



Hughes Primary School

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Language Policy

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Language Learning Philosophy

We believe reading and writing “float on a sea of talk” (Britton 1983)

Hughes Primary School’s Language Policy supports the International Baccalaureate’s view that the development of language is fundamental in the need to communicate; it supports our thinking and understanding. Language plays a vital role in the construction of meaning. It empowers the learner and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking. (PYP language Scope and Sequence, pg 1.) At Hughes Primary School all teachers are responsible for language learning. They design and deliver a balanced program consisting of authentic and meaningful learning experiences in reading, writing, speaking, listening and visual literacy. Inclusivity is paramount to successful language learning and as the site for the Southside Introductory English Centre and Learning Support Unit, we provide a differentiated language learning program of both explicit and inquiry based tasks that meet cultural and linguistic needs. In the PYP, it is both recognised and appreciated that students come into the programme from various backgrounds and with a wealth of experience (Making the PYP Happen, pg 3). Therefore, the IB Learner Profile is integral to teaching and learning language in the PYP because it represents the qualities of effective learners and internationally minded students. We aim to develop students who are communicators where they express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. The Learner Profile, together with the essential elements of the program, informs planning, teaching and assessing in language.

Language Profile

Hughes Primary School is an Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government school. Hughes Primary is culturally and linguistically diverse and provides education for approximately 550 students from 40 different nations at any one time. English is the language of instruction and Japanese is formally taught for students 7 years and older. Hughes Primary School also includes the Southside Introductory English Centre (IEC) for children from local primary schools for whom English is a new language. Mother tongue language learning is valued and supported throughout the school. A preschool campus is located across the road with 44 students enrolled at any one time. Hughes Primary School also provides a Learning Support Unit for students who require significant adaptations to the curriculum and mainstream integration for a number of children with learning disabilities. Students who require modification of the curriculum have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) where a language development goal may be included.

Language Teaching and Learning

Hughes Primary School uses the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme as an organiser for the Australian Curriculum. Teachers develop language programs collaboratively in year levels and align the Australian Curriculum requirements with a focus on written, visual and oral language. We provide literacy rich environments that help to develop students’ language through explicit teaching, inquiry learning and collaboration. We teach language and literacy skills in context through a transdisciplinary approach using a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, through standalone units or linked to the current Unit of Inquiry. We believe that choice, voice and agency is a motivator for language learning and we encourage students to ask questions, inquire and use critical and creative thinking skills. Students reflect upon and discuss learning experiences. Teachers and students are supported to implement a consistent approach to the delivery of language learning through the Literacy and PYP Coordinators. Coaching and mentoring of staff and ongoing professional development are key aspects of these roles. The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model is embedded in the school to support students to improve literacy outcomes.

Learning Support and Extension

As an ACT government school we believe in making reasonable adjustments for all students who need them, regardless of whether the child or young person has a diagnosed disability. Adjustments may be made in the following areas: planning; teaching and learning; curriculum; assessment; reporting; extracurricular activities; environment and infrastructure; and resources. Teachers at Hughes Primary School are responsive to the needs of their students, with differentiation, goal development, collaboration and student need at the forefront of teaching and learning. Through our PLC Model, teachers identify areas for development and then use data, explicit instruction, strategies and reflection to form individual group goals. Student progress is monitored by the teacher, school executive and by the Student Resource team (SRT) consisting of the Disability Education Contact Officer (DECO) and the school Psychologist. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are collaboratively developed with families that focus on student needs. Identified students are extended in Units of Inquiry and single subjects through targeted knowledge development, PYP Skills, Approaches to Learning and the Learner Profile. A student's language profile and individual needs are considered when making adjustments to the curriculum and pedagogy delivery.

