

# Kingsville Primary School Language Policy

## Philosophy

At Kingsville Primary School we believe that language forms the basis of all learning and is integral to the complete development of the student: physical, social, emotional, cultural and academic. Language allows the individual to think about, question, respond to, reflect upon, and make sense of the world. It is through language that we make connections and communicate with our fellow human beings. Language is therefore taught not only through literacy but also across all curriculum areas. We believe that all teachers are language instructors. Kingsville provides an authentic, stimulating learning environment which promotes the learning **of** language, **about** language, and **through** language.

At Kingsville Primary School we endeavour to develop internationally minded students who value diversity and are able to bring about positive change in the world. We strive for our children to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. This allows our students to recognise their place and role in looking after our planet.

At Kingsville primary school we believe that we are a community of lifelong learners: the students, staff and parents. We also recognise that each student has the ability to think, learn, develop social skills and values and acquire knowledge. We value the uniqueness of each student and the contribution that they as individuals and as family members can make to the evolving nature of school life. We embrace the richness of the cultural diversity within our school community.

At Kingsville Primary School we believe that recognising and supporting our student's mother tongue languages and cultures is crucial to their development. Language comes from the experience, needs and interests of the students. We have made a commitment to our students and parents to provide a learning community that promotes and supports language diversity and is culturally inclusive. We promote the use of mother tongue both at home and whenever possible in the school environment amongst peers and adults. This assists students to maintain their cultural identity and emotional stability and confidence.

## Language Policy

English is the foundation of our language program. Italian is the additional language and culture in which students are immersed. The use of mother tongue languages both at home and in the school environment are encouraged and supported. By identifying our language populations we are able to inform our teachers and staff so that we can strengthen our learning community and integrate languages into instruction. The richness of authentic language is crucial to full cognitive development and the maintenance of the individual's cultural identity.

Our language program is based on the inquiry model, which begins from the students' previous needs, experience and interests. Teachers create a print rich, literature-based environment using best practice strategies. We model ourselves as inquirers and learners for all students. Teaching situations

are structured to support the student in their use of oral, written and visual language. Students viewing and presenting skills are linked to all three areas. We scaffold the students learning of and through language using supportive body language and gestures; language accompanying actions; building on to what other students say and guided questioning. Through our guided questioning we assist the students to develop their own learning path. Structured, purposeful inquiry allows students to move along a language developmental continuum, which is fluid.

The broad driving idea behind the teaching and learning of language at the school is based around the six transdisciplinary themes of who we are, where we are in place and time, how we express ourselves, how the world works, how we organise ourselves and sharing the planet. We strive to develop the students' understanding of their global world by asking the 'big questions'. Thus, we teach a concept driven curriculum. Skills are important; knowledge can be found anywhere, having understood the broad ideas students are able to transfer a concept from one situation to a new one.

We believe that just as language is crucial to learning so are the attitudes that we develop in our students. The learner profile attitudes of appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect and tolerance are embedded in our teaching and learning. Our planning, teaching and assessing in language are informed by the essential elements of knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action.

## **Implementation**

As a Victorian state school, the strength of our language learning consists of these key features: a daily two hour literacy block, with one hour of reading and one hour of writing. Within a framework of whole class teaching and small structured groups, students are engaged in both reading and writing experiences where they can develop their skills and reflect on their learning.

Our language practices include:

- explicit instruction on reading for meaning, fluency and accuracy
- explicit teaching of the concepts of print and phonemic awareness.
- Explicit teaching of reading strategies-predicting, using prior knowledge(connections), questioning, thinking aloud, visualising, summarising, using text structures and features.
- modelling of strategies in reading and writing
- independent reading of 'just right' books
- assessing by the student and the teacher through conferences and reflection, writing sample analysis, miscue analysis, portfolios
- grouping according to students' needs
- collaboratively selecting appropriate texts
- reading a variety of genres
- writing as a process exploring different text types and their appropriate use
- developing a range of independent spelling strategies
- nurturing an appreciation of the richness of literature- discuss, analyse, compare and contrast
- developing computer literacy – to be used as a learning tool, communication tool and research tool
- awareness of the relevance that language concepts have in all learning
- accessing information from multiple sources

## **Mother tongue**

The current demographics at Kingsville cover such a diverse group of languages that the teaching of any one mother tongue language is not justified. For the majority of our students English is in fact their mother tongue. For a significant few however, (and these numbers are increasing), English is a new language and we do provide other support programs.

