LANGUAGE POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office.

Auburn South Primary School Mission and Values

At Auburn South Primary School we develop a positive sense of identity within a community that empowers individuals to flourish as open-minded inquirers, creative thinkers and compassionate, globally responsible citizens.

Aims and Purpose of the Language Policy

The Auburn South Primary School *Language Policy* aims to provide a broad overview of the underlying language learning philosophy of our school and the planning, teaching and assessment practices that bring this philosophy to life in classrooms. This document draws significantly from the International Baccalaureate's *From Principles into Practice* as it functions as a core guiding document for all teaching and learning decisions made by the school. When enacted with consistency, this policy ensures an inclusive, engaging and globally significant educational experience for all students in our school.

> *The development of language is fundamental to the instinctive human need to communicate. Language learning includes the development of the home and family languages, the languages of the school, additional languages and the development of literacy. This is integral to exploring and sustaining cognitive and personal development and cultural identity. Language learning and teaching are social acts, dependent on relationships with the self and others, with context, with the environment, and with the world. The Primary Years Programme (PYP) beliefs and values about language are embedded implicitly throughout the learner profile and explicitly through the attribute of "communicator", as well as in the IB's approaches to learning. Through an IB education, PYP learning communities use language to build a better and more peaceful world.*
>
> (PYP: From Principles into Practice, IB)

At Auburn South Primary School, we believe that:

- All teachers are teachers of language
- All members of the community are language learners
- Language is fundamental to learning, inquiry and expressing understanding
- Language enables the communication of ideas, feelings and emotions
- Language underpins our capacity to think creatively and critically
- Language learning is a vehicle for expressing identity and culture and developing international mindedness
- Authentic language learning is purposeful, inquiry-based and transdisciplinary
- Language allows us to interact with others and become active members of local and global communities
- Critical literacy, and developing independence of judgement, thought and action, is vital for effective participation in contemporary society
- Home languages need to be valued and supported by the school community
- All students should have the opportunity to learn an additional language (Mandarin at ASPS)
- Additional language learning helps understanding of, and proficiency in, the first language
- Resources in the school need to reflect the language profile of the school community

The Interplay of Language

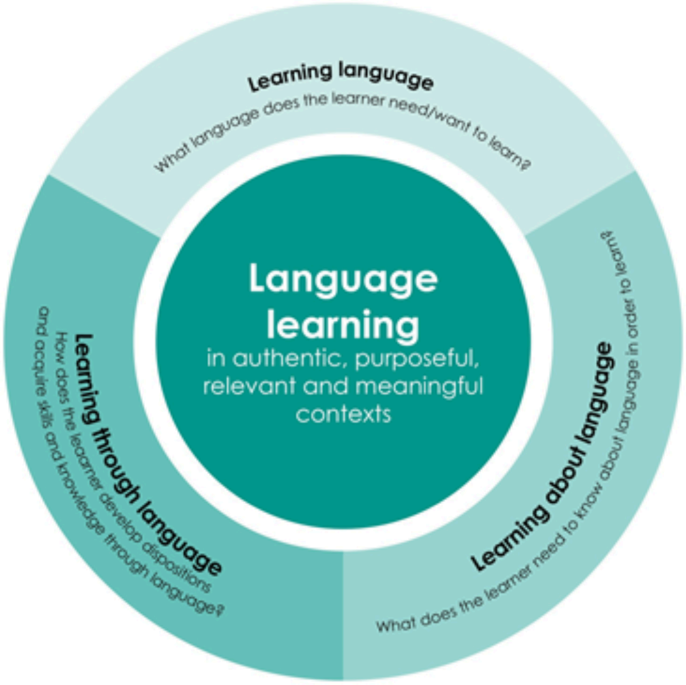
We acknowledge that language development is a complex process that relies on the interplay between learning language, learning through language and learning about language.

