



## LANGUAGE POLICY

### *LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY*

At Surrey Hills Primary School, we recognise that language is involved in all learning. Language is the cornerstone for providing a vehicle for inquiry and communication. Through its written, oral and visual forms it enables us to access, interpret and discuss information. Language enables us to develop social skills, foster relationships and maintain culture. Through the use of questioning and critical thinking skills, we explore international mindedness and become global citizens.

Acquisition of language is an active life-long process which involves learning about and through different dialects as first and additional language learners. Students are to learn at least one additional language, with emphasis also given to EAL students maintaining their mother tongue. Language empowers students and should be taught in context and in response to students' previous experience, needs and interests.

Language is central to helping to create an increasingly peaceful world by cultivating the values of diversity, intercultural understanding, international mindedness and respect. As such, at Surrey Hills Primary School every member of the school community is viewed as a language teacher and learner.

### *DEFINITIONS*

- Language of Instruction – the language in which most of the curriculum is taught, in this case English.
- Languages Other Than English (LOTE) program (additional language) – refers to the language that the school offers in addition to the language of instruction, in this case Mandarin.
- Family language – refers to the native language of an individual. This most commonly refers to the language most commonly used at home, however there may be occasions where most than one language is used interchangeably at home.
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners – refers to students who have a mother-tongue other than English and therefore may require additional support within the school environment.

### *LANGUAGE PROFILE*

Surrey Hills Primary School has a diverse cultural population with more than 20 languages spoken at home. Across our school approximately 20% of all students come from a language background other than English, however English is the predominant mother tongue. Other mother tongue languages at Surrey Hills PS include: Mandarin, Chinese (not further defined), Vietnamese, Korean, Cantonese, Spanish, Hindi, Latvian, Turkish, Min Nan, Swedish, Azeri, Thai, Indonesian, Bengali, Persian, Gujarati, Kannada, Japanese, Teochew, French, Mauritian Creole and Polish. The language of instruction and communication at Surrey Hills PS is English and the additional language is Mandarin.

### *PURPOSE*

The study of language is vital to the learning and development of our students. It empowers students to communicate and express ideas and opinions, make conceptual developments, think critically and meaningfully engage with the world around them. Our aim is provide a challenging and engaging language

program which is used as a vehicle for inquiry and follows a transdisciplinary approach that operates across all learning areas. It is through the study of language that students:

- Have a shared platform to connect and communicate with others in various contexts and differing purposes.
- Become global citizens by enriching their lives with experiences and opportunities to understand different cultures and perspectives.
- Express and share emotions, thoughts, ideas and knowledge with others.
- Make meaning from the world around them through making connections, analysing patterns, organising information and making conceptual understandings and generalisations.
- Create relationships and connections with their immediate and wider world communities.
- Connect culturally with their community to maintain their cultural identity. They communicate and express their culture to others with the view of developing tolerance, understanding and an international view of the world.
- Use metacognitive strategies to reflect on, communicate and share learning and support their cognitive development.
- Experience academic success as we recognise that all learning is based in language.
- Become critical thinkers and questioners of the world around them and make connections and generalisations to find the universal truth.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### ***Language of Instruction: English***

- The language of instruction at Surrey Hills Primary School is English.
- A transdisciplinary approach to teaching is used. If possible, language is taught in the context of our units of inquiry and Specialist program to enable students to make meaningful and authentic links.
- While it is recognised that a transdisciplinary inquiry-based approach to teaching through the context of the inquiry is preferable, there may also be a balance of explicit skills based teaching taught in stand-alone.
- Multiple exposures are used to extend language knowledge and skills.
- Key concepts are used as lenses to focus and direct the teaching of all subject areas, including language.
- Literacy blocks, where practical, take place at the beginning of the day before recess and it is expected that there be at least 4 x 50 minutes blocks of differentiated explicit Literacy (reading and viewing) instruction per week, with additional sessions dedicated to writing, speaking and listening.
- Teaching of language should have a balance of explicit teaching of skills, exploration and student construction of knowledge and experiences to promote enjoyment of language.
- Language learning, to ensure students are targeted at their point of need, is guided by:
  - the Victorian Curriculum standards and Scope and Sequence documents to plan for cohesive and consistent skill acquisition across the school that builds and scaffolds on prior experiences.
  - IB Scope and Sequence documents.
  - student interest, achievement levels, as indicated through a variety of formal and informal assessments, and students' language backgrounds.
  - student voice and agency, students use their personal goals and knowledge of achievement level to guide learning experiences.
- Strategies for differentiation are to be incorporated into lessons, including the daily literacy block, to enable the inclusion of all students, including Students with Additional Needs and EAL learners.

