

POLICY TITLE: Language Policy

PUBLISHED: July 2017

1. School Context

Opened in 1960, Red Hill caters to a diverse student clientele in the inner south of Canberra, drawing families from diplomatic, government, defence force, university and other backgrounds. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Red Hill provides an inclusive, international education for students in preschool to year 6.

The Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework are delivered through the five essential elements of the IB's Primary Years Programme (PYP). This inquiry-based philosophy is underpinned by the belief that thinking and understandings are best built when children are curious, engaged and responsible for their own learning.

2. Beliefs that support and underpin our Language Policy

We believe that language permeates the world in which we live and is therefore fundamental to all learning. It is the major connecting element across the Programme. In a PYP school, the focus is not only on language for its own sake. Its application across the subject areas, and throughout the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry, underpins successful social interaction and relationships.

- 2.1** As an International Baccalaureate (IB) world school we aim to create a positive inquiry based learning culture that encompasses all aspects of teaching and learning, meets the needs of all learners and is driven by evidence based practice.
- 2.2** To prepare students for the increasingly complex life and work environments they will experience in their future, we need to incorporate the fundamental skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. English is the language of instruction and is taught through a balanced approach that covers all components of English. We provide an inclusive environment that values students' cultural backgrounds, mother tongue languages and offers opportunities to learn French and other additional languages.

3. Language Overview

The teaching of language is embedded into the transdisciplinary Programme of Inquiry. This provides students with authentic learning experiences for the acquisition of language. Teachers develop language programmes collaboratively in year levels and align Australian Curriculum requirements with a focus on oral, visual and written language. Teaching and learning programs balance and integrate the three strands of Language, Literature and Literacy.

Red Hill School's Language Policy supports the International Baccalaureate's view that the development of language is fundamental in the need to communicate; it supports and enhances our thinking and understanding.

4. English

Following Halliday's model of 'learn language, learn about language and learn through language' allows us to build on concepts, skills and processes developed in earlier years. The individual literacy learning needs of students are catered for through differentiation.

A variety of strategies, resources and support mechanisms are used to scaffold student success and allow every student to achieve. A love of literature and language is fostered through the use of engaging and rich text and the six areas of reading needed to successfully program and teach literacy; oral language, phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. These six areas are focussed on building skills, knowledge and understandings.

5. Additional Language Provision

Language education enriches learners intellectually, linguistically and culturally, enabling them to communicate in multiple ways. It strengthens the understanding of one's own culture and identity, and helps the learner to understand global commonality and difference. Learning another language builds neural pathways, increasing cognitive ability and lateral thinking. It prepares learners for greater immersion in life.

5.1 Additional Language Provision for English as an Additional Language/ Dialect (EAL/D)

The IB is committed to increasing intercultural understanding and is equally committed to providing an education that is accessible to children from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

EAL/D teachers work with individuals and groups of students using targeted and highly supported teaching in collaboration with classroom teachers. This is designed to best assist students to access the oral, written and visual language of the transdisciplinary program of inquiry at their year level. Specific instruction is provided in vocabulary, grammar and spelling to support EAL/D students as they develop competence as English language learners.

EAL/D teachers formally moderate student's progress twice throughout the academic year to assess eligibility of EAL/D funding; this process allows the EAL/D team to ascertain necessary levels of intervention, therefore ensuring equitable allocation of support.

5.2 Additional Languages

Specialist teachers of French deliver a specific language and culture study programme for Kindergarten to year 6. Each class engages in one lesson per week. Class teachers are encouraged to reinforce the French language by modelling key vocabulary such as greetings, days of the week and incorporating French language signs around the classroom and school. The specialist teachers of French report on student achievement and progress in learning each semester in a student report and portfolio work samples. Students in year 6 are offered additional opportunities to learn Italian, Spanish and Japanese.

Mother Tongue

The variety of languages that students bring to a PYP school may be complex and diverse; however, the influence of mother tongue development is significant for all learners. It is acknowledged that the continued use of mother tongue language is crucial for cognitive growth and in maintaining cultural identity. For a child to be successful in learning another language they must have a strong mother tongue. We are committed to the continued development of a child's first language by allowing, promoting and facilitating an ongoing exposure to a variety of languages through the ['ACT Community Language Schools Association'](#), recognition of cultural events and guest speakers.

Related documents/resources

Making the PYP Happen – A curriculum framework for international primary education (2005-2017)

IB Guidelines for developing a school language policy (2005-2017)

PYP Language scope and sequence (2005-2017)

The Primary Years Programme – A basis for practice (2005-2017)

English and a Second Language or Dialect Teacher Resource Australian English Curriculum English and Languages: French (Version 8.3)

Australian English Curriculum English and Languages: Cross Curriculum Priorities (Version 8.3)

Halliday, M.A.K. (2004). Three Aspects of Children's Language Development: Learning Language, Learning through Language, Learning about Language.

[https://www.education.act.gov.au/school_education/enrolling_in_an_act_public_school/languages_in_act_schools/languages_\(version_8.3\)](https://www.education.act.gov.au/school_education/enrolling_in_an_act_public_school/languages_in_act_schools/languages_(version_8.3))

<http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/multicultural/services/community-group-directory/groups/youth/act-community-language-schools-association>