Language Policy

Preamble
The language of instruction at Treetops Montessori School is English. Treetops strives to ensure that its students develop English language and literacy skills to the highest level in order to assist them to function at the highest level in later life. Moreover, language is crucial to all learning and Treetops’ teachers, across the curriculum and across all age groups, recognise their individual responsibilities as language teachers.

Treetops Montessori School also recognises the importance of students learning a language other than their mother tongue. Competency in a second language enriches and broadens the minds of children and helps them appreciate that there are world views other than their own. This, in turn, supports Treetops vision that our educational community makes a difference through the education of its children.

Definition of Language
Language is the symbolisation of human life, communication, the recording of all knowledge, the basis of history and culture. It encompasses written, oral, aural and visual genres. At Treetops, the concept of Language is not limited to vocabulary and grammar. Treetops recognises the importance of non-verbal communication, such as body language, facial expression and gestures, and meta-language.
**Aims**
- To ensure the effective delivery of the Western Australian Curriculum and IB Curriculum for English.
- To ensure that language skills are developed across the whole curriculum and across all age groups.
- To provide appropriate learning support to children experiencing difficulties with literacy.
- To provide all students with the experience of learning a second language.
- To ensure the effective delivery of the Western Australian Curriculum and IB Curriculum for LOTE (Languages Other than English).
- To ensure that the second languages at Treetops (French and Spanish) are clearly articulated throughout the school.
- To ensure that the development of language skills takes into account all aspects of the child’s developmental needs.

**Philosophy and Methodology**
The Montessori approach to education focuses on the whole personality of the child; the faculties of intellect, deliberation, initiative and independent thinking. Montessori education emphasises the uniqueness of the individual child and acknowledges that children grow and develop at different rates. Treetops’ approach to language follows this overall approach.

Maria Montessori did not believe that reading, writing, spelling and language should be taught as separate entities. The young child has a natural sensitivity for language development. The Montessori approach provides a carefully thought-out programme which nurtures this sensitivity and facilitates language development as an on-going process throughout childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. Staff across all subject areas and age groups are encouraged to be creative and imaginative in facilitating language development and are made aware of professional development opportunities to support their role in the classroom.

The Montessori language programme begins immediately and is continuously woven into the life and work of the class, across all areas of the curriculum and across all age groups:
- Children are free to talk to one another in the classroom and time is always devoted to expression, discussion and reflection. Both the receptive (listening, reading, viewing) and the expressive (speaking, writing) are explored to their fullest dimensions.
- Language materials aid the development of all aspects of a child’s language. These materials are age and skill appropriate and are easily accessible to the children themselves, as part of the prepared classroom environment. Materials are self-correcting and generally do not require the intervention of a teacher in order for the child to develop their skills. Children learn best through manipulating materials with their hands and using multiple senses. The materials across all age groups encourage this. Materials developed for other learning areas include the potential for language development (for example, Practical Life materials provide the coordination, concentration, control, independence and order required for reading).
- Children work both independently and collaboratively on a range of activities. There will often be several different activities, using different materials, being undertaken at the same time within the same classroom. Children are encouraged to help each other and pass-on their own knowledge and understandings. Older children often participate in activities for younger children such as reading aloud, giving oral presentations and organising and managing activities. A key understanding here is that the benefits of such interaction are two-way; that the experiences and participation of all ages are valid and each child has something to learn from another. Children are also encouraged to develop their own areas of study and to challenge themselves.
• Children engage with as many text types (genres) as possible. Younger children experience the richness of different oral and written traditions, through storytelling and the empowerment of naming the world around them. Older children learn to work with different genres to achieve different effects and develop expressive and receptive skills in order to engage with the world around them. Young adults develop analytical skills, working with and responding to a variety of texts in a critical manner.

• Cultural context is central to language development. Pre-primary children are immersed in the dynamics of their own language development in their own world. As children grow, they become aware of the customs and conventions of language and are encouraged to understand and use language according to circumstance and purpose. All age groups engage with the second language cultures, through the experience of food, music, customs and the celebration of culturally specific events. Excursions and incursions are organised to further facilitate language development.

• Language is a significant component of our commitment to peace education, both in the development of peaceful individuals and of individuals who can find peaceful solutions to areas of conflict.

• The importance of language development is formally acknowledged throughout the school year with events including Book Character Day, Literacy Week, the celebration of French and Spanish national days, student contributions to in-school publications, end-of-term Kunsidos (community gatherings), class presentations, parent mornings/afternoons, book readings and involvement in poetry and story writing community projects.

Language Protocols
Treetops Montessori School uses the following:
• Standard English spelling for reading and writing.
• Victorian Cursive lettering for handwriting.
• The Harvard referencing system.
• An expectation that all members of the school community will use respectful, considerate age-appropriate language when communicating with each other verbally or in writing.