(Halliday, 1980)

Learning language:
What language does the learner need to use and want to learn?
i.e. acquisition of language, vocabulary development, language experiences

Learning through language:
How does the learner acquire skills and knowledge and develop dispositions through language?
i.e. reading, speaking, listening, performing, viewing and writing to inquire and make meaning; reading a text to source information

Learning about language:
What does the learner need to know about how language works in order to learn?
i.e. spelling, language conventions, structures, grammar phonemic awareness, word etymology, morphology



Language at Auburn South PS is a mosaic made up of:

- English (the language of instruction)
- Mandarin (the school additional language)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Family languages (L1)

Our primary reference for all aspects of language philosophy and practice is PYP: From principles into practice – Learning and Teaching – Language (2018) and corresponding Teacher Support Materials

Language of instruction: English

English is the main language of communication at Auburn South PS and, in the context of school, is central to students' creative, social and emotional development. Auburn South PS uses the Victorian Curriculum - English and the PYP Language Scope and Sequence to guide our planning for, and assessment of, language teaching and learning.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 (Version 2) sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian priorities and standards. https://f10.vcaa.vic.edu.au/ The Victorian Curriculum - English is organised into language modes and strands. The language modes (Reading and Viewing, Writing, Speaking and Listening) are interrelated, reflecting the interdependent nature of the modes when using language.

There are three strands:

- Language: students develop their knowledge of the English language and how it works.
- Literature: engages students in the study of literary texts of personal, cultural, social and aesthetic value.
- Literacy: aims to develop students' ability to interpret and create texts with appropriateness, accuracy, confidence, fluency and efficacy for learning in and out of school, and for participating in Australian life more generally.

PYP Language Scope and Sequence

The PYP has identified three strands—oral language, visual language, written language—that are learned across and throughout the curriculum, with each strand being an integral component of language learning. Each strand has been considered from both the receptive aspect—receiving and constructing meaning, and expressive aspect—creating and sharing meaning (figure 1). While the receptive and expressive aspects are clearly reciprocal, the processes involved in receiving and constructing meaning are different from those involved in creating and sharing meaning. The learner's ability to understand language and use it effectively varies in different situations and from one individual to another. For this reason, it is important to distinguish between these two modes of learning and the demonstrated proficiencies associated with them.

(PYP Language Scope and Sequence, 2018)

Strand	Receptive—receiving and constructing meaning	Expressive—creating and sharing meaning
Oral language	Listening◄——►Speaking	
Visual language	Viewing◄——►Presenting	
Written language	Reading	Writing

Figure 1: Receptive and expressive aspects of language strands

Early Years at ASPS

Students use play to make meaning and understandings of the world, and to develop oral language and symbolic competence. They share personal experiences and understandings through talk, play, shared stories and collaborative exploration.

PYP: From Principles into Practice, IB, 2019

Young learners begin school with a rich knowledge of language, through their experiences at home, early educational settings, and their communities. In the first year of school, language and symbolic understanding is developed through inquiry and play; alongside developing skills in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers integrate these elements through inquiry-based learning, explicit instruction, transdisciplinary approaches and authentic assessment while maintaining student engagement and curiosity. Learners extend their language capabilities through play, by cooperating, negotiating, turn-taking, sharing with

and responding to peers and teachers. Young learners transfer their understanding about the world through authentic and meaningful experiences, in a learning environment that provokes wonder, exploration and risk-taking. Through observing and listening, teachers are responsive to the needs of students, planning and adapting learning experiences to further develop language skills.

The Workshop Model

At Auburn South Primary School, we use an instructional 'workshop' approach to learning language. An ideal workshop (Figure 2 - Writer's Workshop example) includes about 10 minutes of an explicit whole-class mini-lesson (incorporating strategies, mentor texts, worked examples and language review), followed by at least 30 minutes for writing/reading time (during which the teacher holds conferences and small-group instruction), ending with 5–10 minutes for students to share what their learning with another writer/reader and reflect on the learning target.

