



ESF International Kindergarten Wu Kai Sha

Language Policy

PHILOSOPHY

*“Language wraps itself around, in through and between everything the teachers and learners do in the classroom.”
Ritchhart 2002*

At Wu Kai Sha International Kindergarten, we recognise that language is embedded in everything we do, it is the most significant connecting element throughout the school’s curriculum. We believe that language is fundamental to learning, thinking and communicating. Language is integral to the whole of the curriculum as students learn to use language, learn about language and access ideas and strategies through the use of language. We strive to empower our learners through their journey to become internationally minded individuals.

As teachers of language, we are committed to teaching through inquiry and application, adhering to the belief that learning is most effective when it takes place in relevant and authentic situations. Teaching through inquiry promotes accessibility for all children, recognising each child as an individual.

At Wu Kai Sha, we recognise that children use language as a vehicle for inquiry, self-expression and for communicating ideas. Thoughtful, reflective communicators are able to understand, comprehend and appreciate the world around them. It is through the use of language that children develop responsible attitudes and take appropriate action in order to make a difference in the world.

We understand that language is dependent of all relationships; from the staff to the environment, peers, parents, community and the world. Language shapes our thinking and helps each child construct meaning and building a framework for conceptual development. We aim to provide children with the skills for long term language development. We strive to provide an environment which enables students to participate fully in school life and realize their potential as individuals.

We recognise our diversity, with 20 different languages currently being spoken by both students and staff. We are inclusive of all within our school community and endeavour to celebrate this allowing us to further shape cultural identity in our learners.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English is the primary language of instruction at Wu Kai Sha International Kindergarten. Through instruction and activities we encourage the ability to communicate in a variety of modes. We strive to develop language and communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading, viewing, non-verbal communication and presenting, as delivered through the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), and outlined in the IB Language Scope and Sequence document. At Wu Kai Sha, we recognise that many children have English as an additional language and that learning a language is a complex developmental process and have therefore developed and implemented intervention programmes that identify the language learners individual needs and provide additional support for learners where deemed necessary.



CHINESE AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

We believe that the acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and facilitates international understanding and empathy with other cultures. The ability to communicate in more than one language allows students to participate more fully in their community and in the greater global community, and as Mandarin(Chinese) is the host language in China, this is the most suitable additional language for Wu Kai Sha International Kindergarten to offer. In keeping with the educational philosophy throughout the kindergarten, we strive to provide Chinese instruction through inquiry-focused activities relevant to local Chinese cultural events. Thus, students learn the language in a culturally-rich, practical environment through practical and relevant use. Chinese is explicitly taught at Wu Kai Sha Kindergarten; however other languages are implicitly incorporated into children's everyday learning. We take into account socio- cultural circumstances and provide a variety of opportunities for learning more than one language to encourage more holistic learning.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WHO ARE LEARNING IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE

At Wu Kai Sha International Kindergarten, we believe that mother tongue language development is crucial for cognitive development and maintaining cultural identity. However, as English is our primary language of instruction, it is equally crucial for students applying for admission to both our Kindergarten and the ESF schools that our students may attend, to demonstrate English language fluency or the potential to develop English language fluency in order to access the curriculum at its fullest.

During the admissions screening for the kindergarten, students who will need support with English are identified and scaffolding is put in place to support these students in their acquisition of the English language. Depending on the extent of the child's needs, this support may take place within regular class settings or through withdrawing the student from class sessions for more intensive instruction. Parents may also be asked to provide additional language support outside of the Kindergarten.

Strategies used in the scaffolding process may include visual aids, graphic organizers, demonstrations, or small, structured group work. Whilst these scaffolding techniques are used for all children to help develop deeper understanding of class discussions and inquiry, they are used extensively with students developing language abilities. Staff able to speak the child's mother tongue language may also be paired with that child to help the child acclimatise and make connections between the mother tongue language and English.

Within our Kindergarten, we strive to create learning environments where children feel comfortable to take risks and communicate freely. We believe that language is learned at an individual pace and by creating an environment in which children are free to experiment with the language they will develop greater confidence in the language and speed fluency.

Strategies used at Wu Kai Sha to support positive language development:

- On-going moderated language assessment
- Early intervention where necessary - Support for SEN children, Support for EAL children
- Parent communication (Moodle, newsletters, communication books, etc.)
- Parent involvement (Open days, Comment forms, parent helpers.)
- Continual professional development for all staff
- Open minded attitude from staff and parents and students

- Collaborative planning and reflections
- Variety of resources / strategies and practice - Role play areas, Small world play, Creative activities, Construction, Sand and water play, Story props, Mark making/writing opportunities, Song and rhyme
- Problem solving experiences
- Effective use of library facilities and variety of texts
- Visual aids
- Inquiry based learning centres
- Effective use of ICT / multimedia to support
- Relevant and positive vocabulary/model of language continually used and modelled visually and orally.
- Safe and stimulating learning environment
- Opportunities for collaboration
- Reading buddies
- Relevant language to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes.
- Group and whole class learning
- Peer modelling
- Talking strategies - Think, pair, share, talking partners
- Displays
- Continuous opportunities to be reflective
- Encouraging children's independence
- Recognising multilingualism as a resource
- Effective use of bilingual staff in the school
- Exposure to other languages
- To provide the senior leadership team with information that allows them to make judgements about the effectiveness of the kindergarten.

Agreed by all staff March 2012

Review: March 2013