



ROCHEDALE STATE SCHOOL

Language Policy

2026



IB Mission Statement

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 programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Rationale

Rochdale State School (RSS) is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School implementing the Primary Years Programme (PYP). At RSS, we create a challenging and motivating multilingual environment where the host language and language of instruction is English.

The study of English helps to create confident communicators, imaginative thinkers and informed citizens. It is through the study of English that individuals learn to analyse, understand, communicate and build relationships with others and with the world around them. *'The study of English plays a key role in the development of reading and literacy skills which help young people develop the knowledge and skills needed for education, training and the workplace'* (ACARA.2022 English).

We view language as a tool for communication, exploration of personal development, making meaning in the world and shaping individual and cultural identity. We believe that every student has an individual and a cultural set of experiences, skills, and interests, which must be considered in the teaching and learning process. RSS is committed to supporting *'multilingualism as a fundamental part of increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds'* (IBO. 2014).

At RSS, all teachers are language teachers as language transcends curriculum areas. How we know and how we communicate what we know rely on the power of language. Language learning and teaching is transdisciplinary by nature (Albright 2016). Through the IB language programs, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers, listeners and creators. Students use language to draw upon their prior knowledge, experiences and cultural contexts to explore their inquiries. Language is always taught meaningfully and in context. These contexts vary, but often involve the use of real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local area and a wide variety of text types. We advocate the learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with context, to explore and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each individual student knows to help them move forward.

As a school situated in Australia, we are strongly committed to providing students with access to English language learning and utilising the host country and community to promote language and cultural experiences across the curriculum and school community. We aim to develop language competencies and equally important, is the belief that all students should have the opportunity to maintain and develop their mother tongue(s). Through language, learners express their unique perspectives and negotiate their ideas to shape new understandings. This inquiring process is what makes transdisciplinary learning a lived and context-specific experience. For this reason, language is equally important to sense-making as it is to the construction of shared and new knowledge and conceptual understandings. (IBO.2019) We fully support the concept of multilingualism and promote the acquisition of additional languages. This allows students to further reflect upon, explore and understand different cultural perspectives.

Learners of languages in Australia comprise three major groups:

- **second language learners** – ‘are those who are introduced to learning the target language at school as an additional, new language. The first language used before they start school and/or the language they use at home is not the language being learnt’.
- **background language learners** – ‘are those who are introduced to learning the target language at school as an additional, new language. The first language used before they start school and/or the language they use at home is not the language being learnt.’
- **first language learners** – ‘are users of the language being learnt who have undertaken at least primary schooling in the target language. They have had their primary socialisation as well as initial literacy development in that language and use the target language at home. For Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages, first language learners are learners whose primary socialisation is in the language being learnt and who may or may not have yet developed initial literacy’. (ACARA.2022 Languages)

Language is the major connecting element across the curriculum. Therefore, as a PYP school our focus is not only on language for its own sake, but also on its application across the subjects and throughout the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. It facilitates connections with the wider community.

Language Profile

RSS draws from a diverse cultural catchment and provides a rich education to students from over 30 different countries who have 40 different language backgrounds within our community.

English is the predominant language and the language of instruction at RSS. Data is collected on the language, ethnic backgrounds and specific language requirements of all students and their families during enrolment.

The rich representation of cultures within our school fosters the IB core principle of international mindedness and helps to teach our students the importance of understanding and accepting the diverse cultures and traditions the world has to offer. The IB learner profile is also integral to learning and teaching language in the PYP, because it represents the qualities of effective learners and internationally minded students. The learner profile, together with the other elements of the programme—knowledge, concepts, skills and action—informs planning and teaching in language.

English

The Australian Curriculum: English Foundation to Year 10 – Framework Overview

The Australian Curriculum: English is designed to support students' progressive understanding and use of Standard Australian English (SAE) from Foundation to Year 10. It is structured around three interconnected strands that collectively develop students' knowledge, understanding, and skills in listening, reading, viewing, speaking, and writing. These strands provide a comprehensive framework for language learning and align with the principles of the IB PYP, fostering inquiry, communication, and intercultural understanding.

