



Language Policy

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Purpose

Mercedes College is committed to increasing international mindedness and providing opportunities for students to engage as global citizens and develop an awareness and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

This Policy supports the implementation of the Policy of Languages and Culture (2021) from the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) and is one of 5 policies mandated by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO).

Guiding Principles

Mercedes College Mission

As a Catholic school in the Mercy tradition and inspired by the Gospels, we work in partnership with families enabling students to flourish in all aspects of their humanity and thus contribute to a better and more peaceful world.

Mercedes College Vision

To be a sustainable, internationally minded world-class school, providing a holistic educational experience for our students within a unique culture and community where we honour traditions and live the Mercy Keys.

Mercedes College Values

We live by the Mercy Keys: Compassion, Loyalty, Justice, Integrity, Responsibility and Mutual Respect across our daily interactions and strategic decisions

IB Mission

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 programs of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Language Philosophy

Mercedes College is an innovative learning community committed to excellence in Catholic and international education.

Mercedes College is a 'community for the world'. Our identity is consciously shaped within the Catholic Church, and through participation in the international education community.

At Mercedes College language is fundamental to learning and integrates many aspects of the IBO Learner Profile. In particular, language learners are inquirers, thinkers, communicators, open-minded, caring and balanced. Language learning is "crucial for cognitive growth and the construction of knowledge" (IB, 2008a, p4). The inquiry approach encourages students to construct language meaning using various strategies and to make cultural discoveries. As such, "all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication" (IBO, 2008b, p1).

Language permeates the whole curriculum, building on students' prior knowledge and understanding. Mercedes College aims particularly to educate its students to understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication.

Our students have the opportunity to learn language, learn about language and learn through language irrespective of their mother tongue which reflects the philosophy and objectives of the IBO and in keeping with Australian Government Language initiatives.

The primary aim of learning an additional language at Mercedes College is to encourage students to gain competence in a modern language other than their mother tongue, with the long-term goal of balanced bilingualism. The IB acknowledges that learning additional languages greatly contributes to the holistic development of students by encouraging a respect for and understanding of other languages and cultures, and providing a skills base to facilitate further language learning. Proficiency in an additional language gives students access to a broader range of experiences and perspectives, and is believed to raise achievement in other subject areas, as well as giving the student the enjoyment of being able to communicate in a language other than their mother tongue. As a result they are able to contribute positively as citizens in the culturally diverse nation in which they live and also as global citizens.

School Language Profile

Oral communication (listening and speaking), written communication (reading and writing) and visual communication (viewing and presenting) are the 3 strands embedded in the language of instruction, the additional language and mother tongue - the 3 distinct areas of language within our school community.

The language of instruction

The language of instruction is the language in which most of the curriculum is taught. Mercedes College is an English-based centre of learning where the vast majority of students are native speakers of English.



The school's additional languages

The additional language refers to the language the school offers in addition to the language of instruction.

French is the additional language in Reception to Year 12.

Indonesian is an additional language available from Year 7 to Year 12.

Spanish is an additional language introduced at Year 10 and available at Beginner's Level (ab initio) to Year 12.

For English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) students, English is an additional language available from Year 8 to Year 12.

Other additional languages may be available through external agencies and supported by the College.

Mother-tongue support

The mother tongue describes the language most frequently spoken at home, but there may be more than 1 language a child uses comfortably at home. Although only a small proportion of our student body has a first language other than English, we acknowledge that this group provides an opportunity to enhance our global perspective. We recognise that for some of our students mother-tongue is spoken at home and opportunities are provided through curriculum and activities for students to develop and celebrate their cultural diversity.

The College seeks to promote the development of the mother-tongue language of all students in giving students from non-English speaking backgrounds the opportunity to speak to their classes, in acknowledging their external studies, in inviting their parents to talk about their country, for example and, indeed, encouraging them to pursue the study of their language externally if we do not offer it. Stressing the importance of mother tongue enables students to remain in touch with and maintain esteem for the language and culture of their country of origin.

Where students wish to pursue their home language at a formal level, the Subject Pathways Counsellor assists in accessing external courses and arranging enrolment. The School of Languages is an external language school that offers after-hours classes in many languages and, in many cases, for mother tongue maintenance.

Support for students learning in a language other than mother tongue

Individual students who come to Mercedes College from other backgrounds include new arrivals to this country and students wishing to complete final exams in the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) or International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program.

These students must complete the curriculum requirements in English and therefore English language support is provided for them to ensure they have "equal access to the curriculum" (IBO, 2008a, p2).

Students may be enrolled as local students or be part of the International Students Program (ISP).

Support is facilitated through the Learning Enrichment Team and the ISP Academic Advisor.

