



**ALTURAS**  
**PREPARATORY ACADEMY**

**EDUCATION | SERVICE | COMMUNITY**

# Language Policy

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Alturas Preparatory Academy promotes academic distinction, while empowering students to be principled and intellectual leaders as they explore, create, investigate and analyze in a safe, engaged, collaborative environment that inspires them to make a genuine difference in their local and global community. Relevant learning opportunities for high-quality education through community partnerships and engagement helps our students develop attitudes and knowledge to succeed in a technologically advanced world.

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Language is the foundation of all learning and the basis for all inquiry and transdisciplinary across the curriculum. Language learning involves the elements of learning language, learning about language and learning through language. All students are language learners and our teaching philosophy of small group instruction gives our students opportunities to explore language analytically and critically. Our program supports students bringing their own unique contribution to language learning. Teachers facilitate learning experiences that enable learners to develop language within meaningful and engaging contexts. Students are able to make connections, apply their learning, and transfer their conceptual understanding to new ideas. This progressive conceptual development, together with high engagement, and a love for learning provides the foundation for lifelong learning. In our program students are given the tools to be part of a community of active learners who aspire to be internationally minded and responsible global citizens.

Alturas Preparatory Academy has a balanced language curriculum which includes; oral, visual and written language. Through active participation in small-group instruction students are involved in a diverse range of learning experience. Students

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perceive themselves as readers, writers, listeners, speakers and analytical and critical thinkers.

### **Alturas Preparatory Academy Mission Statement**

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### **Practices and Implementation**

The mother tongue for instruction at Alturas Preparatory Academy is English. Students whose mother tongue is different from English are encouraged to continue to develop their mother tongue and culture in addition to the English language program. Students are given the opportunity to speak, share and value learner diversity in a safe environment. By working in small groups students are encouraged to be open minded and purposeful communicators. Each student is different, and each student will have different needs to be met. Students that are not proficient are taught by inclusion in the classroom setting by small group instruction at their instructional level and have the support of the special education department, classroom teacher, classmates in a collaborative community. A plan is made and for those needing additional support or just more time to process, resources and help are available from the SPED teacher and other support staff.

A balanced and scaffolded language program is implemented at Alturas through the My Perspectives language curriculum, and Community Project, and Project Night

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Programs. Each component is tailored to include an explicit focus on students being internationally minded. Our curriculum provides students with authentic purposes and audiences for their work, in which they discover, construct or use knowledge. Teachers plan and facilitate activities that integrate the different language modes; speaking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. Language learning follows the Inquiry cycle and is transdisciplinary in that it is used in all areas of the curriculum. We use a balance of oral, written, and visual language.

Inquiry in the DP incorporates rigorous questioning, exploring, wondering, solving, and the following:

- Experimenting and exploring possibilities in various situations, including real life
- Making connections between previous learning and current learning
- Making predictions
- Collecting and tracking data, and reporting findings
- Clarifying existing ideas and real-life events throughout the world
- Reflecting on the perceptions of real-life events throughout the world
- Deepening understanding through the application of concepts and standards
- Making and testing theories
- Researching and seeking information
- Solving problems in a variety of ways

The Language of Instruction is made up of the following areas.

1. *Oral language—listening and speaking*

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2. *Visual language—viewing and presenting*

3. *Written language—reading and writing*

4. *Learning a foreign language-Spanish*

### **Oral Language**

Oral language encompasses all aspects of listening and speaking. Opportunities for learning about and learning through oral language occur in all areas of the curriculum. Students are provided with authentic opportunities to develop their skills. These include assemblies, Project Night presentations, The Community Project, and with collaboration in small group instruction. Assessment of speaking and listening is completed in small group settings as well as partnership mentoring. Students learn best when learning is focused on progression of understanding through collaboration, and students make deep conceptual connections, across the curriculum, that enhance their sense of purpose and meaning, and enable them to use critical and analytical thinking.

### **Visual Language**

Alturas incorporates using and constructing visuals and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences. They allow students to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs. Visual learning allows students to look at problem differently, increases memory of important information, builds understanding of the overviews and summaries, inspire students to think in more creative, open-minded ways and create ideas of their own, help organizational skills, and students can process and retain information faster and with more readability. Students are provided with learning experiences to develop their ability to understand how images and languages interact to

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convey ideas, values and beliefs by incorporating into their project's websites, videos, graphs, maps, diagrams and charts. Learning to interpret, understand and use different media are incorporated into our program.

### **Written Language**

Writing is primarily concerned with communicating meaning and intention to an audience. Students have two Project Nights, and one Community Project a year where writing is thematically woven into the program. Children learn to write by writing. The students are engaged in writing and researching throughout the school day. Students learn the mechanics of writing including spelling, grammar, text structures and features, the writing process and developing voice thus integrating language throughout the curriculum. Our Project Nights and Community Project give students the opportunity to communicate their questions, intuitions, conjectures, reasons, explanations, justifications and ideas in a variety of forms with the written language as a foundation.

### **Spanish**

Alturas Preparatory Academy DP students are taught Spanish every day for at least eighty minutes in the DP. This enables students to gain an understanding of culture through language. Students will develop skills in Spanish by using the comprehensible input approach to learning. This approach allows for students to understand what they will be using in their everyday lives. The Spanish program will allow for the development of the language and skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing. Foreign Language study creates more positive attitudes and less prejudice toward people who are different. Analytical skills improve when students study

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a foreign language. Learning about another culture enables people to gain a more profound understanding of their own culture. Creativity is increased with the study of foreign language. Skills like problem solving, dealing with abstract concepts /are increased when you study a foreign language. Studying Spanish enhances listening skills and memory. Students will participate more effectively and responsibly in a multicultural world.

### **Plan for Implementation**

The language policy will be implemented through a collaborative team and whole school effort. Our collaborative team will involve teachers, students, parents, staff and administrators, working in partnership, to promote and pursue student language learning needs. This language policy includes support for mother tongues as well as support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction. The goal at Alturas is to take into account all students' language learning needs.