

International School Augsburg

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Introduction

At our school we strive to create a cooperative and inclusive learning environment in which multilingualism is seen as an enriching experience for the whole school community. While students add English to their language repertoire it is beneficial to continue to develop proficiency in the mother tongue. Research has shown that this will support academic achievement and the development of an additional language.

This policy sets out the school's aims, objectives and strategies to ensure that EAL students fulfil their potential.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that we meet the full range of needs of EAL students in both social (BICS) and academic (CALP) language
- To implement teaching strategies that help students access the curriculum
- To welcome and celebrate a variety of cultural, linguistic and educational experiences
- To encourage lifelong language learning and maintain students' sense of identity and self-esteem
- To monitor students' progress and use this data to inform teaching and curriculum planning
- To assess proficiency in English of EAL students new to the school in an interview
- To support EAL students and their parents by providing translating/interpreting services
- To raise staff awareness of EAL issues
- To develop home/school/community links

Organisation of Teaching Groups

The acquisition of basic communication skills and understanding of curriculum content is supported by various delivery models:

- Pullout model- In grades 1-5 all beginner EAL students are pulled out of the mainstream classroom for 45 minutes per day, five days a week. Language learners are guided in small groups so that they internalize the features of the English language and become effective communicators by participating in relevant listening, speaking, reading and writing activities.
- Collaborative model-Depending on the needs of the EAL students there are usually 3 periods of flexible in class support in grades 1-5.

Intermediate and advanced EAL students are taught by the classroom teachers and assistants. EAL teachers also provide support when appropriate.

Teaching Strategies

- Additional verbal and visual support is used to make input comprehensible
- Role-play activities are used to develop speaking and listening skills
- Students are grouped to ensure that EAL learners hear good models of English
- Collaborative activities are encouraged in order to support purposeful talk, risk-taking and active participation
- Background knowledge is activated and pre-teaching activities are provided
- Discussion takes place before, during and after reading and writing activities
- Key vocabulary is identified and meaning is gained through a multisensory approach
- Scaffolding activities are used
- Tasks are set at an appropriate level of challenge
- EAL students are given more time to process answers
- The teacher's reply is used to model correct pronunciation and grammar
- Thinking and talking in the home language is encouraged to support understanding

Accommodation

There is an EAL teaching base, i.e. main classroom and resource centre. The library and ICT rooms are also used if necessary.

Staff

There are three EAL teachers:

Vânia Costa, full time and EAL Coordinator
Rama Shaar, part time
Gosia Behm, part time

Resources

The EAL class library is growing. There are reference materials, games, listening materials and a variety of story props.

Assessment

A wide variety of methods are used to monitor and assess students' progress in the acquisition of English:

- Continuums
- Anecdotal records
- Interviews with pupils
- Checklists
- European Language portfolio (ELP)
- Reports

Assessment in home language should be carried out if necessary.

Distinguishing between Second Language Acquisition and Special Educational Needs

The process of acquiring an additional language is complex. Students will acquire language over an extended period of time and at varying rates. This process is not to be confused with a learning disability.

If an English language learner is thought to be eligible for special educational support, then the following factors need to be considered:

- Evidence that the delays and difficulties are in both the home language and English and in various contexts, i.e. school, home and community
- Formal and informal assessment data indicates that the learning disability is not due to cultural factors or factors related to second language acquisition
- The fact that the problem has persisted over time
- Evidence that the student has not improved although effective strategies have been implemented in both the mainstream and EAL classroom

Entering and Exiting EAL

Decisions regarding entering and exiting EAL are made as a result of careful observation of students' progress and consultation among teachers.

Staff Development

- All staff involved in teaching EAL learners liaise to discuss best practice and students' progress
- There has been a workshop for all members of staff regarding key principles of additional language acquisition and implementation of effective teaching strategies
- Class observations have taken place
- Key language teachers are encouraged to attend conferences and workshops, e.g. AGIS Staff Professional Development Stephen Krashen 19 May 2010 and ECIS ESL and Mother Tongue Conference 3-5 March 2011

Parental/Community Involvement

Our school strives to inform parents and encourage parental and community involvement by:

- Providing parents of EAL students with an EAL parent handbook
- Celebrating the achievements of EAL students by inviting parents and community members into the EAL classroom
- Recognising and encouraging the use of the home language
- Helping parents understand how they can support their children at home
- Identifying the cultural and linguistic background of students and establishing contact with the wider community where possible