Language Needs of the Community

LOTE (Languages other than English)

The Australian Curriculum: Languages is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. At Hughes Primary, a specialist teacher of Japanese delivers a transdisciplinary and conceptual language and cultural learning program for students in years 2 to year 6. Explicit language teaching emphasises the importance of Japanese in developing international-mindedness and intercultural understanding. Students are encouraged to actively participate in language-rich experiences, connecting language skills with cultural understanding through interactive and purposeful Japanese lessons. The program supports both the acquisition of Japanese as an additional language and the maintenance of Japanese for native speakers with differentiated experiences that allow all students the meaningful opportunity to achieve their potential in Japanese. The Specialist Japanese teacher reports on student achievement and progress to parents, annually in a student report and portfolio work samples.

There are a variety of opportunities to experience Japanese culture and reinforce students' language learning across the whole school. This includes our annual Japanese Fun Day, a whole day event to celebrate the language and culture taught at school through a variety of traditional and modern Japanese activities, a Language linked program with Alfred Deakin High School, Australian Capital Territory Speech contest, Australian Capital Territory Calligraphy contest, Japanese colouring contest and lunchtime Origami club.

Introductory English Centre (IEC)

The ACT Southside Primary Introductory English Centre (IEC) is co-located at Hughes Primary School. The IEC provides a safe and inviting place to introduce school life in Australia to students with little or no English. Students attend full-time for a determined period, prior to transferring to a mainstream school. The main goal of the IEC is to teach children to speak English, therefore the explicit instruction of English is paramount to the centre. Teachers use a variety of strategies and teaching methods to engage students in language learning including the use of visuals, scaffolds, songs, body language, games and real life experiences. All families participate in an enrolment interview prior to starting, discussing Mother Tongue language, assessments from the home school, and needs of the student. A thorough assessment process is conducted prior to graduating from the IEC. To support communication between home and school, an online portfolio, Seesaw, is used by each teacher across all classrooms. Messages can be translated into different languages to support parent and student understanding. Communication between school and home is simplified for IEC families and teachers meet regularly with parents to support language development.

EAL/D

We value the diversity of student languages, cultures and backgrounds and acknowledge the needs that this diversity may bring. We aim to promote inclusivity and intercultural understanding in responsive, culturally aware and internationally minded learning environments. Class teachers work with the EAL/D teacher to support and encourage both student's mother tongue and their English language development by planning and developing targeted teaching and learning experiences. English language proficiency is guided by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) EAL/D Learning Progression Framework and Observation Guides to ascertain language phases and report EAL/D learner's English language proficiency. The Guides are used to monitor language phase progress, and guide teaching and learning needs. The EAL/D coordinator is available to support teachers to address any learning needs.

Mother Tongue

Research shows that education in the mother tongue is a key factor for inclusion and quality learning, improving learning outcomes and academic performance. Multilingual education based on the mother tongue empowers all learners to fully take part in society. It fosters mutual understanding and respect for one another and helps preserve the wealth of cultural and traditional heritage that is embedded in every language around the world. At Hughes Primary, Mother Tongue is fostered through Units of Inquiry. Mother tongue awareness provides students with the opportunity to engage with language and culture of various cultural groups within our school. We expose students to a variety of perspectives and build his/her worldview as a global citizen. We believe that language learning is a whole school responsibility and in addition to teachers explicitly planning for students to engage in Mother Tongue, we continue to build our resources, physical and human. This includes the introduction of Mother Tongue clubs at lunch time, a dedicated Mother tongue section of books in the library, valuing Mother Tongue languages and cultures through celebrations, advertising community cultural events to the school community.

Library as a resource

The Hughes Primary School Library is dedicated to providing and promoting intellectual and physical access to an extensive range of print and electronic resources, tools and technologies which meet the educational needs of all members of our staff, student body and wider community. The library aims to enrich and enhance language and literacy in the school, empowering students to become independent lifelong learners. The library is a primary resource for students, teachers and parents and is accessible to support language development. The library holds several collections, which meet the diverse needs of the school community and is continuously refreshed and maintained. Both the digital and physical resources of the library support teacher development of Units of Inquiry, ensuring all students are using the same skills successfully to find, evaluate and use information.