PARENT INFORMATION CARD: How can I support my child’s language development?

Maintaining mother tongue and fostering home culture:

☐ Continue to speak with your child in their home language to protect, value and foster it’s development. Not only will your child find speaking in another language tiring and need a rest from it sometimes, they will also need to use their home language to further develop their new one.

☐ Read with your child in their mother tongue regularly.

☐ Provide reference materials in your home language to support topics covered in school.

☐ Remember to use the home language in different contexts to expose them to a variety of vocabulary beyond the home. Supporting them with school-work, take them to museums, go to sporting events together, speak about festivals and arrange days out.

☐ Be proud of your culture. Celebrate things from home and share your culture with the school community and friends.

☐ Encourage friendships with children who speak the same language.

☐ Have regular visits to your home country. If this is not possible maintain the connections to family with Skype, phone calls and emails.

☐ Foster your child’s home language by having an interesting collection of fiction and non-fiction books, games, DVD’s, cookbooks etc... in the mother tongue.

Learning a new language:

☐ Foster a balanced and positive attitude to being bilingual. It’s not about learning another language at the expense of the first language, it’s about developing both.

☐ Be positive, focus on what your child can do rather than what they can’t! Do not overcorrect-grammar.

☐ Have realistic expectations. Do not expect them to have the same level of English as their monolingual peers.

☐ Be patient, homework may take longer as it is being completed in another language. If your child is spending too much time doing their homework, speak to their teacher.

☐ Choose a good time for both of you to review their homework together.

☐ Language used for real purposes in a social context is meaningful and motivating for children. Engage them in fun family projects using the new language e.g. a scrapbook about their move, a PowerPoint of a holiday, a recording of their favourite story...be creative!

☐ Enjoy and celebrate the experience! Motivation is the key to success.

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