Figure 2: Writer's workshop instructional model

Additional Language: Mandarin

Philosophy

Additional Language study contributes to the universal purposes of schooling and to the development of skills in thinking and reflection. It supports the moral, social and economic initiation of young people into the culture and wider civilisation that surrounds them. Learning an additional language nurtures reflective, deep and creative thinking in specific ways, cultivates culturally distinctive fields of knowledge, and stimulates awareness of intellectual functioning.

Students who are multilingual have an improved capacity to think, talk and reflect on how language works. That's why the PYP requires the acquisition of an additional language from the age of 7 to support the development of international-mindedness.

At Auburn South Primary School all students learn Mandarin as a second language. Students learn Mandarin language for communicative purposes and understand that language and culture are the resources for interpreting and shaping meaning in intercultural exchange. Mandarin language is taught through the relevant, authentic context of units of inquiry.

Pedagogy

- Provide students with as much exposure as possible to Mandarin language and cultural experience
- Plan and facilitate student-centred and inquiry-based learning activities
- Provide activities that improve student engagement in their language learning, such as role-play, singing and rhyming
- Use gestures and story-telling methods to enhance students' speaking and listening skills
- Use ICT/multimedia to enhance and broaden students' language learning experience

Current implementations:

- Weekly 50-minute Mandarin language lessons in the Language Classroom
- Integrated learning program connecting with units of inquiry and inquiry pedagogy
- Students are able to use iPad as a tool for their language learning, such as filming, recording, participating in interactive activities or games
- Incursions and excursions

Further consideration:

- Increase Mandarin lesson time allocation (the recommended time allocation is 150 minutes per week by Department of Education and Training Victoria)
- Encourage parent involvement in the language program
- Build consistent connection with our sister school (Fuxue Hutong Elementary School) in China and encourage the communication between students from both schools, such as Pen Pal program or WeChat group

- ATCP (Assistants to Teachers of Chinese Program) support teachers and students to have authentic learning resources and provide small group or individual students with learning support
- Additional weekly 10-min Mandarin revision program in each classroom

Family Languages: L1

Maintaining and developing language and literacy skills in family languages:

- facilitates the learning of other languages
- ensures continuous cognitive development
- may increase intercultural awareness and understanding both for the language, literature and culture of their home country
- makes it possible for students to re-adjust to life in their home community and education system should they return to their home country

Purpose

Mother-tongue programs should aim to develop students' language and literacy skills in their mother tongue to their full potential in order for them to achieve the benefits outlined above.

Implementation

Auburn South PS is aspiring to:

- elevate the profile of mother tongue and ensure that students have the opportunity to continue to develop full literacy in their home language
- show recognition and celebration of the various family languages spoken throughout the school community
- acknowledge that mother tongue languages are a beneficial resource for both teachers and students
- make information on mother tongue programs available to parents and teachers

The ability to effectively communicate in the home language of their parents is important for a child's identity and belonging, as well as their cognitive development. We encourage parents to speak, read and write with their children as much as possible using home languages.

We can help develop mother tongue proficiency by communicating affirmative messages about the value of knowing additional languages. Teachers can develop projects which promote additional language learning and sharing of additional languages in proactive, positive ways. Children learn an additional language more quickly and effectively if they maintain and develop their proficiency in their mother tongue. The level of development of a child's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development. When children are able to develop their mother tongue vocabulary and concepts, they come to

school well-prepared to learn the language of instruction (in our case English) and succeed educationally. Both languages can nurture each other when children have access to both languages. Many skills acquired in one language can be transferred to another.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

At Auburn South Primary School all teachers play a role in supporting the English language development of our EAL learners. The aim of the EAL program is to enable students to access the curriculum of the school, while students are identified and assessed according to the English as an Additional Language (EAL) curriculum.

