

PHILOSOPHY

Crete-Monee Middle School (CMMS) Mission

Crete-Monee Middle School strives to develop principled, knowledgeable, and caring students who positively impact their intercultural community.

To meet this mission, we promote an inclusive environment where inquiry, intercultural understanding, and open-mindedness are valued, and where student efforts impact their local and global community.

The CMMS mission statement and the IB Learner Profile establish the foundation for our language policy. We believe that language forms the basis of all learning and all teachers at Crete-Monee Middle School are, in effect, language teachers. Through language, students are able to explore areas of interests, become lifelong learners, and communicate in a diverse, multicultural world. Being able to speak and write effectively in all CMMS classes is a high priority for our MYP Program.

The Language Profile of our school indicated that about 98% are English speakers because they speak English more than 50% of the time in their homes.

English is the main language of instruction for all students and teachers at CMMS with the exception of the Language Acquisition classes, Spanish.

We have a full time resource teacher for English language learners. The teacher has required state licensing and attends an annual conference for Teachers Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

PRACTICES

Language in the School Community:

- English is used to communicate in the school and outside of the classroom.

Crete-Monee Middle School is a public school where all students are immersed in the MYP program, so proficiency in English is not a requirement for admissions. Due to our geographic region, it is rare to have a student at CMMS who does not speak at least some English. Students who do not speak English are given a WIDA Screener to determine ELP, ELL services (average of 150 minutes/week). Students are evaluated every year until they exit with score of 5.0 on the ACCESS Test. The information gathered from the assessment is used to determine the level of additional support services needed.

Language & Literature: English

We acknowledge the importance of including the teaching and learning of language continuously throughout the program. It is through language that crucial connections are made by students across the curriculum. All students are involved in Language & Literature learning from grades six thru eight, and it aligns with the requirements of Illinois Common Core standards, and the International Baccalaureate Language & Literature objectives.

Language Acquisition: Spanish

All CMMS students are encouraged to pursue acquisition of a second language. We recognize the importance of students becoming culturally and linguistically proficient. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are all vital parts of language development. Emphasis on grammatical structures,

verbal and writing skills, and vocabulary development help students develop the tools they need to become effective, multilingual communicators. The Language Acquisition courses are aligned Illinois State Foreign Language Learning Standards and the International Baccalaureate Language Acquisition objectives and assessment tools.

Language Development and Support across the curriculum:

Language learning occurs in every classroom and in every subject group in the MYP because we recognize that language stands at the center of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning. Because of this reality, teachers attend to the various language needs of their learners.

For those whose mother tongue is not English, our main language of instruction, students may receive a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI). This program may include classroom support through one or more of the following examples where appropriate from this non-exclusive list, depending on the context:

- Use of visuals
- Buddy system for speaking mother tongue
- Access to readings in advance
- Access to graphic organizers
- Adapted tasks so as to make tasks less dependent on large amounts of writing when writing is not the objective
- Checks for understanding in ways that require students to respond with more than a yes, or smile and nod because we know that many cultures view this as being polite and respectful despite the respondent's actual lack of understanding.
- Additional time to complete a task
- Where the assessment is not specific to the language, students may respond in their mother tongue or use language aids like dictionaries or translators
- Where possible, bell work and other directions are given in the mother tongue; we also have some instruction materials in various content areas to disseminate when appropriate
- Descriptive body language alongside verbal explanations
- Tasks designed to empower peers in offering one another feedback
- Activation of "students' prior understanding, using the mother tongue and other languages when appropriate
- Consideration of "time and strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson"
- Demonstrations of the learning objective or task
- Learning structures designed to enable students to work in small, collaborative groups
- Our English Language Learner (ELL) facilitator has resource time with various students using pull outs or pushing into the classroom

Language policy alignment

CMMS's language philosophy and policy align with our values and policies as outlined below. In all of these policies and positions, the student is central.

... to our mission statement

Part of our mission statement is to “*develop principled, knowledgeable, and caring students who positively impact their intercultural community.*” In order for students to create that positive impact, they must learn how to respectfully communicate in a variety of ways. Part of being respectful of diversity is understanding the world from different points of view. Our language policy works to both of these aims because it ensures that students spend a significant amount of time learning an additional language while modelling respect and support for those whose mother tongue is something other than English.

...to IB's principles

CMMS's language policy reflects the MYP concept of communication because we require students to learn a language in addition to their mother tongue thereby inviting them to broaden their opportunities for communication. Our language policy supports the IB's holistic approach to education as it honors and supports the linguistic background and knowledge of our students and community. Finally, our language policy supports the philosophy of international education as it supports the idea of working across boundaries – cultural and national – to gain understanding of alternative perspectives.

...to our academic honesty policy

Our language policy aligns with our academic honesty policy in that students are supported, where possible, in learning through their mother tongue; this flexibility decreases the pressure students might otherwise feel to copy and paste information from English language sources when conducting research. Instead, students can choose (where possible and appropriate) to work from multilingual sources without feeling badly about doing so. We also provide support for our English language learners in this regard (please see the language policy for details of this support) as there may be differences in cultural understanding of academic honesty that need to be bridged.

...to our inclusion policy

Our language policy aligns with our inclusion policy in that we require all students to enroll in a language acquisition course unless their Individual Education Plan (IEP) specifies otherwise. An IEP would only suggest otherwise if such a plan were in the best interests of the student under recommendation by the relevant specialists.

...to our assessment policy

Our language policy aligns with our assessment policy because our assessment policy is directly applicable to all of our learners – regardless of their linguistic background. Flexibility is built into our assessment policy to recognize and allow for when students' lack of vocabulary hinders their communication of their understanding.

Policy review protocol

The CMMS language policy is a working document. Since language is “not static, a language policy needs to be dynamic and flexible so that it can evolve with the changing needs of the school population.” This policy will be reviewed and revised as needed each Fall through the curriculum coordinators in consultation with departments, students, and the parent community via the School Leadership Team. The policy’s effectiveness will be evaluated as part of the review process. The coordinator will gather ELL data from our ELL support teacher each Spring and Fall and this data will inform our review.

Communication of the language policy

The language policy will be listed with the other school policies on our public website.