

学校法人 天周学園 若草幼稚園

Language Policy

言語についての方針

2020年1月



WAKAKUSA
KINDERGARTEN

Wakakusa Kindergarten

The launch pad for infinite learning, dreams and possibilities.

School Mission

We believe that
our lives and growth are based on our connections with others
(interdependent co-origination) and
we learn mutually with gratitude and respect toward them.

~Our 5 educational objectives~

Student centered
Play based Inquiry learning
Harmonious living
Communication
International Mindedness

Our visions

Nurturing individuals to become lifelong learners
with a harmonized heart, body and mind.

To educate our children to contribute to world peace,
full of confidence to resolve issues and knowing the joy in
helping others.

~Our 5 core values (5Cs) ~

Compassion
Commitment
Creativity
Challenge
Cooperation

All teachers and staff members share the philosophy and values described above and are putting them into practice following the “Kindergarten Education Guidelines” established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and are incorporating teaching methods developed by the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Language Policy in Wakakusa Kindergarten

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Written Language

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1. Language Philosophy

Human beings connect (themselves with) the external and internal world through ^{*}sensations, perceptions, formations, volition. Through this process they attain consciousness about themselves and the world.

The new meanings which are constructed through this process are confirmed and developed in social interaction with language. Therefore, language is an important foundation that supports our learning.

In addition, expression in various ways, including body language is also regarded as a language in a broader meaning. All of them are the means to connect people and deliver compassion which will be able to enrich our lives.

From the above viewpoint, Wakakusa Kindergarten believes that language learning is the foundation of the overall development of children and is essential for holistic education.

*Five aggregates in Buddhist philosophy

2. Context

2-1 Our mission

Language plays a vital role in the construction of meaning. It empowers the learner and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking. We believe that learner's needs are best served when they have opportunities to engage in learning within meaningful contexts, rather than being presented with the learning of language as an incremental series of skills to be acquired. Therefore, we believe that Teaching of language should be in response to their actual life experiences, personal feelings, needs and interests especially in early childhood between the age of three to six. In order to motivate them to acquire a new language, it is necessary to provide language nurturing according to their developmental stage which will give them meaning and a joy of learning.

The first language at the kindergarten is Japanese. Research has shown that development of mother-tongue language is crucial for cognitive development and in maintaining cultural identity. It also has the potential to increase intercultural awareness and understanding and encourages students to remain in touch with, and maintain esteem for, the language, literature and culture of their home country. We provide language education based on the mother-tongue.

Since we encourage student international-mindedness, we believe that every student benefit from having access to different languages, and, through that access, to different cultures and perspectives. Even though our first language is Japanese we also provide an environment where students can

communicate with foreign teachers and experience different cultures in daily life. Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal development and helps facilitate international mindedness.

We are responsible for recognition and supporting language development to ensure that all students are provided with a good learning environment and the necessary language support. This to enable them to fully participate in the academic program and in the social life of the kindergarten as well as to develop them as individuals. All teachers are considered teachers of language and are always to strive to improve the structure of the language teaching/learning environment so that students have opportunities for success.

2-2 Our Understandings

All of our students...

- ① Value the acquisition of their mother tongue, which is the basis of construction meaning.
- ② Learn diversity of expressions and cultures through languages.
- ③ Learn that there are a variety of ways to express themselves other than words, such as painting, music, and dance.
- ④ Have the experience of expressing their own thoughts and feelings to others by talking.
- ⑤ Acquire the ability to read and understand visual materials such as letters, numbers, symbols, drawings, picture books, human facial expressions and body language

- ⑥ Get familiar with reading books and enjoy the story.
- ⑦ Realize that they can find various information through books.
- ⑧ Listen carefully and with respect to others.
- ⑨ Explain and present their thoughts and feelings in front of people.
- ⑩ Know that we can learn from others and participate in discussions with friends by talking and asking questions.
- ⑪ Have interest in written text and enjoy expressing themselves in writing.

2-3 Mother-tongue

Most of our students are native Japanese speakers, only a small number of students are non-Japanese native speakers. For new students who are non-native Japanese speakers the parents will be asked the following two questions at the preliminary interview.

- 1 . What is your opinion on how to develop your child's native language?
- 2 . What is your plan to support your child at home in order for them to learn their mother tongue?

During this interview teachers and parents will discuss how to value and continue learning their native language as well as establish a support system.

We may ask parents to donate native language books.

2-4 Additional Language

The first language in our school is Japanese, however, we have provided English education as an additional language to our students since 2003 in order to support their international understanding. Over the last 15 years our English education programs have been supported by many native language experts and are currently being developed by the collaboration of foreign instructors as well as Japanese teachers with a curriculum of planning, teaching and reflection. Through much trial and error as well as reflections, the programs are improving day by day for students to learn more effectively and cultivate their practical ability. All according to the children's developmental stages and learning progress. All students above 3 years old will be provided the programs. In addition, we offer 'Mum and me study abroad' opportunities at our partnership kindergartens in New Zealand and we interact with the partner schools in various ways. We talk to the students who are studying in New Zealand with skype and share experiences with them when they come back home. We also invite the expert teachers from those schools and our teachers go there for training etc.

