



LANGUAGE POLICY

RATIONALE

The Language Policy of Sacred Heart College is a whole-school document. At Sacred Heart College, we aim to develop internationally minded people who recognise their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet and aim to take action to help create a better and more peaceful world. By becoming more aware of the impact and power of language, we can make more conscious, insightful and socially responsible choices about how we express ourselves, how we interpret others and the major issues that confront our world today.

At Sacred Heart College, we believe that we are all teachers of Language and that “through language we have access to our own and others’ culture” (Helen Drennen - IBCA). An education in the Mercy tradition invites us to cultivate certain values in order to develop fully our own God given talents. This policy reflects the Mercy value of RESPECT - respect for culture and language of others. Our Mercy heritage means we provide an education that strives to promote Right Relationships and equip students to be participants and agents of change to transform the world and create a better future. Hence, the purpose for including a second language as part of the core curriculum at SHC, and the recognition and promotion of mother tongue languages in the school, is to make our philosophy a reality.

Along with the other subjects we teach, the explicit value attached to instruction in, and speaking of, a second language, creates a curriculum, which goes beyond tolerance to understanding and empathy, to true international mindedness. It is through this curriculum that teachers can work towards the goal of pedagogy for social transformation.

DEFINITIONS

Language A: The language of instruction. At SHC this is English

Language B: The second language other than English being learned by the student. At SHC these are Italian, French and Japanese.

EAL: English as a second language.

Mother Tongue: The first language of the student, the language used predominantly at home.

POLICY STATEMENT

“Education either functions as an instrument of conformity and integration of the younger generation into the present system or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Paulo Freire - Pedagogy of the Oppressed).

At Sacred Heart, our pedagogy supports social transformation. The Curriculum Philosophy Statement sets our context within Catholic Education, which today calls us to act as global citizens, to commit to our neighbour and act in the interest of those who do not share our prosperity or security. Our curriculum, the IB MYP, requires us to ‘share our humanity’ and challenges us to educate students to create a better world.

IB Learner Profile

Sacred Heart College aims that students will develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to be:

- **Inquirers:** They inquire into language use and language structures. They use language to acquire information and to make sense of and critique the world around them. They develop a metalanguage for discussing their own and others' language.
- **Thinkers:** They are able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly, in both oral and in written forms.
- **Communicators:** They are competent users of oral and written language forms in a variety of situations. They listen attentively and pay attention to detail. They speak confidently and clearly. They read fluently with good comprehension. They write clearly, concisely, accurately in a style appropriate for the purpose.
- **Risk takers:** They are willing to attempt to read, write or speak in situations where they may not feel totally confident. They are willing to read broadly across genres. They use language as a tool to defend their beliefs and work to develop language skills to articulately express a position.
- **Knowledgeable:** They have acquired the metalanguage, vocabulary and understanding to discuss language structures, text forms and literary styles.
- **Principled:** They are aware that language is powerful and that it can have a profound effect and it must therefore be used responsibly, with integrity, honesty and respect.
- **Caring:** They show care in their use of language and are aware of how the use of language can affect others. They use language to convey feelings on significant issues and to encourage others to action.
- **Open minded:** They respect differences and similarities between languages, dialects and personal communication styles. They understand that language can be used as an expression of bias.
- **Balanced:** They can express themselves orally as well as in writing and find a balance between listening and speaking in communicating with others. They read and view a variety of written material and are able to write for different purposes and audiences.
- **Reflective:** They reflect on their language development and consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

Language as a Mark of Respect and Inclusion

Sacred Heart College is mindful of the power of language and words, and acknowledges that what individuals say, and how individuals say things directly affects people's perceptions of our intentions, goals and values. As an IB World School, we therefore encourage all Sacred Heart College community members to develop positive means of communication that foster a sense of community. Students and teachers are encouraged when in a group to always use a language, which is inclusive of and respectful towards all members of the group.

1. Language of Instruction

As the language of instruction, English is taught as a Language A to all students in Years 7-10. These courses follow the aims and objectives of MYP Language A. Sacred Heart College has a preference for Australian Standard English. Students and staff are expected to use this one variety of English consistently within each document they produce.

The rationale of the English program is as follows:

- It is essential that students develop language and communication skills in order to be successful participants in modern Australian society and the ever developing, complex global world.
- In English Language A, texts and language provide the means of developing knowledge, understanding, skills in interpretation, reflection and critical analysis
- Students learn to appreciate a variety of texts that are spoken, viewed and written.
- The study of English involves students in reading, viewing, listening to, writing, creating, comparing, researching and talking about a range of text types.

- English teachers encourage students to explore the meaning of texts and how meaning is conveyed. Emphasis is placed on the development of critical thinking and developing an understanding of how language varies in terms of purpose and audience.
- Students learn to control language by applying their understanding of the grammatical structures of Standard Australian English, by learning to spell accurately and use punctuation effectively.

2. EAL Program

Sacred Heart College can provide English as Second Language (EAL) assistance to support students whose English skills limit full access to mainstream instruction. Applicants to the school may be considered for EAL assistance and support program. An applicant can be referred for EAL support if English is not the preferred language in the home.

3. Mother Tongue

Sacred Heart College directly supports students whose mother tongue language is English through structured and defined programs at each of the year levels of the MYP IB. For students whose mother tongue language is other than English, the College recognizes, supports and acknowledges the many benefits of promoting developing language and literacy skills in mother tongue languages.

The College does this by:

- Promoting Intercultural awareness and understanding of mother tongues through overt teaching across disciplines.
- Providing balanced and broad curriculum programs with global appeal.
- Highlighting the importance of mother tongue languages through school festival days and international celebrations such as International Literacy Week/Day.
- Teaching and including subtitled films as part of the set curriculum.
- Providing information to students and parents on courses and programs on mother-tongue languages available in the Geelong community.
- Developing and expanding Library resources available to students such as novels, films, audiotapes and magazines in a variety of mother tongues.
- Liaising and providing counselling services and advice to families who wish to further support the development of the mother tongue outside school hours of instruction.

Language B

To provide for the development of language skills in all students, regardless of prior experience. Sacred Heart College provides opportunities for students across the school to undertake Language B studies in Japanese, Italian and French. Classes focus on the major language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing, and all students are provided with appropriate opportunities to improve their abilities in each area.

Assessment

Assessment at Sacred Heart College is part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers assess work formatively (assessment 'for' and 'as' learning) and summatively (assessment 'of' learning). Formative assessment builds the ability and understanding of the student to achieve a good outcome on the summative tasks. It is imperative that students are shown what a good outcome looks like and thus, teachers at SHC provide and deconstruct models that mirror the assessment task. Students are always given an accompanying task sheet, with every summative task, which sets out unambiguously, the conditions, the mode, full details of the task and all other relevant information.


Students have full access to the criteria on which their work is to be assessed. Assessment takes a range of forms and is conducted under a range of conditions. Parents are kept informed of students' progress through informal means - telephone calls and diary notes, as well as formal continuous on-line reporting. Parent/Teacher/Student conferences take place twice per year.

ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

Enrolment and transition processes.
Referral for EAL support.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

SHC Enrolment forms
SHC Transition forms
MYP Assessment and Reporting Handbook

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