



# LANGUAGE POLICY

## **RATIONALE:**

At East Bentleigh Primary School we believe that language is the common thread that provides a vehicle for learners to engage with the world and links people with its written, spoken and visual forms.

Language supports and enhances our thinking and understanding. The acquisition of language is a dynamic, life-long and social process that permeates all learning.

East Bentleigh Primary School recognises that all teachers are therefore language teachers.

The school, through its practices and resources, recognises the importance of the language of instruction (English), supporting students' mother tongue and learning in an additional language (French).

The curriculum at East Bentleigh Primary School provides students with the opportunity for learning language, learning through language and learning about language.

We acknowledge the need to differentiate language learning to accommodate the diverse range of language skills and understandings that our students possess. This assists students to feel accepted, confident and willing to take risks.

Our library and classroom resources support language learning at East Bentleigh Primary School. This assists development in English, as well as the various mother tongues and the additional language, French.

## **LANGUAGE PROFILE**

Approximately 18% of our student population has as their first language, a language other than English. There are twenty-one different mother tongues spoken in our school community. The predominant languages are Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, French, Russian, Hebrew and Japanese.

The language of instruction at the school is English and the additional language is French.

## **PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

English is the language of instruction at East Bentleigh Primary School. It is the major connecting element across the curriculum. English is the form of communication for all areas of the curriculum and is considered a priority. The fundamental skills of language are taught explicitly at all year levels.

Language learning is a developmental process and therefore differentiated to meet students' points of need. Where possible, language is taught through the relevant context of the Units of Inquiry and is the basis of a sustained Literacy session.

As language plays a vital role in the construction of meaning, language skills are learnt about and through the units of inquiry. In Years 3 to 6 there is a component of explicit teaching of language skills and wherever possible authentic links to the units of inquiry.

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

### **ORAL LANGUAGE**

Opportunities for learning about and learning through oral language occur in all domains of the curriculum. Oral language allows students to express their thinking and understandings. Formal and informal opportunities are designed for students to understand the purposes of oral communication with different audiences. Assemblies, share and learn, presentations, classroom performances and school year level performances are examples of current practices.

### **VISUAL LANGUAGE**

Language learning incorporates understandings about visual language and the messages that visual images can convey. In the close examination of texts students learn about gaining meaning from illustrations. Students learn about the visual cues that are expressed through facial expressions and body language.

### **WRITTEN LANGUAGE**

Written texts are an essential element of communication. Students learn to read in order to read for learning. The school aims to foster an appreciation of the richness of language and a love of literature is nurtured.

Students learn the hierarchy of skills needed to gain meaning and understanding from the texts they read. The technical skills of reading are taught through various approaches including guided reading, language experience, modelled reading, shared reading, reciprocal reading and literature circles. Each week, students have at least one session where they are involved in a small group detailed analysis of a teacher selected text with the classroom teacher. During these sessions texts are studied with a particular focus and critically analysed. A number of reading schemes are used to assess students' reading development and provide students with appropriate level reading material gathered from a variety of publishers. It is expected that positive reading habits are supported at home through daily reading.

The mechanics of writing are explicitly taught at all year levels. We use VCOP Big Write across the school. Daily opportunities to practise these skills occur through standalone language lessons and the units of inquiry. The skills of spelling, grammar, punctuation and text types are taught through modelled writing, shared writing and independent writing. It is during these lessons students learn that authors adapt their writing according to their purpose and audience.

Planning the structure and content of a written piece is also taught and applied. Wherever possible, these are taught and practised using meaningful contexts. Editing is an important

part of the writing process and is an opportunity to transfer the skills taught in preparation for publishing.

Handwriting skills are modelled by the teacher and reinforced through the use of THRASS. Support for language learning Students in Year 1, 2 and 3 who are yet to master the age appropriate skills of reading and writing are provided with the opportunity to participate in the Literacy Support program. These intervention programs are undertaken by with a specially trained teacher.

### **MOTHER TONGUES**

Consistent with current research, East Bentleigh Primary School encourages parents and students to continue to speak in their mother tongue. This has been proven to enrich a child's language development and maintain their cultural identity. We celebrate our differences and encourage students to be proud of their culture.

Our students are encouraged to be open-minded so they understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories.

### **ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (FRENCH)**

Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international mindedness. French is offered at East Bentleigh Primary School in addition to the language of instruction. Students from Foundation to Year 6 participate in a weekly 50 minute lesson with a French Teacher

Every year a French Cultural Day is organised where we experience French traditions and uniqueness.

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 cross-cultural awareness.

### **RENEWAL AND APPROVAL:**

This policy will be reviewed yearly as the school's demographics become available.

***This was ratified by School Council August 2019***