

The St Michael Steiner School Early Years English as an additional language (EAL) policy and procedures

At the St Michael Steiner School we want to ensure all children are ready to benefit from the opportunities that are available to them when they begin kindergarten. For children with English as an additional language (EAL), teachers will work with parents and/or carers to explore the child's skills in their home language and establish whether there is cause for concern. Having a home language other than English is not a learning difficulty, but rather an advantage in life.

Our curriculum in kindergarten is rich in creative free play and opportunities for social and language development. Language is absorbed through imitation, repetition and meaningful activities. Children may experience a silent or receptive phase, during which understanding develops before speech emerges. We provide all children with EAL with experiences that allow them to develop and enhance their English language acquisition, while continuing to build upon and celebrate their own home language and culture, in a safe environment. This is true regardless of the level of the pupil's competence. We aim to offer an inclusive education in which the child's first language is acknowledged and encouraged to develop alongside their acquisition of English.

We will assess, monitor and support all children with EAL in their acquisition of English language skills. We provide opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning, if possible, and we also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and develop their English language during their time in kindergarten. We recognise the importance of the role of parents and work with them in supporting the child's acquisition of English.

We aim to ensure that children with EAL will:

- Develop their confidence in the acquisition of and the use of English during their time in kindergarten.
- Use English as a means of learning across the curriculum.
- Build on the knowledge they already have of other languages and cultures.

1. Our aims will be achieved by:

2. Collecting relevant background and information about a child's home language(s) when a child arrives in kindergarten.
3. Ensuring children with EAL access the curriculum by:
 - a. Providing a welcoming ethos in kindergarten and a language-rich environment with songs, stories, rhymes and daily repetition;

- b. Valuing and supporting children's home languages by learning some of the keywords for play, activities and stories, and using simple picture books with language/scripts of first languages where possible;
- c. Working in partnership with parents to support language development and providing them with copies of texts we use (stories and songs) to take home and share with the child whenever this is possible and appropriate;
- d. Providing appropriate cultural resources where possible (celebrations of different festivals), toys, i.e., a variety of cooking equipment reflecting children's homes in the 'home corner' area, bilingual books;
- e. Ensuring that tasks are well supported with gestures, body language and/or printed images;
- f. Differentiation in weekly planning;
- g. Staff being aware that children with EAL learn most efficiently working in collaborative groups with able and fluent English speakers;
- h. Working collaboratively with colleagues and, where appropriate, external professionals.

Monitoring:

The progress of children with EAL is monitored termly by the teacher based on an individual EAL support plan. Not all children with EAL have an individual support plan in place. The school SENCo may support the kindergarten teachers with the coordination of EAL support plans and reviews.

A list of children with EAL is reviewed termly, assessing their level of English based on five categories (new to English, early acquisition, developing competence, competent, fluent).

Evidence from observations (termly reviews of EAL support plans, if in place) that children with EAL are making expected progress.