The Three Strands

1. Language

This strand focuses on understanding how the English language works. Students explore the structure and features of English, including its historical evolution and geographical variations. They learn how language enables effective interaction, relationship-building, and the expression of knowledge, attitudes, and opinions. The study of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and text structures at word, sentence, and extended text levels helps students recognise patterns and purposes in language use. This aligns with the IB PYP's emphasis on developing communication skills and understanding the role of language in shaping relationships and perspectives.

2. Literature

The literature strand engages students in exploring texts of personal, cultural, social, and aesthetic significance. These texts include both enduring works of artistic and social value and contemporary texts that reflect current issues and interests. Students learn to appreciate and create literary texts, enriching their understanding of human experiences and the power of language to deepen those experiences. This strand supports the IB PYP's focus on fostering creativity, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness through the study of diverse texts.

3. Literacy

This strand develops students' ability to interpret and create texts with accuracy, fluency, and confidence. Students engage with a range of texts, including media, every day, workplace, and academic texts, which become increasingly complex over time. They learn to adapt their language use to suit various purposes, audiences, and contexts, from personal communication to specialised and technical language. This aligns with the IB PYP's goal of preparing students to be effective communicators in diverse contexts and lifelong learners.

Language Learning in the Primary Years Programme

The teaching of language is embedded into the transdisciplinary Programme of Inquiry. This provides students with authentic learning experiences for their acquisition of language. Teachers develop language programs collaboratively in year levels for students' use of language, appreciation of language, awareness of the nature of language, the many influences on language, and of the variety in and between languages and dialects. There is a transdisciplinary nature of language – the students use language within and across subjects, both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as programs aligning with the Australian Curriculum requirements focusing on written, visual and oral language.

The Australian Curriculum addresses the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures, traditions and holistic world views. This knowledge enriches all learner's ability to participate positively and develop a deepening understanding and connection with Australia's Indigenous culture (ACARA – cross curriculum priorities). As Australia seeks to strengthen its ties in the Asian region and to be an effective contributor within, young people will need broad insight into the histories of the countries of the Asian region. By knowing something of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, they will deepen their intercultural understanding, enrich their own lives and increase the likelihood of successful participation in the 'Asian century' for themselves and Australia as a whole (ACARA – cross curriculum priorities). Units of Inquiry are developed with a lens of these cross curriculum priorities.

Oral Language

'The development of oral language is crucial to a child's literacy development, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Research has found that oral language plays a key role in building a foundation for reading. In general, children who possess well-developed oral language skills are more likely to become successful readers' (Sticht & James, 1984).

The more opportunities and experiences we give children to develop and practise oral language skills, the more confident children become as language learners. A balanced programme will provide meaningful and well-planned opportunities for learners to participate as listeners as well as speakers. Listening involves more than just hearing sounds; it requires active and conscious attention in order to make sense of what is heard. Purposeful talk enables learners to articulate thoughts as they construct and reconstruct meaning to understand the world around them. Oral language involves recognising and using certain types of language according to the audience and purposes (for example, the language used at home, the language of the classroom, the language of play, the language of inquiry, conversations with peers, giving instructions, interpreting creative texts, the language of fantasy, the language of different generations, of different times and places). IBO. (2018)

At RSS, students practice oral language skills through targeted and transdisciplinary instruction in all units of learning. Children are encouraged to ask questions, debate, socialise, inquire and experiment in a range of settings that allow their ideas, opinions and thinking to be heard. We encourage students to learn with and from each other so that diversity of language is practised and valued.

Written Language - reading

'Reading is a developmental process that involves constructing meaning from text' (IBO. 2018. PYP Languages Scope and Sequence, pg.15).

RSS has a large focus on reading instruction so that students can develop lifelong reading habits. Reading instruction is highly differentiated to allow all students the scope to be successful learners of reading implementing reasonable adjustments and tailored supports. Teachers plan and deliver learning experiences using a range of reading procedures and strategies and are directly linked to assessment items and the needs of each individual learner.