Participation in the EAL program will enable students to:

- use English language effectively as a means of communication within the social, cultural and academic life of the school, and in the wider community
- develop the specific communication skills required within and across subject areas
- develop an understanding of the nature of language and the process of language learning
- develop an understanding of intercultural awareness

Standards in EAL are organised in three interrelated dimensions:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing

EAL students are engaged in a program that:

- is integrated into the curriculum and planning in order to cater for ongoing language needs
- acts as a resource for teachers and students provides a caring, flexible and supportive environment
- aims to ensure that lack of competence in the language of instruction does not hinder cognitive and academic progress
- is flexible to ensure that the needs of the current students are being met

Implementation

The students should be actively encouraged to continue to develop their first language as this has a critical influence on additional language development. The EAL teacher provides students with support and instruction according to their individual needs. This assistance may occur within, or outside of, the classroom setting depending on the needs of the students. The EAL teacher will also provide support for classroom and specialist teachers. The EAL program should be embedded into the general curriculum wherever possible. The EAL program will be individualised for the needs of each student.

Defining Literacy at ASPS

Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school… Becoming literate is not simply about knowledge and skills. Certain behaviours and dispositions assist students to become effective learners who are confident and motivated to use their literacy skills broadly. Many of these behaviours and dispositions are also identified and supported in other general capabilities. They include students managing their own learning to be self-sufficient; working harmoniously with others; being open to ideas, opinions and texts from and about diverse cultures; returning to tasks to improve and enhance their work; and being prepared to question the meanings and assumptions in texts.

Australian Curriculum - Scope of the Literacy Capability

At Auburn South PS we acknowledge that all members of our learning community need to develop competence in a range of emerging literacies, in order to deal with the increasingly complex demands of contemporary society. Living in a media-rich environment gives us access to an abundance of information, allows us to collaborate globally and co-construct new knowledge. We are constantly challenged to keep up with rapid technological change. To be effective in the 21st Century, students and their teachers must be able to create, critically evaluate, and effectively utilise a wide range of information, media and technology. Along with the comprehensive set of PYP Approaches to Learning, it is our responsibility as teachers to develop the following literacy capabilities within our students, and provide meaningful contexts and opportunities to apply them:

- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Problem solving
- Visual literacy
- Information literacy
- Media literacy
- ICT literacy

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- develop sociolinguistic profiling annually to inform staffing, EAL support selection criteria, family linguistic needs

- create greater access to information from enrolments office to identify language needs
- ensure that staffing for EAL support reflects the needs of the school population
- provide EAL professional development for all teachers
- continue to develop the translation of documents (newsletters, Seesaw, semester progress reports) for greater access by all parents
- target professional development based on the needs of current students

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND REFERENCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following resources:

- Adoniou, M. (2022). *Spelling it out: How words work and how to teach them* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (2006). *Improving comprehension with questioning the author: A fresh and expanded view of a powerful approach*. Scholastic.
- Glover, M. (2009). *Engaging young writers: Preschool–grade 1*. Heinemann.
- Glover, M. (2012). *Projecting possibilities for writers: The how, what, and why of designing units of study*. Heinemann.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1980). *Three aspects of children's language development: Learning language, learning through language, learning about language*. In Y. Goodman, M. H. Haussler, & D. Strickland (Eds.), *Oral and written language development research*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- International Baccalaureate. (2009). *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*. International Baccalaureate Organization.
- International Baccalaureate. (2012). *Language and learning in IB programmes*. International Baccalaureate Organization.
- International Baccalaureate. (2018). *IB PYP language scope and sequence*. International Baccalaureate Organization.
- International Baccalaureate. (2018). *Primary Years Programme: From principles into practice*. International Baccalaureate Organization.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. (2024). *The Science of Reading and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme in the US*. IB Research Department.
- Johnston, P. H. (2004). *Choice words: How our language affects children's learning*. Stenhouse Publishers.

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- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). (n.d.). *Learning in English as an additional language*. State Government of Victoria. Retrieved February 7, 2025, from https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/english/english-as-an-additional-language-eal/introduction/learning-in-english-as-an-additional-language

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2025
Consultation	Language Policy Review Team: Sue Phillips, Justine Wang, Feifei Huang, Hayley Street, Kate Gray, Rhian ap Rees
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2029