



Morningsong Primary School

Language Policy

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Mornington Primary School Language Policy

Philosophy

Language is central to children's social, emotional and cognitive development. It plays an essential role in all areas of learning. Language is seen as the major connecting element across the curriculum and is used for self expression and building knowledge of ourselves and our world.

At Mornington Primary School, we believe that every teacher is a teacher of language. All of our students are language learners. Students within our school have a wide range of language experiences, knowledge and skills. We believe that the learning environment should offer a quality, differentiated language experience for all students.

Language is the foundation for exploring and sustaining personal growth and cultural identity; it is closely linked to the development of self-esteem, emotional well-being and the ability to make a positive contribution to society.

Language should be taught in context and addresses a wide range of areas such as reading, writing, viewing, presenting to an audience, non-verbal communication, speaking and listening.

Providing a program in more than one language is seen as essential when developing internationally minded learners. We support the belief of the International Baccalaureate, expressed in the Learner Profile, that a communicator is someone who understands and expresses ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication.

At Mornington Primary School we acknowledge a child's right to maintain their connectedness to their culture through opportunities to continue to develop their mother tongue.

Language Profile

Nearly 97% of our student population has English as their first language. 3% of students have a language other than English as their first language. There are 8 different mother tongues spoken in our school community other than English. These languages include Spanish, Malayalam, Khmer, Thai, Tagalog, Chinese, Shona and Tswana.

Language of instruction

English is the language of instruction at Mornington Primary School. As it is a communication skill for all areas of the curriculum it is considered a priority and is the foundation of our curriculum. The fundamental skills of language as outlined in VELS and the PYP Language Scope and Sequence are taught explicitly at all year levels. Language learning is a developmental process and is therefore differentiated to meet students' individual needs. All classes have time allocated for the teaching of specific skills involved in reading, writing, speaking and listening to, the English language.

It is also recognised that language provides a vehicle for inquiry. Wherever possible language will be taught through the relevant, authentic context of the units of inquiry. Classes typically read works of literature as well as non-fiction texts in support of the units of inquiry or to focus on specific literacy skills. Scaffolding students in their language learning is essential. A variety of groupings operate

within each classroom in order for the curriculum to be effectively differentiated. We aim for our students to feel supported and challenged– so that every child experiences success and a feeling of individual achievement.

We acknowledge that in the 21st century literacy comes in a variety of mediums and consequently at all levels students learn through and about digital literacies as is age appropriate.

What do we want our students to know?

Oral, visual and written language are each an integral component of language learning. Each strand has an expressive and receptive component. At Mornington Primary School we aim for each student to become proficient in each component of the English language.

Oral (Speaking and listening)

The learning programs will provide meaningful and well-planned opportunities for students to participate as listeners and speakers. Formal and informal opportunities will be provided for students to consider purpose and audience when using oral language.

Visual language (Viewing and presenting)

Opportunities will be provided for students to interpret and use visual language and construct visuals and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences. Learning to interpret visual language and to understand and use different media, are invaluable life skills.

Written language (Reading and writing)

Mornington primary School aims to foster an appreciation of the richness of language and a love of literature. The learning program will ensure that all students are provided with explicit reading and writing instruction on a daily basis. Through a variety of teaching approaches, students will be introduced to the hierarchy of skills needed to gain meaning and understanding when reading, and to communicate effectively through writing. Students will read and write for a variety of purposes, using a range of resources.

Learner Profile

We also aim for our students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to use language to become internationally minded.

Inquirers: Students will inquire into language use and language structures. They will use language to acquire information and to make sense of the world around them.

Thinkers: Students will have opportunities to learn how to express their thoughts and ideas clearly.

Communicators: Student will learn to become competent users of oral and written language for a variety of purposes and audiences. They will learn to listen attentively and speak confidently and clearly. They will learn to read fluently with good comprehension. They will write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Risk-takers: Students will be encouraged to attempt to read, write or speak in situations where they may be challenged

Knowledgeable: Students will acquire the vocabulary and understanding to discuss language structures, text forms and literary styles.

Principled: Students will be aware that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect and it must therefore be used responsibly.

