



Sandefjord
VIDEREGÅENDE SKOLE

Language Policy

IB DEPARTMENT



Sandefjord videregående skole's language profile

Sandefjord Videregående Skole (SVGS) is Norway largest upper secondary school. There are approximately 2200 students and 300 teachers who speak about 45 different languages. In the IB Department 38 different languages are spoken this year. A large percentage of the teaching staff have an international background, and most teachers have attended universities all over the world. This contributes to a high awareness of the value of linguistic diversity and international mindedness.

Our DP cohorts typically comprise of three groups, each with unique language profiles. The first group consists of students who have attended Norwegian national curriculum schools, are largely represented by native speakers of Norwegian and have a solid command of English. The second group consists of students who have some connection to Norway (e.g. refugee status, family reunion). They have lived here more than 5 years and speak Norwegian and English with varying degrees of proficiency. These students may have an additional mother tongue. The third group consists of students from various backgrounds. They are relatively new to Norway and unsure how long they may stay (e.g. expatriates or refugees waiting for final decision on their status).

The variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented by the various students, teachers and languages in the school, obviously influences everyday life at school. We consider that as a resource that allows us to learn to respect and understand different cultures promoting internationalism, multicultural understanding and respect.

The working language in school is Norwegian and the working language in the school's IB Department is English. Since all teachers in the IB department teach subjects both within the IB programme and the National Programme they are expected to master both languages at academic level.

The DP is delivered in English. Sandefjord vgs is a publicly owned school and recruits students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Most of our students within the DP master English at C level (CEFR). From August 2025 all students of the DP cohorts will be enrolled in English A-Language and Literature.

Role and place of languages in the IB Department

The school's Language Policy is developed with reference to *DP: Programme Standards and Practices* (IBO, 2020), *Language and learning in IB programmes* (IBO, 2014), *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes* (IBO, 2008). It is rooted in the IB-Mission Statement and the IB Learner Profile. The school aims to provide students with language skills in all subjects in accordance with the standards set by the IB assessment criteria regarding language skills on a cross-curricular basis, thus ensuring that our students enter their post-IB lives as able and willing ready lifelong language learners.

Students enrolling in our IB Department will be encouraged to approach the role of language as inquirers, communicators and risk-takers. The IB Department is committed to contribute to the development of proficient language skills in the language of instruction to allow an efficient academic development. All teachers have the role of language teachers, and they are committed to facilitate communication with and between students. They share with the school management the responsibility of all students' language development in the language of instruction as well as the responsibility of differentiation to serve the needs of all students.

The school gives the students the opportunity to learn languages, learn through language and learn about language (*Language and learning in IB programmes*, 2014, section 4). The students will study their own mother tongue or their academic language as well as at least one foreign language. The students who master Norwegian and English at academic level will be offered to replace the foreign language course with an additional academic language course. All DP students can choose two foreign languages. The students who have another academic language background than English or Norwegian are offered the opportunity to study that language through the Self-taught Programme.

All students will be encouraged to further develop skills in their mother tongue through the Self-taught Programme as competence in a mother tongue allows to gain a better awareness when learning other languages as well as a better understanding of own personal identity and cultural heritage. This awareness and knowledge are important in a globalized world and facilitates inclusion for newcomers who need to adapt to Norway as well as for students of mobile families.

The school appreciates the importance of language learning and promotes good language skills. Language "is the main tool for building our knowledge of the universe and our place in it. Language then, is central to learning, as well as to literacy, and is thus closely related to success in school." (*Learning in a language other than mother tongue*, IBO, 2018, p.1). The development of balanced, open-minded and reflecting students, expected to have a professional career and a life in a global world, implies a good level of language skills as well as effective intercultural competencies. We believe that those skills and competencies will be acquired in the classrooms, but also by being involved in extracurricular activities in the school, such as CAS.

Language offer in the Diploma Programme at Sandefjord vgs

The school offers two Language A courses, English and Norwegian, as well as Language A self-taught courses supervised by a Language A teacher.