Students with additional needs

Students with a significant language disorder may be provided with an exemption to undertake the study of an additional language (French) under recommendations from an educational psychologist.

This timetabled time is used under the guidance of the Learning Enrichment Team to identify and facilitate language support in English.

This is reviewed annually to enable students to enter an appropriate pathway for additional language.

Beginners level of French and Indonesian is provided up to Year 9 and Spanish is available in Year 10.

Language Principles

The College places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.

At Mercedes College, language is divided into Studies in Language and Literature (Language A) and Language Acquisition courses (Language B).

A student is required to take at least 2 languages up to and including Year 10.

Language and Literature courses are offered from Reception to Year 12.

English is the main language and literature course with for all students to Year 10. From Year 11, variations in English levels are provided in SACE and the IB Diploma to suit student abilities and interests.

Chinese A is also offered in the IB Diploma (accessible to SACE students) as well as a range of languages provided as School Supported Self-Taught (SSST).

Language Acquisition courses are compulsory to Year 10 and are available for students up to and including Year 12.

At Mercedes College, French is the main additional language introduced at Reception and available to Year 12. Indonesian is introduced in Year 7 and Spanish is introduced in Year 10 for new students arriving at the College with no background in French or Indonesian.

French, Indonesian and Spanish continue to be available for students in Year 11 and 12 as part of senior qualifications in SACE and the IB Diploma Program.

English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) is available in Year 6 to Year 12 for students for whom English Language and Literature is out of reach. Essential English is also available as a SACE alternative in Year 11 and Year 12.

Other additional languages are accessible available during senior years of schooling (Years 10-12) through external providers and facilitated by the college.



Language availability is subject to regular reviews and student demand.

The college utilises the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programs.

All language teachers are responsible for sourcing and purchasing a range of quality texts so that students can explore different genres such as recount, storytelling, explanation and persuasive writing in different languages and at different levels. Students also have access to a variety of dictionaries.

The Carmel Bourke Library and Technology Centre provides texts and resources in different mother tongue languages.

The community is considered a valuable resource to aid language learning. Students undertake field trips to community venues including markets and cinemas where they have an opportunity to gain insight into language and culture in context.

International students can experience a homestay to immerse in the culture and language of Australia.

Throughout the year, students are exposed to numerous celebrations linked to the diverse cultures within our community to promote international mindedness and an appreciation of Australian and other cultures.

All teachers are responsible for language development of students.

Mercedes College focuses on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning by recognising and modelling the role of language in all subjects.

There is an understanding of the productive (speaking and writing) and receptive modes (listening and reading) of communication. Teaching and learning involve using a range of these modes in each lesson to ensure students develop their skills concurrently.

When students are acquiring a language, our teaching is informed by incorporating 4 concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, recognise patterns, develop theories and construct meaning as they investigate language. Teachers enable students to see language as a means of self-expression, exploration of self and others, as context driven, having multiple meanings, and involving all levels of discourse.

Language learning and development, and literacy development, are interrelated and overlap. Students and teachers understand that there are multiple literacies such as reading comprehension, critical reading, visual, digital, research, academic and assessment literacies. ACER Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) for reading comprehension are undertaken annually for students in Years 2 to 10. National Assessment of Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) occurs in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Analysis of student progress in literacy is undertaken annually and used by all staff to identify support and enrichment needs, particularly as indicators of giftedness.

Throughout the school there is an expectation that in order to foster an enjoyment and love of reading, students are to read widely and regularly at home from informative texts to quality literary works. The Carmel Bourke Library and Technology Centre provides a wide range of literary and non-literary texts across learning areas to explore language features and conventions.

Mercedes College promotes the idea that all teachers are teachers of language through professional learning, co-teaching and collegial engagement. Training on using the IB criteria and command terms, creating assessment tasks, developing inquiry statements and questions and writing task specific criteria is provided throughout the school year.

A variety of reading strategies are used by teachers to support deep comprehension of meaning in texts. These include recognising patterns in text, decoding, encoding, making inferences, explicit teaching of terminology, and developing etymological understanding.

The writing process of planning, drafting, editing and finalising is undertaken in all languages. The use of literature, games, role-play and multimedia will support students' understanding of different genres as well as developing their vocabulary, sentence construction, correct use of tense and punctuation.

Using the text as a model, students and teachers analyse the features of different genres before jointly and individually constructing written or presented pieces. During the revision process, students are encouraged to develop their knowledge of grammatical and spelling conventions using teacher and peer feedback and self-correcting. Writing may involve students sharing writing with others, self-editing and publishing for a specific audience.

Students are introduced to different strategies to investigate words and groups of words, including a range of spelling strategies. Students develop a deeper understanding of language in context through collocation and discourse. Teachers encourage students to make connections between words in different languages and use translators for key concepts and terminology.