- Scheduled collaborative planning time within teaching teams, and through a Literacy Professional Learning Community, is used to ensure consistency in our Language Program from Prep to Year 6.
- Language learning at Surrey Hills ensures focus is given to the three areas of: learning language, learning about language and learning through language. Planning by teachers reflects the learning experiences used to focus on all three areas and ensure that a balance is maintained. Teachers are models of language learning through sharing their own experiences with these areas.
- Language learning is focussed on a balanced approach to support students to make connections between the skills of reading and viewing, writing, speaking and listening in all subject areas so that skills are transferrable between contexts.
- Reading and Viewing:
  - Balance of learning to read (decoding, accuracy, comprehending) and reading to learn (searching, comprehending, summarising, comparing, analysing, interpreting information to construct meaning).
  - Explicit teaching of phonemes, graphemes and word families are taught through the Soundwaves program.
  - Vocabulary focusses to build knowledge in relevant and meaningful contexts.
  - Engagement with culturally diverse books in the library and classroom.
- Writing:
  - Students use the writing process to create, produce, compare, revise, edit, extend and communicate and engage with an audience to meet a purpose in a variety of contexts.
  - Explicit teaching of phonemes, graphemes and word families are taught through the Soundwaves program.
  - 6 +1 Traits of Writing is used as a framework to teach writing from Prep – Year 6 so that we have a common language through which to teach and learn writing skills.
  - Explore parts of language and their roles within sentences, paragraphs and texts.
- Speaking and Listening:
  - Opportunities for learning about and learning through oral language occur in all learning areas of the curriculum. Oral language allows students to express their thinking and understandings and engage with others to make this a collaborative process.
  - Students develop and extend their abilities to communicate, discuss, compare, question, summarise, interpret, conclude and present information, understandings and thinking.
- Extra Support for Language Learning:
  - At Surrey Hills Primary School we recognise that all students have different levels of achievement and learning and require different levels of support.
  - Differentiation within the classroom with provide additional support to ensure equal access to academic and social opportunities.
  - Students may be offered the opportunity to attend a small group or one-on-one intervention program.
- Value is placed on the learning journey and process of learning, in addition to the final product, with recognition that mistakes are an integral and necessary part of the language learning process.
- Professional Development is planned within annual schedules and our 4-year Strategic Plan in response to student and teacher needs and reflections.

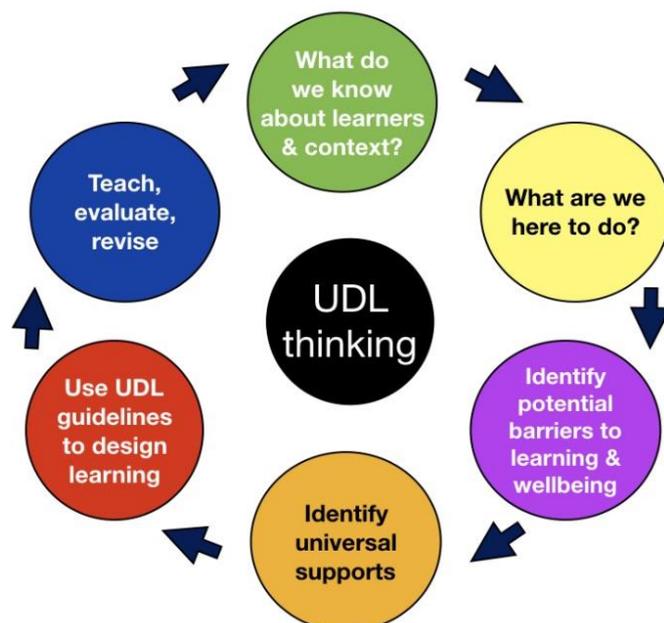
### ***Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Program***

- At Surrey Hills Primary School the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Program offers Mandarin as an additional language from Prep – Year 6 for 50 minutes per week.
- The program's 2 year Scope and Sequence ensures that students learn the language and about the language, in addition to learning through language to discover cultural background and context.