Caring: Students encouraged to show care in their use of language and are aware of how the use of language can affect others.

Open-minded: Students will respect differences and similarities between languages, dialects and personal communication styles.

Balanced: Students can express themselves orally as well as in writing and find a balance between listening and speaking in communicating with others. They read a variety of written material and are able to write for different purposes and audiences.

Reflective: Students are able to reflect on their language development and consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

Extra Support For Language Learning

Our Literacy intervention program provides individual assistance to students learning English as a first language on a needs basis. This program may target the child for a short period of time, or a more sustained time. Children from a variety of grade levels are able to access this support program.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

It is our goal to help international students integrate into our classroom settings by learning English as quickly as possible. Many of our parents express a desire for their children to be immersed in English, taking responsibility for their child's continuing practise of his or her native language at home. Students are deemed to be eligible if they have been in Australia for less than 6 months (18 months for Prep-aged students), are in need of an intensive English program, and are permanent residents of Australia. Some categories of temporary residents are also able to access this support.

Usually, attendance at an English language school or centre is not possible from Mornington so students are able to work one on one with our ESL teacher. Individual student needs will be taken into account. As ESL students will spend most of their time in their classroom, their classroom teacher works closely with the ESL teacher to ensure their needs are being met. We recognise that students who are learning English as an additional language in P-6 learn English more readily through interaction with their peers. Therefore, we include English language learners in the regular classroom activities as often as possible. When first arriving at our school, some students are eligible for 40 hours of individual English learning time. This time is broken up over many sessions so that the student remains in contact with the classroom program and their peers.

As studies show, it is important that children continue to preserve and deepen their understanding of their mother tongue both for the development of higher order cognitive skills and for the transmission of cultural identity. To this end, we are becoming pro-active in suggesting ways in which students might further expand their own language. We can offer advice and information (where available) on resources that can help families maintain their linguistic and cultural background. We also access The Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERIC)

on a regular basis. Through this service, staff are able to request books to either support their inquiry or individual students with particular language needs.

Additional language

The acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international mindedness. French is offered at Mornington PS in addition to the language of instruction. Students from Prep to year 6 participate in a weekly 60 minute lesson with a French 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 cultural awareness. The French program is further supported through a collection of books housed in the library.

Mother tongue support

Mornington Primary School encourages parents and students to continue to speak in their mother tongue. This strengthens the child's language development. We celebrate our differences and encourage students to be proud of their culture. We aim to gradually build up a collection of books in student mother tongues. Families are currently encouraged to contribute to this library collection through donations of books if/when they go on holidays to non-English speaking countries. We are also able to access books in a variety of languages from the Language and Multicultural Education Resource Centre when required.

Language assessment

Language assessment is the ongoing process of gathering, analysing and reflecting on evidence to make informed and consistent judgements to improve future student learning. At Mornington Primary School we acknowledge the value of three types of language assessment – assessment “for”, “of” and “as” learning.

Assessment is the starting point for planning and informs teaching to identify and differentiate the needs of every student. Effective teachers scaffold students' learning through a sequence of purposeful, planned and explicit speaking, listening, viewing, reading and writing procedures. Knowledge and concepts of the discipline are taught through the explicit instruction of vocabulary, language features and genres.

A variety of tools such are utilised in order to chart the progress of each student over time. Online Early Literacy Assessment and Sound/Letter identification assessments are administered when children enter the school in STAR and Prep. This assessment allows teachers to identify a child's individual point of need. Evaluation is then ongoing, through use of such tools as running records, checklists, anecdotal notes, performance assessments, rubrics, reports and portfolios/learning journals.

See Mornington PS Assessment Schedule and Assessment Policy for further details.

Admission procedures

Students entering our school have no specific language requirements. All children entering our school in Prep must turn at least 5 by the 30th April in the year of entry. Children who meet ESL criteria are able to access that program.

Resources

Making the PYP Happen

PYP Language Scope and Sequence

Key Characteristics of Effective Literacy Teaching (DEECD 2009)

Language Policies from the following schools were referred to;

- McKinnon PS
- Wesley College
- Zurich International School
- Hills International College
- Greengates School
- Nanjing International School
- Eton House Language Policy