From the beginning stage of enrolment strong liaisons are developed between the school staff and new families. Wherever possible the parents and students of the school community are welcomed and incorporated into learning programs. For example, in the initial stages of inquiry when frontloading takes place parents and students are invited to bring along relevant artefacts or to share their experiences, knowledge and expertise.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to assist in the classroom with the language program. To facilitate this for our families from non-English speaking backgrounds we make home visits to establish strong partnerships between the home and school. This also allows parents of a different cultural background to gain knowledge about our practices of learning and teaching. Teachers and other staff assist parents who may have difficulty interpreting newsletters and other literature which is sent home from school.

Cultural events such as global coffee afternoons take place regularly to further develop community inclusiveness and understanding. At the student led conferences the students are encouraged to speak in mother tongue to facilitate understanding for their parents.

## **English as a Second Language**

Most ESL learning takes place in the students' classroom. At other times a literacy support program offers specific language based activities for those newly arrived children making a transition from language schools such as the Western English Language School into Kingsville Primary School. These are intensive, small group based structured activities which accommodate the particular needs specific students. For example, the strengthening of oral language skills and vocabulary development, language comprehension, and linguistic structure.

## **Languages other than English**

Our students Prep-6 receive language instruction in Italian once per week for one hour with a specialist teacher. Learning another language helps them to become balanced bilinguals and for some, knowledgeable in two or more languages. It facilitates an international understanding, respect for and identification with other cultures; an enhancement of the student's world perspective.

The Italian program extends the students knowledge of another language so that they are able to effectively speak, listen, read and write in Italian. This enhances their enjoyment and appreciation of

the wider world. Through song, dance, chants, drama and cooking the students are immersed in the richness of the Italian culture and both the multi-cultural and multi-lingual nature of Australia.

The students are immersed both in the Italian language and culture. The students have the opportunity to experience both incursions and excursions, which expose them to an authentic Italian way of life. An annual Italian Day offers exciting and varied experiences. The Italian program gives momentum to the development of the attitude of tolerance and assists the children in accepting one another as different but equally valued citizens.

## **Resources**

Over many years Kingsville Primary School has developed and extended a broad library collection. This incorporates student and teacher resources. There are multilingual books and media that are accessible to all students and staff. In addition to our school library the staff has access to guided reading collections for classroom teaching. An increasing number of these sets are culturally inclusive.

Books in mother tongue languages have been purchased and others are borrowed from LMERC- Language and Multi-Cultural Education Resources Centre. Students are encouraged to read this material both in class and as take home reading. These books have also become valuable resources for parents of non-English speaking background. This strengthens their link and sense of belonging in our school community.

## **Professional Development**

Kingsville Primary school staff regularly attends PYP professional development that supports the language arts. Our onsite Literacy Coach provides in house instruction and support for the teachers. After Professional Development sessions, the Coach has the opportunity to share and also model the good practice explored in the regional workshops. The literacy coordinator supports the coach in professional development and has the responsibility of maintaining and extending the literacy collection.

Individual teachers also attend self-directed professional development related to language instruction or good practice. Several staff have completed the 'Teaching ESL students in the mainstream classrooms' teacher development course. Others have attended Regional Literacy Forums. Teachers collaborate and plan in their year level teams and frequently visit colleagues' classrooms to further develop their common understandings about the teaching of language.

## **Assessment**

Language will be assessed based on our Assessment Policy.