

COMMUNICATION

The Washington School for the Deaf celebrates and honors the natural language and efforts toward second language acquisition of its students, staff, parents and community members. The purpose of this communication policy is to ensure communication accessibility for all students and to provide clarity regarding appropriate communication protocol. As a predominant language of the culturally Deaf population and the first language acquired by a significant portion of our student population, reverence and use of American Sign Language (ASL) is expected. Focused educational efforts toward literacy achievement require expansive knowledge and use of English. To fully engage in school activities, interpreting and accommodations for other native world languages of our parents and community members, such as Spanish, Russian, etc., must be actively pursued. The Washington School for the Deaf strives to be a safe place where all world languages are celebrated and honored.

It is expected that all personnel that possess ASL skills sign when in the line of sight of deaf individuals.

Staff is encouraged to continually improve second language acquisition in the areas of written English and/or ASL. Periodic assessments of current proficiency levels in the second acquired language are designed to provide guidance in developing goals for improvement. Language skill assessments in ASL or written English are designed to serve as a positive staff development tool, not as a punitive mechanism. It is not the purpose of these assessments to serve as the sole determinant of the offer of employment, the continuation of employment, change conditions of employment, or supplant the employee evaluation process. Recommended levels of proficiency by job classification will be developed based on amount of contact with students and expected need for effective written communication.

The Superintendent, in consultation with staff and community stakeholders, is directed to develop such other procedures as are consistent with this policy.

Adoption Date: 12/09/04