Reading instruction and practise in the classroom includes a range of configurations including, modelled, shared, guided and independent reading opportunities. Teachers provide a balance between fiction and non-fiction, to meet the range of learning needs and interests of their students. Reading helps to clarify ideas, feelings, thoughts and opinions. Literature offers a means of understanding ourselves and others, and has the power to influence and structure thinking.

Well-written fiction provides opportunities for learners to imagine themselves in another's situation, reflecting on feelings and actions, and developing empathy. The ability to read and comprehend non-fiction is essential for the process of inquiry. As inquirers, learners need to be able to identify, synthesise and apply useful and relevant information from text.

Children learn to read by reading. In order to develop lifelong reading habits, students at Rochedale have extended periods of time to read for pleasure, interest, and information, where they can experience an extensive range of quality fiction and non-fiction texts. IBO. (2018)

Written Language - writing

As well as reading written language, our students develop their ability to communicate through the written language as well. There are multiple genres and forms that are studied in P-6 and are mapped to the guidelines of the Australian Curriculum. Writing at RSS is taught in a transdisciplinary way, where students are encouraged to communicate their ideas in PYP units through a written and spoken form. Students learn that different genres are used for particular purposes and as they develop their knowledge they are encouraged to choose the genre that is best suited for the context. Our teachers adopt an inquiry approach to teaching different text types. Through this inquiry approach, the students move away from just learning the generic structure of a genre and become more familiar with knowing and structuring their writing for different purposes.

Visual Language

'The process of viewing and presenting allow students to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs.

The ability to interpret data, communicate and construct meaning are invaluable lifelong skills' (PYP Languages Scope and Sequence, pg.11). Visual learning is taught in a very transdisciplinary way. The students are introduced to Visual Language in Prep where they analyse images in the context of reading to try and make meaning from texts. As students' progress, they begin to practice the art of communicating and interpreting through images and learn how to complement their writing and communication by adding powerful images/diagrams to support their meaning.

Environmental print and visual imagery play a vital role in enriching the learning environment, developing learners' ability to critically analyse images and apply his/her understanding to make meaning. The use of graphic organisers, picture books, art work, posters, magazines, comic strips and video clips are integral in all Units of Inquiry. The ability to view and present using a multi modal approach is explicitly taught and students are given choice in presenting their ideas and knowledge.

English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)

Learners bring their first language or languages as the one(s) they use for their initial socialisation in their family or community. For the majority, this is English. For many, it can be a range of different languages. Learners also encounter the language or languages of instruction at school. For most in Australia, this is English. For many students in Australia, the language of instruction is not the same as their first language. These students may learn through English as an additional language/dialect (EALD) program. (ACARA.2022 Languages)

As a PYP school, we have a responsibility to recognise and support language development ensuring all students are provided with the environment and the necessary language support to enable them to participate fully in the academic programme and in the social life of the school, as well as to develop as individuals (IBO.2018). Teachers strive to develop a caring language community in which students are encouraged to take risks in language learning and have a good chance in being successful. Teaching situations are structured with scaffolding including techniques such as body language and gestures, language accompanying actions, building on what others say, and guided questioning.

While students spend time with their class teachers and their peers, the inclusion teacher performs an important role in assisting students through:

- small group support at level of student bandscale (according to EAL/D Bandscales)
- in class support
- extending beyond the classroom walls to bridge close connections with the school library and media devices
- tailored supports and reasonable adjustments with assessment tasks and exams
- PYP Approaches to Learning (ATLs) demonstrated and taught

Additional Languages (Chinese or French)

The Australian Curriculum: Languages - is written for use by teachers with specialist language expertise.