3. Language Instruction

3-1 Learning Continuums (Japanese)

【K1】

Oral language Listening and speaking	Visual language Viewing and presenting	Written language Reading	Written language Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show interest in what the teacher has to say. ▪ Enjoy simple games and play. ▪ Learn a good listening attitude from adults. ▪ Enjoy singing together while imitating the teacher. ▪ Learn the phrases, "good morning", "Hello", "I'm sorry," "thank you" and to use them at appropriate times. ▪ Speak with polite words such as "Thank you", "Please". ▪ Express their own thoughts and feelings to the teacher. ▪ Explain what he/she has made. Communicate with friends using short polite phrases such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observe how friends play and be able to start imitating it. ▪ Together with the teacher, read and understand the daily schedule. ▪ Look at pictures and photos with interest and ask questions such as "What is this?" ▪ Tell the teacher what she/he is thinking. ▪ Express their immediate thoughts and feelings to teachers and friends. ▪ Recognize the symbols/characters of his/her own name and class. ▪ Read a picture book and reflect together with the teacher in order to understand the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enjoy picture books read by the teacher. ▪ Be able to follow the story of picture books or picture-story shows and create their own image. ▪ Enjoy looking at pictures in his/her favorite books and tell the teacher what they liked. ▪ Try to show the teacher their favorite pictures by pointing at them during story time. ▪ Enjoy teacher's story time and ask questions when they hear something they wonder about. ▪ Look at a character in a picture book and reflect about the right behavior or action to take 'What should the character do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enjoy drawing pictures. ▪ Show interest in pictures drawn by friends and teachers and try to imitate them. ▪ Copy the teacher's sample shape drawings. (○、△、□) ▪ Ask the teacher what he/she wants the teacher to draw.

<p>“May I borrow....” “Go ahead” etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be able to explain things that trouble them or what they want to tell someone by pointing. ▪ Express what they want to do or don't want to do by nodding or shaking their head. ▪ Be able to react at something they feel while reading a picture book by pointing or saying. ▪ Tap a friend on the shoulder or call their name when he/she wants to talk. ▪ Increase their vocabulary by using names of people, places and other things repeatedly. ▪ While using simple words and gestures that they know try to convey what is happening around them. ▪ Try to imitate the words and the rhythms he/she can hear. 	<p>main point of the story and try to express copy the important scenes. (Example books: Hand-washing, reconciliation after fighting with a friend.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enjoy reading their favorite picture story book repeatedly. ▪ Use gestures to respond to questions. ▪ Understand words such as “big / small”, “high / low” seeing the objects. ▪ Recognize the difference between "colors" and "shapes" and say the names correctly. ▪ Sing and talk with friends in play. 	<p>What should the character say?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enjoy reading a picture book while holding it upright and turn the page in the right direction. ▪ Be able to understand the feelings of characters/animals in a story, e.g.: He seems to be sad. It seems to be happy etc. ▪ Ask questions (What does it say etc.) or ask adults to read texts for them if they cannot read. ▪ Imitate the teacher's rhythm play such as ‘apple’ and ‘cherry’. ▪ Enjoy saying repetitive and rhythmical words. ▪ Read texts or look at pictures on the boards/bulletins together with the teacher and learn their meaning. ▪ Reacting when finding their own name or characters in written text. 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Raise his/her hand and answer when his/her name is called by the teacher.▪ Listen to the teacher and follow their instructions.▪ Listen to stories and tell teachers what he/she thought/felt.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Find numbers and symbols they know through play (example: The first carriage of a train says number 1! etc.).▪ Identify written names, their own as well as friends.▪ Understand that different characters and marks have different meaning and be able to identify his/her belongings by his/her name or symbol sticker and understand where it should be kept (such as in lockers).	
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【K2】

