



Language Policy

PURPOSE

At Murrumbeena Primary School we believe that learning language, learning about language and learning through language is essential to a thriving learning community. It is integral to developing competent and confident communicators, thinkers, inquirers and internationally minded students who are able to successfully participate in a culturally diverse global society.

As part of our language program, we support students who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) and also to learn another language: Japanese. By studying another language students gain greater understanding of language structures as well as gaining new cultural perspectives. The school community (leadership, teachers, students and parents) is responsible for promoting opportunities for students to become articulate, literate and respectful learners.

The EAL curriculum provides opportunities for students to draw on their knowledge of the language/s spoken at home as a way to enhance their developing understanding of the English language. The inclusion of plurilingual awareness in the curriculum acknowledges the value of competence in multiple languages. A student who develops plurilingual awareness is able to integrate their knowledge of multiple languages in a way that enriches their communication and learning in all languages. This inclusion in the curriculum validates the importance of language and the role it plays in an individual's sense of self and identity.

AIMS

The aims of the policy are to:

- provide early learners with the opportunity to participate in planned collaborative play-based learning experiences which encourage students to use language
- develop communication skills including articulate speaking, active listening, fluent handwriting, efficient keyboarding, multimedia and artistic performance
- develop the ability to utilise communication skills with enjoyment, purpose and confidence in a wide range of contexts
- develop skills which will enable the student to understand, interpret, critically analyse, uncover perspectives, make connections, reflect upon and enjoy written and visual print and multimodal texts
- facilitate the ability to conceive, plan, compose, edit, revise/upgrade and publish a range of texts
- enhance knowledge and use of appropriate oral language for particular audiences and occasions, including appropriate body language and voice
- support the understanding of how language works, the development of multilingualism and international mindedness and the recognition of cultural identity by:
 - ✓ providing the opportunity to experience a language other than English (Japanese)
 - ✓ encouraging and supporting students' use of home and family languages

- assist students learning English as a additional language by supporting their understanding of cultural information and social interactions while scaffolding the learning of English
- build partnerships between home and school to encourage parental and guardian involvement in their child’s language development
- scaffold language learning through collaborative inquiry-based classrooms which support the use of complex functions of language, such as classifying, justifying, hypothesising, clarifying, explaining, comparing and so on, within transdisciplinary and subject-specific contexts.

GUIDELINES

We will deliver a sequential program of language learning based on the mandated Victorian Curriculum.

Language learning focuses on the conscious and deliberate study of language in a range of texts and contexts in which language is heard, spoken, read, viewed and written. The language program will incorporate specific skill sessions, introduced sequentially throughout the school, covering the conventional aspects of language in Japanese and English.

Where possible, the teaching and learning of language will be incorporated into the programme of inquiry in authentic contexts. Learning contexts should be diverse and include situations that are formal, informal, planned and spontaneous. First hand experiences are used to ensure purpose and meaning is reflected in language activities.

Speaking and listening activities will include active listening strategies and an understanding of conventions of different spoken texts including everyday communication including: questioning, collaborating, presenting, storytelling, debating and negotiating.

The structures and features of language will be a focus of classroom experiences. Throughout the years of schooling, students need to develop abilities to use the following features of language:

- print elements, including: letters, characters, words, scripts, spelling, paragraphs, punctuation, layout and presentation
- grammatical aspects of language including sentence structure and vocabulary
- patterns and structures of a range of genres, including: recount, procedure, information, explanation, persuasive, narrative and poetry/verse
- intonation, pronunciation, rhythm, pace, pitch, volume and pauses in spoken language
- non-verbal elements of communication including: facial expression, body movement, proximity and gestures
- graphic elements of texts including: diagrams, photos, illustrations, and mathematical representations.

At all levels, all language activities will be tailored to the individual/personal needs of each student. Individual learning plans will be developed for funded students and goals will be negotiated for all students to personalise learning. Students in Grade 1, who are eligible, may also participate in the Reading Recovery program. Students from English as an Additional Language (EAL) backgrounds will be supported through Equity Funding with consideration to cultural background, level of proficiency in English and prior learning experiences.

EVALUATION

Assessment procedures to include:

Assessment *for* learning

- ✓ Teachers will use formative assessments to inform learning and teaching plans and support the setting of personalised student learning goals (e.g. cold/big writes, standardised tests, running records, rubrics).

