvertently. We encourage them to be supportive of the language acquisition of their peers and to avoid derisive actions or words relating to language acquisition efforts.

Academic Language

English is the language of instruction and is expected to be used consistently in all academic settings with the exception of non-English language courses, in accordance with the student's English-language skill levels.

English Language Spelling and Pronunciation Conventions

Albanian College recognises that there are multiple ways to spell and pronounce a number of words in the English language. The majority of the students and staff will use British and North American spelling conventions in both speaking and writing and both are equally accepted and celebrated as promoting diversity and the importance of honouring language and culture.

Referencing Conventions

The school's designated referencing convention is that of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Being that all teachers are language teachers, MLA referencing is taught in the Primary and Secondary divisions and in all subject-area classes.

More information about MLA referencing conventions is available at: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.

Language Continuum Scope and Sequence Curriculum Documents

Each language's scope and sequence is indicated in curriculum documents developed by teachers and programme coordinators and can be accessed through ManageBac as well as by contacting the programme coordinators.

Language Policy Review Process

The Language Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, as indicated in the Policy Review Policy. The steps of the review process will be indicated in the annual calendar which is shared with the school community. Additionally, the Student Government and Parent-Teacher Association guidelines (see Student Government Guidelines and Parent-Teacher Association Guidelines) include further details about the roles played by members of each group with regards to this review process.

The Language Policy review will incorporate input from parent and student committees, teachers, programme coordinators, Heads of Primary and Secondary, and Directors who will each have assigned responsibilities. These responsibilities include:

- Teaching Staff
    - To compile assessment data and student-generated evidence of achievement of Language Policy-related goals (see below).
    - To reflect on assessment data and student-generated evidence of achievement of Language Policy-related goals (see below).
    - To review the existing Language Policy and feedback from students and parents on its implementation provided by the programme coordinator and give feedback regarding suggested updates for the subsequent academic year.
- Programme Coordinators
    - To facilitate the review process undertaken by the teaching staff.
    - To reflect on assessment data and student-generated evidence of achievement of Language Policy-related goals (see below).
    - To share input from students and parents with teaching staff to inform the divisional policy review process.
    - To review the existing Language Policy and feedback from students and parents on its implementation provided by the head of division and give feedback regarding suggested updates for the subsequent academic year.
    - To collaborate with coordinators of other programmes to ensure a smooth continuum across programmes and divisions.
    - To inform the Head of Primary and/or Head of Secondary of the degree to which the evidence reviewed demonstrates appropriate implementation of the Language Policy.
- Heads of Primary and Secondary

- - To oversee the entire process to ensure thoroughness and accuracy of procedure.
    - To share input from students and parents with programme coordinators to inform the divisional policy review process.
    - To collaborate with Heads of other divisions to ensure consistent application of the Language Policy across programmes and divisions in the continuum.
    - To inform the Director of the degree to which the evidence reviewed demonstrates appropriate implementation of the Language Policy.
    - To develop an appropriate timeline for completion of necessary tasks in alignment with the most recent version of the Language Policy.
    - To inform the Director of the results of the Language Policy review process.
  - Director
    - To gather reflective input from students and parents regarding the Language Policy and its implementation to date.
    - To compile and share input from students and parents with division heads to inform the divisional policy review process.
    - To compile and review the input from students and parents and share it with the Executive Director, along with recommended related actions to be taken.
    - To review the reports shared by the Head of Primary and Head of Secondary and to ask for clarification where needed.
    - To report the findings to the Executive Director.
    - To inform the Parent-Teacher Association of the results of the internal review of the Language Policy.
  - Executive Director
    - To review the report shared by the Director and to ask for clarification where needed.
    - To report the findings to the Board of Governors with any applicable recommendations for Language Policy adjustment.
  - Board of Governors
    - To review the recommendations made by the Executive Director regarding Language Policy and to approve any changes agreed upon by the majority of the Board members.

Additionally, this policy will be made available in the Parent and Student Handbook and will be reviewed and commented on by a parent committee and student committee annually.

How the Language Policy Was Developed

A Language Policy Committee first assembled in October 2014 with the task of developing a draft Language Policy. Further development of the Language Policy has been ongoing, with input from students, parents, staff, Governors and official and unofficial International Baccalaureate consultants. Revisions have been made and the current Language Policy has been submitted to the Board of Governors. All members of the Albanian College community will

be encouraged to continue to reflect on the Language Policy on an annual basis (see Essential Agreements).

National language-instruction requirements, as established by the Albanian Ministry of Education, were taken into account in the development and implementation of the Language Policy.

Further development work was carried out referring to the following documentation and guidance:

- *Language Scope and Sequence of the Primary Years Programme*
- *Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy*
- *Language acquisition guide of the IB Middle Years Programme*
- *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education*
- *Guide to school authorisation: Primary Years Programme*
- *Guide to school authorisation: Middle Years Programme*
- *Guide to school authorisation: Diploma Programme*
- *IB Learner Profile*, 2013