Collaborative time is provided for exploring language needs and corresponding differentiation strategies.

Teachers work within and across disciplines to:

- Collaborate on vocabulary, concepts and command terms across the curriculum.
- Use a common language about language learning and development.
- Teach the conventions of referencing.

Opportunities for teachers to reflect on data analysis of language development is provided through professional formation sessions in staff meetings and through documents provided on the staff intranet.

Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue.

Differentiation in language lessons is based on best practice according to the standards and practices of the IB and supported by CESA teams.

All teachers respond to students' needs and provide individualised instruction guided by specific learning goals in Personalised Plans for Learning (PPLs) available on the college student management system (SEQTA). Teaching strategies include working in small groups, flexible ability groups, reading ability groups and mixed ability groups as needed. The school uses a variety of resources with different levels of language complexity, as well as alternating levels of questioning and differentiating tasks according to the needs of individual students. Teaching and co-teaching teams are used to create a flexible and differentiated learning opportunities for students. The school uses breakout spaces, classrooms and open spaces in a variety of ways to meet the needs of student groups, which have diverse language needs.

Students' language needs are determined through an initial survey at enrolment and ongoing formative and summative assessments. Teachers differentiate for a range of abilities in a variety of ways.

EALD students are assessed using Learning English Achievement and Proficiency (LEAP) levels which describe the development of language needed across the year levels to access and demonstrate curriculum knowledge, skills and understandings for all learning areas.

Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the program(s).

Using a range of tools and strategies, teachers determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes towards language.

Assessment is in line with the requirements of SACE and IB programs.

Students may complete additional assessment to enable teachers to gain as much information as possible about a student's strengths, interests and development and to monitor progress. As outlined in our Inclusion Policy, Personalised Plans for Learning (PPLs) are developed by Learning Enrichment Team depending on their individual learning needs. This may include modified assessment criteria for the student. These plans are discussed with the student, parents, respective IB program or SACE coordinator and Year Level Leaders.

Language Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

The School Leadership

- Ensures that accurate data is collected through enrolment procedures, interviews and meetings with families, so that statistical information about the school population can be

collated, and so that important factors that may influence students' learning are known.

- Provides teachers with access to information about their students that is relevant to the teaching and learning program.
- Provides opportunities for staff professional development to ensure that there is an awareness in the school community of the implications of second language acquisition for learning and teaching, and so that teachers can access the latest information about EALD methodology and resources.
- Promotes a culture that values diversity and ensures that multicultural perspectives are incorporated into all aspects of school life.
- Encourages home-school partnerships.
- Ensures that policies and learning programs in all learning areas are formulated and implemented with the language learning needs of all students in mind.
- Ensures that all teachers are informed about teaching strategies for making the mainstream curriculum accessible for all students, including EALD students.
- Ensures that curriculum policies require that multicultural perspectives are incorporated in all learning areas.
- Communicates the language pathways and directions to the family and the student, and takes their choices into consideration in the design and implementation of the language programs and classes.

The Languages/EALD Coordinator

- Provides information which helps teachers to plan and implement school programs with multicultural perspectives, and develop cross-cultural understandings with their students.
- Provides resource information for teachers in the areas of second language acquisition, EALD teaching methodology, classroom organisation, and selection of suitable texts and resources for EALD learners.
- Keeps abreast of the latest information in the EALD field, e.g. through professional learning opportunities and shares this with staff as appropriate.
- Provides specialist EALD teaching that increases students' capacity to participate successfully in mainstream classroom activities and to achieve the goals of the mainstream curriculum.
- Assists teachers to plan and implement a program inclusive of EALD needs.
- Assists the classroom teacher in assessing EALD students' competence in English, formulating practical goals and objectives for EALD learners and planning a program that caters for the needs of all EALD learners.
- Organises information and practice sessions for staff.
- Consults with College Psychologist, Director of Learning Enrichment and International Students Program Coordinator

regarding the language development of the students with PLPs.

- Consults with language teachers and language departments in the assessment of language skills and placement into the relevant language classes.
- Works in cooperation with the curriculum coordinators in the design and implementation of the curriculum in order to cater for the needs of language learning.
- Identifies language needs and implements intervention programs pertinent to the need of the student.

Homeroom and Subject teachers

- Consider the language learning needs of all students when planning activities across all areas of the curriculum.
- Support EALD students in learning through the use of English, while they are learning English.
- Use assessment strategies that allow all students to express the understandings they have gained across the curriculum.
- Keep assessment records that indicate the growth of understandings and skills in both English and EALD.
- Informs parents of student progress in EAL as well as in the learning areas other than English.
- Provides opportunities for all students to share the diversity of their experiences.
- Develops classroom activities that relate to and build upon the experiences that students bring to the learning situation.
- Ensures that multicultural perspectives are incorporated in all aspects of the classroom social and learning environments.
- Attends relevant professional learning opportunities to support students' language development.