Assessment *as* learning

- ✓ students reflect on and monitor their progress to evaluate current goals and inform future learning goals (e.g. self-reflection, peer assessment, assessment against standards).
- ✓ teachers conference with students to support and monitor their progress and achievement of personal learning goals.
- ✓ teachers respond to student needs through planned whole class, small group and personal explicit teaching.

Assessment *of* learning

- ✓ students and teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgements on student achievement against learning goals and standards (eg. reports, assignments, models, standardised tests, work portfolios).

Achievements will be evaluated by comparing past and current performances.

Evaluation of the policy occurs formally every four years and is informed by data regarding student learning outcomes and parental feedback. Informal feedback is also received at regular intervals in order to reflect and respond to the needs and wishes of the school community.

Appendix One - Supporting English as an Additional Language (EAL) Learners

At Murrumbeena Primary School, we recognise the changing cultural and linguistic identity of our students and their families. We recognise the need for additional support for these students and their families who do not speak English as their first language.

As language is integral to a sense of identity and is intimately connected to how we feel about the world, it is essential that students are able to succeed in learning language for both social and academic purposes. In order to ensure this is a positive experience for all students, we need to identify the personal needs of each learner and promote and value diversity within our school.

EAL students have the opportunity to progress through the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL as a parallel alternative to the English curriculum. Students may stay on the EAL curriculum for up to 7 years and should reach standard in all areas of the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL before progression to the English curriculum for assessment.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to support EAL students, each area of the school has a role to play. The school leadership team works in partnership with staff, parents and appropriate community partners to ensure that every student has access to the best possible educational experience.

To build the capacity of the whole school in helping EAL learners reach their full potential the school will:

1. ensure it has procedures in place to gather relevant, accurate demographic information

2. ensure that new EAL learners and their families are welcomed to the school so that home school partnerships and parental engagement is encouraged
3. build an inclusive environment, recognising the diversity in the school and where possible use community languages
4. acquire and build a wide range of resources that reflect the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the school community
5. ensure that planning for EAL teaching and learning is supported by appropriate policies and professional development to build capacity and expertise
6. document support for and provision of quality EAL programs
7. liaise with the local English Language school(s)
8. provide interpreters when needed.

Teachers bring knowledge, enthusiasm and varied teaching and assessment approaches to the classroom. In order to address individual student needs and support EAL learners, teachers will:

1. learn about their students' backgrounds, experiences and languages
2. create a classroom that celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity
3. provide engaging and challenging opportunities to learn English with appropriate modifications or accommodation
4. communicate regularly with parents, taking into account the varied background experiences of diverse families
5. use a variety of teaching and learning strategies to facilitate the success of EAL learners (Examples include the use of visual aids and demonstrations, working in small groups, differentiating and scaffolding appropriately, allowing students to research in their mother tongue, practising oral language skills to build social competencies as well as academic ones.)
6. use assessment strategies that allow all students to express the understandings they have gained
7. participate in relevant EAL professional learning.
8. Use the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL to guide the teaching and monitor the learning.

SUPPORT OF MOTHER TONGUE (OR HOME) LANGUAGES

Students who have their mother tongue or home language skills acknowledged and celebrated by teachers and classmates, are more likely to feel confident at school and take risks that are involved in learning, particularly a new language. They come to view English as an addition rather than a substitution to their first language.

There are numerous positive outcomes from continuing to use and develop mother tongue language. Students who are able to communicate in more than one language are better prepared to participate in a global society.

“Students with well-developed skills in their first language have been shown to acquire an additional language more easily and fully and that, in turn, has a positive impact on academic achievement.”

Educating English Language Learners: A Synthesis of Research Evidence. Fred Genesee, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, William Saunders and Donna Christian. Cambridge University Press 2006.

In order to support the maintenance of mother tongue, we will:

- continue to build resources in a variety of community languages
- ensure display boards, posters and signs reflect the languages in the classrooms
- celebrate cultures and languages through regular events such as inviting parents in to read in home languages, carnivals and as experts in a unit of inquiry
- Identify parents who may act as a liaison between school and mother tongue language groups
- use a translator/ interpreter for communications with parents where appropriate
- disseminate information to new families that explain the procedures and how to get assistance if needed.

Principles into Practice, International Baccalaureate Organisation, Published October 2018, <https://resources.ibo.org/pyp?>, 27/5/2020.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's cyclical review process every 4 years.