



RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

At all times, language access is of paramount importance for students' cognitive, academic, social and emotional growth. Incidental learning plays an important role in the education and language development of all children. As a bilingual school, where American Sign Language and English are the languages of instruction and community interaction, the goal is to create an environment where communication access is the guiding principle.

All RISD staff are expected to use ASL to the best of their ability when on school property, and when representing RISD at school and community events. Spoken English or simultaneous communication should not be used. Interpreters should be requested when spoken English is used in a public space with non-signers (e.g., school tours, LEA visits). ASL should be the primary language modeled for visitors to reflect the language of the school. Interpreters are used to accommodate visitors as needed.

In public spaces, everyone should sign to the best of their ability. Public spaces include, but are not limited to, the main front office, hallways, all classrooms, shared common areas/pods, hallways, audiology, mail room, the playgrounds, the track, and the lounges.

RI School for the Deaf's enrollment includes a number of students who have auditory access to spoken English through the use of cochlear implants and hearing aids. For these students, specially designed instruction using spoken and written English may be provided on a case-by-case basis as determined by the student's IEP team. At no time will a student at the RI School for the Deaf be denied access to information, regardless of their primary language.

Staff are expected to continuously improve their skills in American Sign Language. RISD will offer ASL proficiency assessments at no cost to the staff member, allowing them to confidentially evaluate their skill level and work towards greater fluency. Per the Rhode Island Department of Education, Teachers of the Deaf are expected to achieve a passing score of 170 on Praxis 0634 ASLPI (<https://ride.ri.gov/teachers-administrators/educator-certification/certificate-areas-and-requirements>).

Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees:

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