

Caulfield South Primary School

C.S.P.S. Policy

Language Policy

Philosophy

At Caulfield South Primary School, we believe that developing a common written, spoken and visual language is essential for learners to engage with the world. The acquisition of language is a dynamic, life-long, social process that permeates all learning, and is vital to our thinking and understanding processes. Thus Caulfield South recognises that all teachers are language teachers.

Through its practices and resources, the school recognises the importance of the language of instruction (English), which is the majority of students' mother tongue, as well as learning in an additional language (Italian). Further to this we acknowledge language as a gateway to culture and as such endeavour to embed local Aboriginal languages (Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung) into classrooms where possible.

The curriculum at Caulfield South provides students with the opportunity *for learning language, learning through language and learning about language*. We acknowledge the need to differentiate language learning to accommodate the diverse range of language skills and understandings that our students possess. This assists students to feel accepted, confident and willing to take risks.

Our libraries and classroom resources support diverse language learning at Caulfield South, including English, Italian and other languages appropriate to our school community language profile.

Language Profile

Approximately 13% of our student population has a language other than English as their first language. There are sixteen different mother tongues spoken in our school community. The predominant languages are Russian, Hebrew and a range of Chinese dialects.

Practices and Implementation

As the language of instruction across the curriculum, English is considered a priority. The fundamental skills of language are taught explicitly at all year levels. Language learning is a developmental process and therefore differentiated to meet students' points of need. Where possible, language is taught through the relevant context of the Units of Inquiry and is the basis of sustained Literacy sessions. Language allows us to construct meaning,

therefore explicit skills are taught to allow further exploration and practice through the Units of Inquiry. Students at all levels learn about and through text, visual and digital mediums.

Oral Language

Opportunities for learning about and learning through oral language occur in all domains of the curriculum. Oral language allows students to express their thinking and understanding. Formal and informal opportunities are designed for students to understand the purposes of oral communication with different audiences. Assemblies, turn and talk, writing-talk, exhibitions, presentations, classroom performances and school concerts are examples of current practices. Oral language development and phonemic awareness are supported by Little Learners Love Literacy in Foundation, and SMART Spelling across the school.

Visual Language

Language learning incorporates understandings about visual language and the messages that visual images can convey. In the close examination of texts students learn about gaining meaning from illustrations, as well as examining purely visual texts/images. Students learn about the visual cues that are expressed through facial expressions and body language.

Written Language

Written texts are an essential element of communication. Students learn to read in order to read for learning and to make meaning of the world around them. The school aims to foster an appreciation of the richness of language and a love of literature is nurtured. Students learn the hierarchy of skills needed to gain meaning and understanding from the texts they read. The technical skills of reading are taught through various approaches including phonemic awareness and alphabet knowledge, phonics, Smart Spelling, guided reading, language experience, modelled reading, shared reading, reciprocal reading and literature circles. The Fountas & Pinnell framework is used to support the explicit teaching of reading strategies and skills.

Each week, students have at least one session where they are involved in a small teacher-group, undertaking a detailed analysis of a teacher-selected text. During these sessions, texts are studied with a particular focus and critically analysed. A number of reading schemes are used to assess students' reading development and provide students with appropriate level reading material gathered from a variety of publishers. It is expected that positive reading habits are supported at home through daily reading.

The mechanics of writing are explicitly taught at all year levels using the framework of the 6+1 Traits of Writing, Scribi and Smart Spelling. Daily opportunities to practise these skills occur through stand-alone language lessons and through the units of inquiry. The skills of spelling, grammar, punctuation and text types are taught through modelled writing, shared writing and independent writing. It is during these lessons students learn that authors adapt their writing according to their purpose and audience. Planning the structure and content of a written piece is also taught and applied. Wherever

possible, these are taught and practised using meaningful contexts. Editing is an important part of the writing process and is an opportunity to transfer the skills taught in preparation for publishing. Handwriting skills are modelled by the teacher and reinforced through the use of a handwriting text.

Support for language learning

A reading difficulty may be indicated when there is a discrepancy between a student's actual reading ability and what might be expected of their age-cohort peers. For example, when a student's achievement level in the Victorian Curriculum is more than one year below their peers.

Students in Year 1 who are yet to master the age appropriate skills of reading and writing are provided with the opportunity to participate in an individualised or small group program.

Support is also provided for students who are new arrivals to Australia.

Students not achieving benchmark, or making benchmark in Year 1 but falling behind in later years, Year 2 &3, are considered based on data collected from:

- F & P Running Records
- Writing samples 12 months behind
- Students on an ILIP for Literacy

Meetings will be conducted with parents to discuss this information and how the school can support their child, as well as their responsibility in accessing outside support/intervention.

Intake into an intervention literacy/language program after Year 1 will be based on

- Prior intervention at this school
- Data

Mother Tongues

Consistent with current research, Caulfield South PS encourages parents and students to continue to speak in their mother tongue outside of school. This has been proven to enrich a child's language development and maintain their cultural identity.

We celebrate our differences and encourage students to be proud of their culture. Through the teaching of the IB Learner Profiles, our students are encouraged to be open-minded so they understand and appreciate their own and others' cultures and personal histories. The use of mother tongue is supported by the school providing access to digital resources and books in the diverse languages represented in our community. These books are housed in the school libraries. Families are also encouraged to contribute to this library collection through donations of books in their mother tongue.

Additional Language (Italian)

Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international-mindedness. Italian is offered at Caulfield South PS in addition to the language of instruction (English). Students from Prep to Year 6 participate in a weekly 50 minute lesson with a qualified Italian specialist teacher. Learning in the additional language is supported through a range of resources, including books, online activities, digital resources and cultural games. Lessons include both language learning and cross-cultural awareness. The Italian program is further supported through a collection of books, videos and DVD's housed in the library for student use.

Local Aboriginal Languages (Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung)

C.S.P.S acknowledges and Boon Wurrung, Bunurong & people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the land on which the school resides. The Koorie languages spoken across Melbourne are Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung (Boon Wurrung & Woi Wurrung share over 90% of the same vocabulary). The school understands that all local Indigenous Australian languages are in revival and therefore aim to use local Koorie words where possible. Learning local Aboriginal vocabulary provides the opportunity for students to increase their understanding & respect for local culture, recognise patterns & use higher order analytical thinking skills, contribute to the health of endangered languages, learn about our shared national heritage & history and see the connections between languages & place. Furthermore it signals to the local Koorie community that C.S.P.S. welcomes and values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The learning happens incidentally, for example through naming our Houses, greetings, etc. and where possible topic specific language is introduced through Units of Inquiry. C.S.P.S follows local Victorian Aboriginal protocols by ensuring we ask permission to use language (VACL) thus respecting the work of those bringing these languages back.

Resources

Learning Difficulties Information Guide- Literacy

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/reading/literacy-guide.pdf>

Identification and assessment of learning difficulties

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/reading/Pages/assessment.aspx>

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.