



Language Policy

Developed 2014-2015

Reviewed 2017-2018

Philosophy (What We Believe)

We believe language development goes beyond learning language mechanics and is inquirybased learning. Language is an avenue to understand and relate to a global community, while encouraging international mindedness.

Language has defined structures and consists of three main communication skills (oral, written, and visual) which include six sub-strands (listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting).

Language is a way to communicate and it reflects our culture.

Our view of language will be reflected in the school's Programme of Inquiry. Language learning is ongoing across disciplines. Arts Enhancement strategies are in place to support language development through the arts.

The entire school community is responsible for all language developments in English as the language of instruction. We believe that mother tongue language development is crucial for maintaining cultural identity. Supports are in place for those students who have another language as their mother tongue.

We engage the students, and staff, in learning Spanish as a second language. While we understand that language proficiency will not be an outcome, we feel strongly that authentic learning exposure to Spanish and the cultures of Spanish speaking countries will be both a short term and long term benefit. Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international understanding.

We agree that language has many components. Language skills are embedded across the curriculum as students communicate their ideas, thoughts and shared knowledge. Language is composed of listening, speaking, understanding, reading, writing and presenting. We use language purposefully to communicate.



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Practices (What We Do)

We believe children learn best when:

- a. Staff embraces the importance of exposure to all forms of language development (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting).
- b. Allowing students to express themselves through writing, speaking, drawing enables them to extend their knowledge of their own language.
- c. Instruction is differentiated to provide equity for all students on the language development continuum.
- d. The staff recognizes and respects the different ways in which students express themselves, including mother tongue development and second language acquisition.
- e. The school provides an enriching language development environment.
- f. The staff utilizes rich, authentic language sources to promote cultural identity in order to foster global perspectives.
- g. The staff embraces Arts Enhancement practices.
- h. The staff recognizes the diversity of student's development of language and developmental stages.
- i. Teachers acknowledge differences in learning style of students.
- j. Staff provides challenges to students, allowing them opportunities to reach their full potential.
- k. Teachers encourage students to reflect on language and develop language awareness.
- l. Mother tongue languages are points of inquiry, interest, and celebration.
- m. Language is purposeful.
- n. Language Acquisition begins in the home environment. It is expanded through a variety of means at school.
- o. Needs consistent reinforcing.
- p. Language is acquired through many ways through verbal and nonverbal means and through imitation and experimentation.
- q. Mother Tongue languages help form personal and cultural identities and should be respected.
- r. Through language we can gain an appreciation of culture.
- s. Kids who read more have more enriched vocabulary.
- t. Real world connections are essential for effective language development as well as critical thinking skills.
- u. Culture is evident through language. To teach language we must connect with each student's culture and be open minded to all.



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Supports:

The school has several formal and informal support services in place to support language development.

Supports are in place to help students work toward their potential in the area of language. These supports include, but are not limited to:

- Reading intervention groups
- Special Education
 - occupational therapy
 - speech therapy
- ALPS (Advanced Learner Programs)
- ESOL(English as a Second Language)
- Technology programs
- Arts Enhancement

These services assist with areas such as reinforcing curriculum vocabulary, using age-appropriate grammatical structures, comprehension of directions, and answering content-related and personal experience questions verbally and in writing.

We promote the use of appropriate social language skills such as body language, intonation, and basic pragmatic language skills. Students use receptive language skills to follow directions, understand text and internalize vocabulary. Teachers use repetition, paraphrasing, provide visual supports and chunk information into manageable pieces in order to increase comprehension. Students use expressive language skills to explain, connect, reflect and evaluate information. Students are encouraged to use communication skills on a daily basis as they observe, plan and analyze data.

Goals:

Sunset Elementary School students are developing an appreciation of all forms of language through music, literature, various media, and the spoken word in conversations.

We will continue to promote, as well as grow in the areas of:

- Asking questions and accepting information gained through student's inquiry based research.
- Communicating clearly through multiple mediums.
- Gaining a global perspective through authentic exposure to a second language.

Sources

Language Policy Writing webinar PowerPoint and notes

International Baccalaureate, [Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy](#)