Oral language Listening and speaking	Visual language Viewing and presenting	Written language Reading	Written language Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen to teachers and friends until they finish talking. ▪ Learn 4Ls. ▪ Learn rules through play or group games and develop communication skills with friends. ▪ Enjoy singing with friends. ▪ Give greetings to teachers and friends without hesitation. ▪ Assembling sentences using ‘who’ ‘what’ ‘how’ in correct order. ▪ Attend group discussions. ▪ Be able to explain his/her work and how he/she made it. ▪ Try to convey his/her feelings in their own words. ▪ Tell the teacher what he/she found and felt while reading picture books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convey his/her thoughts with confidence in front of a small group. ▪ Listen to and watch a friend’s presentation and be able to give kind criticism after the presentation. ▪ Look at the daily schedule shown on the board in the classroom and understand it. ▪ Look at facial expressions, gestures, body language and understand their meaning. Also make use of those for communication in daily life. ▪ React to pictures and photos. ▪ Be curious and have questions about the symbols around them. ▪ Distinguish between different characters such as Hiragana, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distinguish between pictures and texts. ▪ Learn numbers and letters by playing and other activities. ▪ Show interest in the symbols and texts around them and be curious about their meaning. ▪ Show interests in written language shown on the white board/notice board and try to find out their meanings. ▪ Understand the schedule written on the board. ▪ Be able to tell the time and take an action accordingly . (Example: clean up after 10o’clock) ▪ Be able to recognize their own name. ▪ Find texts and numbers around 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write and draw with a good posture at the desk. ▪ Have fun drawing with different tools. ▪ Choose suitable drawing materials when painting. ▪ Understand the shapes and sound of the characters through play such as Karuta game (Japanese concentration card game) etc. ▪ Try to use letters and texts in their play. ▪ Show interest in the teacher’s texts and drawings and try to copy them. ▪ Ask questions about writing. (Example: ‘How do you write it?’). Try to write by his/her self. ▪ Write their first name.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to explain about things, places and names that he/she have learned. • Try to express his/her thoughts in their own words. • Try to answer questions with words they know. • Follow multiple instructions from the teacher and act upon them. • Use body language to express the contrast of big/small, long/short, happy/sad etc. 	<p>numbers, Katakana, Kanji and other symbols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their favorite books and talk about what he/she enjoyed about them with friends. • Learn that there are many ways to tell stories, such as plays, picture story shows, paper and apron theaters, picture books etc. • Remember his/her lines and present a character role in a play. 	<p>them and try to read them aloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share fun stories and happenings with friends. • Enjoy reading their favorite pages repeatedly. • Look at picture books and show interests in letters. • Look at pictures and ask teachers and friends questions. • Understand stories and be able to answer the teacher's questions. • When he/she comes across a scene in a story that they have had a similar experience to, try to understand the feelings of the characters by connecting them with their own experience. • Guess the story of a book by looking at the text and illustrations on the front cover page, and then choose a book he/she wants to read. 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get familiar with words, voices and patterns by participating in reading chants, poetry, songs, word games and clapping games.	
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【K3】

Oral language Listening and speaking	Visual language Viewing and presenting	Written language Reading	Written language Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop their own way of playing by communicating with friends while playing in groups. ▪ Understand the meaning of the lyrics to a song and think of suitable movements which matches it. Be able to enjoy the lyrics with friends. ▪ Understand that exchanging greetings make you feel good and use it actively as a communication method. ▪ Realize that language changes depending on the past, the present, and the future and be able to use the tenses correctly. ▪ Listen to others and understand that everyone has different opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share their own opinion in a large group. ▪ Look at the schedule shown in the classroom in order to understand the daily schedule and be able to think/anticipate the next action. ▪ Try to understand how their friends feel by looking at their facial expressions and attitudes. ▪ Compare pictures and photos, find similarities and differences. ▪ Understand the meaning of signs and symbols and think about why they exist. Follow their instructions. ▪ Find positive things to say about things friends have made. Use that experience to improve things he/she makes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the daily schedule written by the teacher and be able to follow it. ▪ Recognize symbols and texts around them and be able to follow the written instructions. ▪ Use numbers when counting or measuring. ▪ Try to read picture books they have been read to by an adult by him/her self. ▪ Imitate the teacher and read picture books together with their friends. ▪ Use picture books to obtain knowledge. ▪ Choose a suitable picture book to get the information what he/she wants and share that information with friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enjoy using various drawing materials. ▪ Express their thoughts and imaginations in colors and shapes. ▪ Use different colors and shapes to match the image of what they want to draw and explain why they chose them. ▪ Develop their own ideas from the teacher's drawings. ▪ Try writing texts or draw pictures from books. ▪ Show interests in written characters such as Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji, numbers and alphabets. ▪ Talk about their thoughts about written texts and think about the meaning together with friends.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Derive their answers from different opinions in discussions. ▪ Ask questions. ▪ Explain what is happening by describing a location and who or what is involved. ▪ Try to share feelings and happy memories with friends and teachers. ▪ Be able to explain how he/she felt or what he/she wants to say with the reason. ▪ Understand the meaning of the teacher's questions and give an answer with words and actions. ▪ Remember daily routines and follow them without instructions from the teacher. ▪ Realize that people speak different languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enjoy making a story to match their own pictures and share the story with friends. ▪ Use gestures while communicating to make it easier for listeners to understand. ▪ Be able to take on a character and express that character's feelings with song or speech. ▪ Choose the appropriate way to deliver a story and present it in front of other people. ▪ Enjoy to learn songs and rhythms as well as singing or playing musical instruments together with friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connect the feelings of the characters appearing in story books to his/hers own. ▪ Understand messages conveyed in stories. ▪ After reading a picture book, think about the feelings of the characters and share their thoughts with friends and teachers. ▪ Use knowledge gained from stories in real life. ▪ Learn that there is a flow order in stories. ▪ Follow the lyrics to a song while singing it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenge themselves to write or trace what the teacher writes. ▪ Write his/her own name. ▪ Distinguish texts, numbers and symbols and use them properly. ▪ Write sentences with characters they know and use them in play, such as 'writing a letter' or 'creating story' etc. ▪ Write his/her thoughts and use them for presentations.
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3-2 Learning Continuums (English)