- The Scope and Sequence reflects a balance of speaking and pronunciation, listening and understanding and reading and writing learning experiences.
- Where possible, authentic links are made to classroom units of inquiry, either through direct links with central ideas or with the concepts. Where this is not possible, stand-alone units of inquiry will be developed.
- The program is differentiated to meet individual student needs, taking into consideration students whose mother tongue is Mandarin or have additional experience due to their family background. All students work on and are assessed against the Victorian Curriculum as a Second Language Learner.
- Mandarin is promoted through the school community through student leaders presenting at weekly assemblies, newsletters and events such as an Annual Cultural Day to provide students with a range of cultural experiences to engage with and opportunities for student leadership and peer teaching with Year 5 and 6 students planning and teaching sessions for the Prep – Year 4 students.
- Vocabulary will have a place in the classroom context through displays (Mandarin words next to English), teachers and students

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners**

- Students who have English as an Additional Language are referred to the language support school Blackburn English Language School (ELS). Students attend Blackburn ELS for an intensive program in English Language prior to fully enrolling at Surrey Hills Primary School. The aims are to teach students the language and learning skills to successfully meet the educational demands of schooling at Surrey Hills Primary School and to prepare them for participation in the wider school community.
- Students and teachers of students who have English as an Additional Language are supported by DET experts to identify learning goals and plan appropriate programs in response to these goals.
- Surrey Hills Primary School takes an inclusive approach to EAL learners, with students learning in their regular classroom and supported by peers and teachers.
- The Assistant Principal also provides support to students, teachers and families such as facilitating access to DET resources and organising interpreters to support Parent Teacher Meetings.
- Commitment by the school to develop our resources to reflect the cultural and language backgrounds of our families and the community.
- The Universal Design for Learning is used as a framework for determining goals for all students, including EAL learners, with the view to remove potential barriers to learning and identify universal supports when designing learning sequences.



### **Family Language**

- Opportunities for students to embrace and engage with their Mother Tongue will be provided in the classroom, such as the students being the 'experts' and teaching classmates words and phrases or using their Mother Tongue to express parts of their learning.
- Engagement with the Mother Tongue at home is encouraged by the school so that students maintain a sense of cultural identity and appreciation.
- Languages and cultures, other than English and Mandarin which are explicitly taught, are explored and celebrated through incidental classroom moments and units of inquiry. This includes, but is not limited to: incursions, excursions, cultural music, cultural displays and parent guest speakers.
- Recognition within our community of the variety of languages spoken by our students and their families.

### **Assessment**

Assessment in all areas of English are developed in line with the school's Assessment Policy. Students complete assessments as per the school's Assessment Schedule which include a range of formative, summative, formal and informal assessments. Evidence from these assessments inform planning for teaching and learning in Language and are used for reporting on student achievement. A range of assessment methods are used to enable students to provide multiple ways of showing their understanding and demonstrating their learning and achievement.

### **RESOURCES**

- The library is used as resource centre for students and teachers, housing a range of picture story books, fiction and non-fiction texts on a wide variety of subjects.
- The library is constantly being revised and updated to ensure that resources are relevant and representative of student interest, cultures and languages represented in the school and other world cultures.
- Our units of inquiry benefit from the wide variety of resources offered to extend students' understanding of content knowledge and its context in the world to foster international mindedness and their view as global citizens.
- Texts connected with units of inquiry are used whenever possible for reading, writing, speaking and listening and media literacy skill acquisition. Resources, physical and digital, are organised by units of inquiry and are continually expanded and refined.
- Levelled resources are important to the teaching and learning of language and are available and specific to the year level. Levelled classroom and home resources include class sets of guided readers and novels, big books and take home readers.
- The LOTE program is resourced with a range of subject specific language based and cultural based texts to support the learning of Mandarin as an additional language.
- The EAL and Extra Support program is enhanced with specific resources for the support of students' language acquisition.

### **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of this policy will be undertaken annually by staff.

### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy updated on 10 November 2019 and is scheduled for review in November 21

## *RELATED POLICIES*

- Assessment Policy
- Curriculum Framework Policy

## *REFERENCES*

- International Baccalaureate – ‘Language Scope and Sequence’
- International Baccalaureate – ‘Guidelines for developing a school language policy’
- International Baccalaureate – ‘Making the PYP Happen’

*Information was also gathered from the following IB-PYP school language policies:*

- Balwyn North Primary School Language Policy
- McKinnon Primary School Language Policy
- Brighton Primary School Language Policy