The school offers four language B courses- Norwegian, French, Spanish and German.

Students who do not have an academic background in Norwegian are encouraged to choose Norwegian B HL. That choice will allow them to fulfil the Norwegian language requirement for university admission in Norway.

The DPC together with the language teachers will pay special attention to the choice of language subjects and provide support to students and their parents. Need of support may appear at the time of selecting either one of the school taught A language courses or a self-taught A language. It may also appear at the time of choosing between A and B language course, especially when it comes to Norwegian. That matter is addressed during parent information meetings, faculty meetings as well as individual meetings with students and parents.

Language skills development in the language of instruction

At Sandefjord vgs the DP is taught in English, and all subject teachers are responsible for the language development of the students. In all classes teachers contribute equally to further development of English language skills on one side and knowledge and skills specific to their subjects on the other side. Students are given the opportunity to increase vocabulary and further develop semantic skills as well as to learn English Language for specific purposes (LSP) related to their subject area.

All subject teachers are language teachers in their subject when they

- teach core academic vocabulary, subject vocabulary and command terms
- differentiate teaching and support language learning differences
- teach subject specific writing styles and text type requirements

Students will further develop their academic language skills while

- speaking English in instructional context
- increasing competency in LSP related to their subjects
- speaking Norwegian during Norwegian Language and Literature lessons
- speaking the target language in acquisition classes with support from the instruction language

Most of our students master English at an academic level and have a background from schools where English is the language of instruction, or the first foreign language taught from 4th year of education. Few students with low proficiency in English will need additional support. The school strives to offer them with a range of opportunities to enable a better participation and improvement in their subjects. Students with inclusion needs are considered in the school's Inclusion policy which explains the ways in which the national system gives support by law.

Language skills development in B-Languages

The school prioritizes the offers four language B courses. Despite the low number of students choosing other B-languages than Norwegian, the school makes a special effort to offer French, Spanish and German.

In addition to regular classes a language trip is offered in DP year 2 to the students who choose French, Spanish and German. This language-immersion week in the country of the target language is designed to enhance, foster and further develop students' communication skills in a real context as well as multi-cultural understanding.

The role of the Library and the IT-Department in language learning

The school's Library staff are competent English language speakers, and they play a crucial role in the development of our students' language skills. They collaborate closely with our teachers and organise activities that promote development of literacy.

The library and learning centre have reference books and novels in several languages along with material and reference books suitable for Internal Assessments and Extended Essays. They also have audio books, films free access to online sources, encyclopaedia and dictionaries, in addition to newspapers and magazines and other resources digitally available.

The library organises support meetings led by foreign language teachers on Thursdays after school where students can have access to a wide number of teachers who can support them in their mother tongue.

The library also provides a central hub for language learning in a quiet and reflective space and with access to a wide range of curated support material. The school's librarians play a key role in the curation of these resources and updates resources regularly.

The school's IT- Department assures that all laptops are supplied with extra programmes to help language usage and support. They render both visual and auditory support for most programmes. There are several versions of those programmes and more advanced versions give added support to Dyslectic students.

A wide range of key resource are offered to DP-teachers to facilitate their tasks as language teachers (e.g. Inthinking)

Promoting an English language learning environment in the Department

By focusing on developing our students' English written and oral communication skills across subjects and a variety of genres, we help our students meet the requirements in their DP subjects while encouraging them to become active, balanced and open-minded learners.

To provide an adequate language preparation to Sandefjord vgs' first year students interested in the DP, the school has established a pre-DP class. Students attend the first year of the Norwegian National Programme while preparing for the DP year 1. They are taught by IB-teachers and are exposed to more English than their counterparts in year 11 at the school. The gradual transition from instruction in Norwegian to English as a language of instruction in

various subjects, contributes to develop language skills and as such students' preparation to the DP-programme in general.

This policy has been developed collaboratively by the IB community at Sandeffjord vgs and is reviewed every year in January. Date of last update - January 29th, 2025.

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