The Student

- Takes every opportunity to learn and provides feedback on their learning.
- Shows interest in learning and participates.
- Shows respect for teachers and peers.
- Takes ownership of their learning and seeks help when needed.
- Provides feedback and reflection on language learning.
- Attends additional language classes if required by the EALD Coordinator and Admissions Officer during the admission process.
- Shows academic honesty and integrity in the collection of language assessment and observation.
- Has the right to exit language support programs, tutoring or phase requirements when sufficient proficiency has been demonstrated through work, performance and grades.

The Family

- Communicates directly with the learning community regarding their child's language development.
- Complies with the additional costs required for additional support for their child's language support.
- Is informed about their child's language pathways.
- Is involved in choosing modern languages between French, Indonesian and Spanish for their child to pursue in the PYP, MYP, Diploma and SACE.
- Reads and returns forms and notifications from the coordinators and language teachers regarding their child's language learning.

Connections to other Policies and Requirements

Language and Admissions

Language background information is collected during enrolment processes to create a language profile, identify EALD LEAP Levels and guide placement into language classes and learning support.

Language and Inclusion

Mercedes College tries to include a student's home language, language profile and background in the learning process. The college endeavours to support students in developing their home language and celebrate their culture.

All teachers work together with the Learning Enrichment Team in the inclusive design and delivery of the curriculum to make it accessible to EALD students.

Language and Academic Integrity

At Mercedes College, the following practices are considered dishonest with regards to language learning.

- If a student uses any online translation tools or websites to translate a phrase or text, whether it be from their own text in their home language or from any other published source, unless it is approved by the teacher.
- During reading comprehension assessments, if the student translates the original text to their own home language to demonstrate understanding and comprehension in English or the target language.
- If the student receives support from another student, parent, teacher or tutor without the approval of the teacher.
- During the writing assessments in the target languages, if the student writes the text in their own language and claims to express it as their own writing.

Language and Assessment

Assessment of language learning is an on-going process throughout the school year in both formal assessments (formative and summative) and informal situations (learning experiences and inquiry).

All 4 skill areas (reading, writing, listening, speaking), as well as the students' knowledge of grammatical structures and their ability to use these correctly, are assessed regularly at levels



appropriate to the students' language phase and abilities. A range of formative and summative assessment measures are used.

A range of standardized assessment tools are used to identify and track student progress in aspects of language literacy. ACER PAT Reading and NAPLAN Reading, Writing and Conventions of Language provide feedback on student language levels and informs teacher differentiation.

Student language level and ability is acknowledged and incorporated into the planning of assessments. In subjects where writing is not required by the published criteria, teachers strive to provide alternative modes of presentation for students. Additionally, whenever reading, writing, listening or speaking tasks are assigned, expectations are set according to the student's language level.

Policy Review

This policy was reviewed in 2022 in consultation with the Program Coordinators following recommendations from 2017 CIS/IB evaluation.

The next review is proposed for 2025 following feedback from the 2024 CIS/IB Evaluation.

Bibliography

General Regulations: Diploma Programme (2016), [ebook]
Geneva: International Baccalaureate. Available at:
<https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/become-an-ib-school/dp-general-regulations-sept-16-en.pdf>

South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (2021)
Languages and Culture Policy

South Australian Certificate of Education SACE (2021)



Appendix A: Policy Elaborations

Language Pathways Clarifications – to be completed.

Appendix B: IB Standards and Practices for Language

Culture 4: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language. (0301-04)

Culture 4.1: The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (0301-04-0100)

Culture 4.2: The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognises multilingualism as a fact, a right, and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)

Culture 4.3: The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)

Culture 4.4: The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context. (0301-04-0400)

Culture 6: The school implements, communicates, and regularly reviews its IB mandated policies to ensure they are cohesive and reflect IB philosophy. (0301-06)

Culture 6.1: The school implements processes with consideration of the relationship between its IB mandated policies. (0301-06-0100)

Culture 6.2: The school documents its IB-mandated policies and communicates them to the school community. (0301-06-0200)

Culture 6.3: The school considers physical and virtual spaces in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0300)

Culture 6.4: The school articulates a planned integration of human, natural, built, or virtual resources in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0400)

Culture 6.5: The school considers the learner profile in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0500)

Culture 6.6: The school considers international-mindedness in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0600)

Culture 6.7: The pedagogical leadership team uses the school's IB-mandated policies in decision making and curriculum development. (0301-06-070)