

Culturally Safe Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the strategies and actions undertaken by the School, as an Independent School governed by the School Board, to ensure a culturally safe, inclusive and supportive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families.

This policy gives effect to:

- **Child Safe Standard 1** – Culturally safe environments
- **Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 5**

The School is committed to ensuring Aboriginal children and students are safe, respected and empowered, and that their right to express and enjoy their culture is actively supported.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- The School Board
- The Principal and Executive Leadership
- All employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Students
- Members of the School community

3. Statement of Commitment (Child Safe Standard 1)

The School:

- Recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations peoples of Australia.
- Acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the School operates and pays respect to Elders past and present.
- Commits to creating a culturally safe environment where Aboriginal children, young people and their families feel respected, valued and supported.
- Does not tolerate racism in any form.
- Actively promotes the strengths and cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

4. Policy Alignment to Ministerial Order 1359 – Clause 5

4.1 Clause 5.1

The School supports and encourages Aboriginal children and students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.

The School will:

- Integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures into curriculum programs.
- Celebrate NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week and other culturally significant events.
- Conduct Acknowledgement of Country at assemblies and significant events.
- Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.
- Promote student voice and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal students.
- Provide culturally responsive wellbeing supports.
- Respect cultural obligations, family structures and community connections.

4.2 Clause 5.2

The School embeds strategies that equip staff and the School community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to wellbeing and safety.

The School will:

- Provide regular professional learning on:
 - Cultural safety
 - Cultural competence
 - Anti-racism practices
 - Trauma-informed approaches
- Include cultural safety in induction processes for staff and volunteers.
- Partner, where possible, with local Aboriginal organisations and community representatives.
- Embed culturally responsive teaching practices.
- Promote respectful dialogue about culture and identity.
- Encourage student-led reconciliation initiatives.

5. Preventing and Addressing Racism

In accordance with Child Safe Standard 1 and Clause 5:

The School adopts clear measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated.

5.1 Prevention

- Explicit prohibition of racism in:
 - Student Code of Conduct
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Anti-Bullying Policy
- Education programs addressing discrimination and cultural respect.
- Promotion of inclusive language and respectful behaviours.
- Visible leadership commitment to anti-racism.

5.2 Reporting and Response

- Clear, accessible reporting pathways for students, families and staff.
- Prompt investigation of incidents.
- Appropriate disciplinary action consistent with policy.
- Restorative practices where appropriate.
- Support for impacted students and families.
- Monitoring and review of incident data to identify trends.

Racism or culturally unsafe behaviour is considered a serious breach of School expectations.

6. Participation and Inclusion of Aboriginal Families

The School actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children and their families through:

- Culturally respectful communication practices.
- Consultation in decision-making processes affecting their child.
- Flexible engagement opportunities.
- Welcoming physical environments reflecting cultural respect.
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal students and families.
- Providing access to culturally appropriate wellbeing supports.

7. Whole-School Systems Approach

In alignment with Child Safe Standards 1–11, the School ensures that cultural safety is embedded across all policies, procedures, systems and processes.

This includes:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Staff and Student Codes of Conduct
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Recruitment and Screening Processes
- Risk Management Framework
- Curriculum Planning and Review
- Student Wellbeing Framework
- Professional Learning Plans

Cultural safety considerations are incorporated into risk assessments, policy reviews and governance oversight.

8. Governance and Accountability

8.1 School Board

The School Board:

- Endorses this policy.
- Ensures compliance with Ministerial Order 1359.
- Monitors implementation through governance reporting.
- Reviews this policy at least biennially.

8.2 Principal

The Principal:

- Leads implementation of culturally safe practices.
- Ensures professional learning is delivered.
- Ensures complaints and incidents are appropriately managed.
- Reports to the School Board on Child Safe compliance.

8.3 Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers:

- Participate in cultural safety training.
- Model respectful and inclusive behaviour.
- Actively identify and respond to racism.
- Promote culturally responsive practices in their roles.

9. Continuous Improvement (Audit Readiness)

The School will:

- Maintain evidence of professional learning attendance.
- Retain records of curriculum planning incorporating Aboriginal perspectives.
- Document consultation with Aboriginal families and community partners.
- Monitor incident data relating to discrimination and racism.
- Include cultural safety in annual Child Safe self-assessment processes.
- Review this policy at least every two years, or sooner if required.