



English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Rationale

This policy stands on extensive research and evidence-based best practice and published advice from the Department of Education, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Yarra Hills Secondary College has an increasing enrolment of refugee and other students whose first language is not English. In recognition of this growing population five staff from YHSC participated in the eighteen-month (2014-2015) Refugee and Education Support Program (RESP). This policy underpins the implementation of the aforementioned advice and reflects the goal to implement a whole school approach to EAL. A whole school approach is defined by the DET as cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed to improve student learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and the conditions that support these. This is represented at YHSC by all KLAs, ES, Wellbeing, Pathways, Library and teachers being supported and working together. This policy is consistent with YHSC's five-year strategic plan and Annual Implementation Plan to improve teacher capacity and student outcomes.

Definition

English as an Additional Language is one of the four English subjects offered at VCE. Eligibility for this subject is determined by the VCAA as a student who has had less than 7 years instruction in English.

EAL for years 7-10 at YHSC is a specialist subject and should be delivered by qualified EAL teachers. All EAL students who have been in Australia less than seven years generally require this support. There are students from time to time who may have been learning English for more than seven years but still require support. In these cases the school (Principal/EAL coordinator/Head of Schools) can place these students in the EAL class and if certain criteria is met a Special Circumstances application (made by VASS/VCE/EAL coordinators) can be made to the VCAA to allow the student to attempt EAL VCE.

When an EAL student arrives in Australia, or at YHSC, their English language level is assessed using the following documents published by DET and VCAA:

- The ESL Developmental Continuum S stages (L-4)- until they meet The Victorian Curriculum standards.
- EAL Companion to AusVELS (2013)
- Annotated Content Descriptions English/Science/History/Maths Foundation -10.

And Teachers are expected to be familiar with the:

- EAL Elaborations of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL and ACTA)

There is also a document referred to as The Rainbow that illustrates the EAL Stages against the Victorian Curriculum and allows teachers to easily see the equivalents eg; a student assessed as S1 will show the equivalent Victorian Curriculum level range of upper prep-early grade 2.

All these resources are available to staff through Moodle.

Implementation

The teaching and learning of Australian Standard English is seen as adding to, not replacing, the first language and culture of the EAL student. EAL Students will be supported in all aspects of school life through a whole school approach. EAL students are encouraged to study their first language (L1) as research and evidence show that L1 study improves English language learning. All students assessed as S1 will hopefully be supported in mainstream classes by a Multicultural Educational Aide. Staff will be supported by the EAL Coordinator through a variety of means including professional development and resources provided on Moodle.

Responsibilities

Staff will teach and assess EAL students according to the Victorian Curriculum English as an Additional Language (7-10). VCE EAL teachers follow the VCAA VCE EAL Study Design. Clear descriptions of all course outlines will be provided for students as well as modification as appropriate. Translations and Interpreters will be provided by Yarra Hills Secondary College as per the RESP recommendations and whole school approach to EAL.

Staff will also:

- Allow the use of the L1, first language, of students for learning purposes.
- Allow silence and not worry about new EAL students being quiet.
- Discuss language and cultural values.
- Work openly on positive social and racial attitudes.
- Offer something more than tokenistic gestures towards inclusivity.
- Encourage peer support and socialisation through mentoring and buddy schemes.
- Create a community with a positive attitude towards (or at least an acceptance of) immigration.

Ratified by School Council May 2017