

Student Support Services

Inclusive Insights!

This month, we're focusing on how we support students who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). At Stonehill, many of our students speak two or more languages, and this linguistic diversity is something we value and celebrate. In this edition, we share how our EAL programme helps students grow in confidence, engage fully in class, and develop strong English language skills.



DID YOU KNOW?



Building strong language skills in a child's home language gives them a solid foundation, making it easier to learn an additional language.

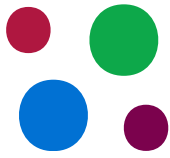


How does your family continue to value and use your home language, and how can this strengthen your child's English learning?



This Month's Focus:

- Introduce our EAL programme, EAL teachers and how they support students across the school
- Share a brief overview of WIDA, the language assessment used to guide student growth
- How creative play and games can ease transitions and support EAL students' confidence and well-being.



What is EAL?



Our EAL teachers support students who are developing English proficiency through a mix of in-class, small-group, and personalised approaches. They help students with vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, while also working closely with classroom teachers to ensure lessons are accessible and language-friendly. Most importantly, they help learners build confidence and feel a sense of belonging at school.



**Our Mid-Year WIDA assessments will take place January 12-20 for P4-P8
P3 WIDA - Feb 2026**

At a Glance

Our EAL team supports students who are developing their English skills in ways that match their individual needs. This includes:

- Push-in support: EAL teachers join the classroom to help students during regular lessons.
- Pull-out support: Small-group sessions where students can focus on targeted language skills in a quieter setting.
- EAL classes: Dedicated English as an Additional Language lessons that help students build vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

The goal is to help every learner feel confident, included, and ready to succeed in all areas of school life.

What is WIDA?

WIDA is a language assessment used in many international schools to understand how students are developing their English skills over time. It helps us see what students can do in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and guides us in planning the right support. It's not a test students need to study for. It's simply a helpful tool that allows us to track growth and celebrate progress.

We assess any student who is a non-native English speaker or who comes from a non-native English-speaking country. WIDA assessments take place 2-3 times per year so we can monitor progress and celebrate growth over time.

Meet The Team!

Let's get to know all about our English as an Additional Language teachers!

This is my seventh year at Stonehill and I am originally from Bangalore, where I bring with me over twelve years of teaching experience across a range of schools. Working in different educational settings has given me valuable perspectives on diverse curricula, classroom practices and the unique needs of learners. I currently work with students who need a little extra support in developing their English language skills and working with these learners has always been close to my heart. I enjoy being with children, nurturing young minds and creating an environment where every child feels encouraged and confident to learn, while also growing and learning alongside them each day. I strongly believe in the power of collaboration and working closely with teachers, parents and administrators to support students and make a positive difference in their lives gives me immense joy and purpose. Watching my students grow in confidence, develop their language skills and achieve success brings me a deep sense of fulfillment and pride each day.

Ms. Madhavi
P7 & P8



Ms. Cheri
P5 & P6

This is my third year at Stonehill as a PYP EAL Teacher, and it has been so great working with an amazing team that truly cares for our learners! I am a true global citizen at heart: originally from the Philippines, I've lived in Italy and Switzerland, and spent 18 wonderful years teaching in international schools in Moscow. Being part of diverse international communities has always been important to me as I love discovering, appreciating, and celebrating different cultures.

I truly believe that every learner adds their own cultural and intellectual magic to the classroom. With my M.A. in TESOL and years of experience in Learning Support, I am dedicated to equipping students with the tools they need to thrive and share their stories. I've always been fascinated by languages, so I find deep fulfillment in supporting young learners as they grow in English. When I'm not teaching, you'll find me on the dance floor! I used to be a dance teacher and I bring this same energy to the classroom, so if there is music playing, you can bet I'll be the first one jumping in to dance!

Ms. Anitha
P3 & P4



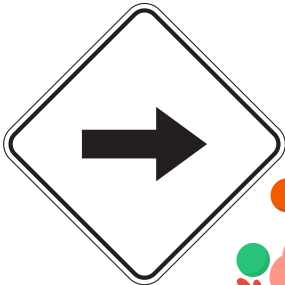
This is my seventh year at Stonehill, and I am grateful to be part of this wonderful community. With over fifteen years of experience in international schools, I have had the privilege of working with learners from many backgrounds. Supporting EAL students is something I deeply value, and helping children grow in confidence as they build their language skills continues to inspire me each day.

I bring a calm, patient, and learner-centred approach to my teaching. Over the years, I have developed strengths in differentiation, creating a supportive learning environment, and collaborating closely with colleagues to plan meaningful learning experiences. I believe in meeting each child where they are and guiding them forward with care and consistency.

I look forward to contributing positively to our school community and partnering with families to support our students' growth. It is an honour to be part of a place that values inclusion, respect, and continuous learning.



Counselor's Corner



Transition Support for EAL Learners



Transitioning into an international school can be both exciting and overwhelming, especially for learners who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). As they step into a new academic environment, a sense of belonging, clear expectations, and positive social connections become essential ingredients for a successful start. One powerful way schools can support this journey is by weaving play-based approaches into daily routines. Elements of play therapy, art, and board games offer safe, enjoyable pathways for EAL students to express themselves, build confidence, and connect with peers beyond language barriers.

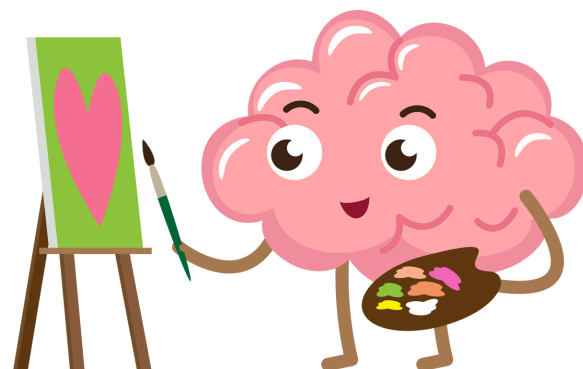
Why Play Works

Play Therapy Elements: Through role play, storytelling, and open-ended materials, students can communicate feelings and ideas without relying solely on verbal skills. This builds emotional comfort and fosters trust with teachers and classmates.

Art as Emotional Regulation: Art offers children a non-verbal outlet to explore, release, and organise their emotions. The act of drawing, painting, or sculpting helps students process big feelings at their own pace while reducing stress. For EAL learners, this is especially important, art becomes a universal language, helping them regulate emotions and feel grounded even when words are still developing.

Board Games as Social & Emotional Tools: Simple games like Candy Land, Jenga, or matching games provide more than entertainment. They create predictable, low-pressure structures where students can practise turn-taking, patience, and cooperation. These games also open gentle opportunities to observe emotions, celebrate a win, handle disappointment, manage excitement and to discuss feelings in a non-threatening, fun way. This playful approach helps students build resilience and emotional awareness while strengthening their English vocabulary naturally.

By embedding these strategies, schools create a warm, inclusive atmosphere that strengthens EAL students' social integration and enhances their overall confidence.



Supporting Your Child's Transition

- Play together: Simple board games in any language help build readiness for social interactions at school.
- Encourage creativity: Offer drawing or crafting time at home to help children express emotions about their new environment.
- Use your home language: Maintaining the mother tongue supports stronger overall language development, including English.
- Celebrate small steps: Acknowledge effort, curiosity, and any new words or friendships made.
- Stay connected: Communicate regularly with teachers about your child's progress and well-being.