The study of languages provides learners with a key to the literature, history, thought, and culture of the ancient world. A unique feature of the study of languages is the opportunity to engage closely with cultures and societies that are removed in time and place from our own, and is a bridge between the contemporary world and the civilisations of antiquity. (ACARA.2011)

In PYP schools all students have the opportunity to learn more than one language from at least the age of seven (7). Every learner benefits from having access to different languages, and, through that access, to different cultures and perspectives. Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal development and helps facilitate international-mindedness. (IBO.2018)

Language is not only a cognitive activity, but, is a social and cultural practice. It is the primary means by which people construct, share, and maintain understanding and meaning as they interact. It is the means through which people make sense of experience and engage in the reciprocal processes of interpreting and creating meaning. It involves thinking about the:

- relationships between languages
- processes of learning languages
- power of language (e.g. to include or exclude, to persuade, to argue, to entertain, to praise, to criticise)
- relationship between language, culture, learning, and identity
- recognition of language as a social and cultural practice that acknowledges the relationship between language and culture. Culture shapes the interpretation and making of meaning through language, just as language, in turn, shapes culture. (ACARA.2011)

Language Needs in our Community

'Every learner benefits from having access to different languages, and through that can access different cultures and perspectives. Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal development and helps facilitate international mindedness' (Making the PYP happen, pg.68).

The Australian Curriculum: Languages, is designed to enable all students in learning a language in addition to English. The key concepts of language, culture and learning underpin the learning area. In line with Education Queensland policy, specialist Chinese Mandarin and French teachers deliver specific language and culture study programs from Year 1 – Year 6. The specialist teachers report on student achievement and progress in learning Mandarin and French to parents.

Time allocation – Mandarin per week (alternate yearly)					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	30 minutes		30 minutes		30 minutes

Time allocation – French per week (alternate yearly)					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
30 minutes		30 minutes		30 minutes	

Mother Tongue Languages

Diversity is a valued and essential element of our school culture that enriches the academic and personal lives of our students. RSS encourages the development of the mother tongue and first languages of students through an ethos of acceptance and celebration of the linguistic diversity within the community. There is also recognition that a strong level of competency in the mother tongue can be an important ingredient in their success as learners of additional languages. Existing practices that support mother tongue include:

- Class placements with similar cultures e.g. Korean enrolments placed with other Korean students
- Celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity with special events and days
- Library resources – books and novels in the mother tongue
- Displays and signs in classrooms printed in the mother tongue
- Community resources used to support mother tongue development and participation in key events
- Parents are encouraged to read and talk to students in their mother tongue at home
- Parents are invited into the school to share stories and games from their culture

Utilising resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within our 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.

Games, art, music, maps and artefacts are used to help students make connections in their language learning.

The community is considered a valuable resource to aid language learning. Students go on field trips where they have an opportunity to use the host country language in context and gain insight into the host country culture.

The involvement of parents is important in our school. Students are exposed to different mother tongue languages through visits during days such as Harmony Week, Year 6 Exhibition, Unit of Inquiries, NAIDOC Week and Book Week. Presentation and communication skills in the host language are also encouraged.

Since students learn about language and through language, we understand that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students in the school. As a result, intentional collaboration and reflection is built into the regular staff schedule to address school-wide language and literacy development. This may take the form of whole staff meetings or group meetings (departmental groups, language groups or year level groups). During these meetings, teachers plan what will be taught, reflect on best practice and consider the needs of individual students.

The basic skills for all types of communication - oral, written and visual - are explicitly mapped across all faculties in scope and sequence documents. 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.

Library as a Resource for Language Learning

The library at RSS is a key hub for teachers and students and is accessible to support language development. The Librarian collaborates with classroom teachers to ensure that the collection in the library supports the Units of Inquiry.

RSS maintains a library with the express aim of:

- Enriching and supporting the curriculum and Units of Inquiry
- Providing texts which vary in the level of difficulty and appeal
- Encouraging the pursuit of recreational interest
- Fiction/non-fiction materials in student's mother tongue
- Foster a love of reading

Review of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed across the leadership team in consultation with the teachers on a two (2) yearly cycle unless otherwise required.

Policy endorsed 2026

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Additional Supports

EAL/D support teacher

Chinese teacher

French teachers

Librarian