Goal of learning English at Wakakusa Kindergarten

- Students will be exposed to and learn the English language as well as different cultures through play and fun activities.
- Students will understand other languages and cultures through universal and cultural experiences.
- Students will obtain the attitude to communicate in English confidently and use basic expressions they have learned.
- Students will develop basic skills in listening, speaking, presenting, reading and writing.

What we provide in English class.

- English lessons will be provided more than once a week for all students above the age of 3.
- Language experts and Japanese teachers collaboratively plan fun lessons to bring out students interests in English
- We focus on the words around the students so that they can use them in daily activities.
- Students will listen to English teachers to become accustomed to the unique rhythm and pronunciation of English.
- Students will have opportunities to learn English in many ways such as singing, dancing, chanting, reading picture books, watching videos, playing games and other fun activities in a variety of topics.

【Conceptual understandings】

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoken words connect us with others. • People listen and speak to share thoughts and feelings. • People ask questions to learn from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual languages is all around us. • The pictures, images, and symbols in our environment have meaning. • We can enjoy and learn from visual language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrations convey meaning. • Print conveys meaning. • People read for pleasure. • Stories can tell about imagined worlds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing conveys meaning. • People write to tell about their experiences, ideas, and feelings. • Everyone can express themselves in writing.
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【K1】

Oral language Listening and speaking	Visual language Viewing and presenting	Written language Reading	Written language Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting familiar with English sounds. • Repeat/echo single words. e.g. colors and numbers. • Understand the meaning of the subject 'I' and give a simple greeting. • Follow classroom directions. • Attend to visual information showing understanding through play, gestures and facial expressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the connection between visual text (marks and symbols) and their own names in alphabet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy listening to stories. 	

【K2】

Oral language Listening and speaking	Visual language Viewing and presenting	Written language Reading	Written language Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand and follow classroom directions and routines.• Repeat/echo single words.• Understand simple questions and respond with actions or words.• Learn new types of greetings.• Name classmates, teachers and familiar classroom and playground objects.• Increase their vocabulary connected to their life and surroundings.• Understand the meaning of the subjects 'I' and 'You' and make simple self-expressions. (Example: "I am ..." and "I like) ...").	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend to visual information showing understanding through play, gestures and facial expression.• Recognize the name of alphabet letters in familiar visual texts. (Example: advertising, logos, labels and songs.)• Recognize their own name in visual text such as books and other printed materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get familiar with Western books.• Show curiosity and ask questions about pictures or text.• Listen to stories attentively and respond by making comments or asking questions.• Recognize their own name in English• Get familiar with reading the alphabet, both upper and lower case letters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy drawing and value their own efforts.• Challenge themselves to write their own name with Western letters.• Get familiar with writing the alphabet, both upper and lower case letters.

【K3】

Oral language Listening and speaking	Visual language Viewing and presenting	Written language Reading	Written language Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use gestures, actions, body language and/or words to communicate needs and express ideas. • Demonstrate their understanding and joy with expressions and/or words while listening to picture books. • Join in while reading poems, rhymes, songs and repeated phrases together with others. • Realize that people speak in different languages. • Follow 2 step directions. • Use words and expressions they have learned, such as greetings, to demonstrate that they can communicate actively with others. • Understand the meaning of the subjects 'I', 'You' and 'We' and make simple self-expressions, example: 'I am ...' 'I like ...' 'I want.' • Ask easy questions in English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to English related visual texts and understand its meaning. • Observe and understand visual cues that indicate context, example matching pictures with the same context. • Use body language to communicate and convey understanding, example, pointing, gesturing and using facial expressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with many Western books by reading them together with the teacher. • Participate in shared reading such as joining in with rhymes, refrains and repeated text as they gain familiarity. • Recognize the upper & lower-case letters as well as the basic phonics. • Recognize their own and friend's names. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy writing letters from the alphabet and value their own efforts. • Recognize sound-symbol relationships • Show curiosity and ask questions about written language.

4.References

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‘Guidelines for developing a school language policy, 2008’

‘Language scope and sequence,2019’

Language policies

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