

Caulfield South Primary School

C.S.P.S.

Language Policy

Rationale

The purpose of this document is to describe our school's language philosophy and practice of language within the school. This includes how we teach our primary language of instruction (English) and our language other than English (Italian). It also discusses how we foster the Mother Tongue (language spoken at home) of our students, as well as other languages important to our school community. The document clearly set out the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community with regards to language and what constitutes good practice within the school context. The aim is to help ensure that the school provides an environment in which students are equipped to deal with the challenges that the 21st Century presents.

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 mother tongue of the majority of students, 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.

The school's language program embeds the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Victorian Curriculum developmental continuum for English and additional languages. Each unit of inquiry is tailored to include an explicit focus on students being internationally minded.

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 (F & P) 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 practice 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:

- Reading assessments (F & P Running Records)
- Writing samples 12 months behind
- Students on an Individual Learning Improvement Plan (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
- Additional relevant data

Mother Tongues

Consistent with current research, Caulfield South encourages parents and students to continue to speak in their mother tongue language outside of school and we undertake practices to

support their development at 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 cultural and linguistic backgrounds. 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, as identified through school enrolment information and discussions with the school 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.

The school's Programme of Inquiry promotes understanding, respect and appreciation of the linguistic and cultural diversity within the school community through units of inquiry that explore community, culture, celebrations, migration and Australian history. This is also developed through the development of International Baccalaureate Learner Profile attributes such as Open-Minded, Communicator, Principled, Inquirer, Knowledgeable and Caring.

Additional Language (Italian)

Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international-mindedness. Italian is offered at Caulfield South 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 and DVD's housed in the library for student use.

The Additional Language program will be relevant to the students' needs and interests. The program is developed sequentially according to the students' abilities and is aligned to the Victorian Curriculum and PYP documents. Students will develop skills in the Additional Language by using the inquiry approach to learning. When possible the Additional Language program will be embedded within the classroom unit of inquiry. Where this is not possible, stand-alone units of inquiry based on the PYP concepts are developed and language skills are explicitly taught. The Additional Language program will allow for the development of language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing.

The choice of additional language offered at Caulfield South will be regularly reviewed through community consultation, based on [guidance](#) provided by the Department of Education and Training for developing a language program. As part of the regular review process, the school will ensure that the school community are informed about the languages that are taught in local kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and the importance of students accessing a continuous language pathway from primary school to junior secondary and senior secondary schooling.

Local Aboriginal Languages (Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung)

Caulfield South 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 Caulfield South 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. Caulfield South follows local Victorian Aboriginal protocols by ensuring we ask permission to use language (VAACL), thus respecting the work of those seeking to foster greater use of these languages.

Other Languages Important to the School Community

In recognition of the strong desire for learning Hebrew within the school community, the school works with the United Jewish Education Board (UJEB), a local community organisation, to support Hebrew language development in the school. The on-site Hebrew language program run by UJEB supports approximately 10% of our student population to learn Hebrew in either a mother tongue or additional language capacity. Ongoing monitoring of community needs and desires, and the effectiveness of existing language programs and arrangements, are conducted through the Community Engagement Subcommittee and School Council.

Professional Learning

School leadership, teaching and educational support staff have an ongoing obligation to complete professional learning in areas of language learning and instruction. This involves professional development run by externally sourced experts in fields of language, whole school staff meetings and learning sessions, professional discussions, lesson observations and collaborative reflections. This is supported through our participation in the Bayside Peninsula Area and Victorian PYP school networks, graduate teacher support processes, school induction processes and ongoing identification of school priorities through data analysis and strategic goals.

Professional learning also includes school community reflection on how the school approaches and implements language learning and this policy at our school.

Resources

The libraries contains resources that are used by teachers, parents, individual students, groups of students and whole classes. These resources are designed to support the development of

intercultural understanding and international mindedness, and to support the school's Programme of Inquiry.

Additional resources are provided to support mother tongue development for students and cultures represented in the school by using information provided in student enrolment and through consultation with the school community. These are regularly revised and added to, supported by school community contributions and participation in our Programme of Inquiry.

Our units of inquiry benefit from a wide variety of resources and provide students with both content and context that aim to support language development in English and other languages.

Parents and the school community are a valuable resource in supporting and shaping the language development of our students.

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

Caulfield South Primary School's Language

Policy will be regularly reviewed both as part of a 3 year cycle and in response to feedback from the school community.

Evaluation of the Language Policy will take into account, amongst other things:

- changes to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Victorian Curriculum
- community needs and desires, and other local contextual factors.

Ratified by School Council: 25.5.22

Date of Last Review: May 2022