

Language Policy

Approver: Board

Owner: Principal

Last Reviewed By: Board

Next Review Date: June 2019

1. Objectives – Policy statement

- 1.1 Language is fundamental to learning, thinking and communicating in all its forms. Learning best takes place in authentic contexts, and literature plays a special role in enabling this to happen. Each aspect of language is only relevant in relation to the whole.
- 1.2 Proficiency in language fulfils children's potential as life-long learners and promotes intellectual, social and emotional development.
- 1.3 Children have the right for their mother tongue and cultural background to be acknowledged, respected and supported. Language is an integral part of our identity and the most direct expression of culture.
- 1.4 The language that children learn and use helps them to establish their own personal identity, contributes to an understanding of culture and facilitates international-mindedness.
- 1.5 Learning more than one language enriches personal growth and facilitates international understanding.

2. Audience and applicability

This policy applies to all MMS stakeholders. It has implications for all levels of the organisation. It outlines the procedures and methods used to implement language learning across the school.

3. Context

Our mission at Melbourne Montessori School is to:

- provide excellence in Montessori education
- provide an enriched and welcoming learning community that embodies the Montessori principles of respect for self, respect for all others including the development of intercultural understanding; respect for the environment as well as respect for our country's freedoms and democratic principles
- nurture, inspire and support each child's individual development
- foster the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, an inquiring, active mind and personal and social responsibility
- foster children's innate love of learning and to make their introduction to education a joyful and purposeful start to a journey of life-long learning.

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organisation works with schools, governments and international organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

The IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognising our common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. IB Learners strive to be Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers, Balanced and Reflective.

- 3.1 MMS is committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- 3.2 MMS will ensure that the values of the school and the IB's values and aims are reflected in the school's activities and organisation.
- 3.3 MMS is committed to supporting multilingualism as fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.
- 3.4 Linguistic diversity is a fact of life with the very high number of ESL speakers at MMS, our multi-cultural diversity and support of all cultures in the school. The ability to communicate in different languages is a must for individuals, organisations in school and in the workplace alike.
- 3.5 English is the main language of instruction at MMS in all subjects except World Language courses. For those students not proficient in English, the primary aim of language instruction must be to achieve an academic working level in the language.
- 3.6 The school supports mother tongue development in the curriculum as it facilitates cognitive development and deepens understanding and their learning.
- 3.7 All school documentation is produced in English but translates relevant and appropriate documents into other languages as and when identified by the Executive.
- 3.8 The school is committed to provide ongoing professional development for teachers to improve student language acquisition and learning. It is truly transdisciplinary and central to all learning.
- 3.9 At MMS, we believe that every teacher is a language teacher and that oral language is the foundation for effective communication. Language learning must be truly transdisciplinary and therefore central to all learning.

4. Responsibilities and delegations

- 4.1 The Principal, Coordinators and Deputy Heads of MMS are responsible for the effective implementation and management of this policy.
- 4.2 The requirements of the National Montessori Curriculum, Australian Curriculum and International Baccalaureate must be met at the appropriate year levels.

5. Language planning and delivery

- 5.1 As there is no one mother tongue which is spoken by the majority of our families, the main international language taught at MMS is Italian throughout the Junior School and a choice of Italian or Mandarin in the Senior School. For students in Years 11 and 12 we will offer Italian B in the Diploma Programme from 2020.
- 5.2 In the senior school, alternative languages are available to be studied by students with different language backgrounds. We currently offer French and Spanish also which will be available online as ab initio subjects in the IB Diploma Programme. Other languages will be considered on an individual case basis. Students who wish to pursue other languages will be helped to find suitable means to engage in lessons, conversation classes and cultural experiences in the language of their choice.
- 5.3 Languages other than English are supported in different ways, through overseas exchange, camp opportunities, visiting speakers, celebrations of different cultural days, music performances, incursions etc. Through various projects and classroom work, students are able to follow their interests and use international languages.
- 5.4 Teachers and librarians are encouraged to pursue professional development so that international languages are supported in inter-disciplinary units and the purchasing of relevant resources.

- 5.5 Support and extension in all subjects is available at MMS through our Learning Differences Unit. Children are assessed to find whether they need additional ESL support.
6. All children at MMS study English through the physicality of Montessori language grammar materials as well as through literature, drama, poetry, debates and through Creative Expression lessons and across all subject areas. In Years 11/12 they study Language and Literature within the IB Diploma Programme.

All children are encouraged to be engaged, life-long learners and as such they study a wide range of genres. They are encouraged to use higher order thinking skills and metacognition to delve deeply and explore the ideas of people, both Australian and international, across the ages and today.

7. **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements**
- 7.1 The Language teachers are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the operation of this policy within their areas of responsibility (see Assessment Policy.)
8. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their cultural and language differences, can be right.

Linked with the IB publications:

The Diploma Programme: From Principles to Practice
Language Policy document