

Related Policies

Curriculum

Rationale/Purpose

Aboriginality is not just a physical manifestation of Aboriginality, but includes a combination of cultural heritage, spirituality and an intrinsic link with the land.

“Being Aboriginal has nothing to do with the colour of your skin or the shape of your nose. It is a spiritual feeling, an identity you know in your heart. It is unique feeling that may be difficult for non-Aboriginal people to understand.” Linda Burney, 1994.

In 1993, the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn launched its Aboriginal Education Policy. This policy stood as an affirmation that we, as a Church, follow the example of Jesus and seek to achieve justice and harmony with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through educational processes.

There is a growing awareness of the sublime dignity of human persons, who stand above all things and whose rights and duties are universal and inviolable. They ought, therefore, to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life: for example, food, clothing, housing, ... the right to education, and work.

#26, The Church in the Modern World

The Catholic Education Commission acknowledges the progress made so far and calls upon the Catholic Education System, Catholic Education Office and Catholic schools to continue to play an important role in establishing processes and procedures to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contemporary society.

We need to develop working partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve more equitable outcomes in education. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture are one of the three Cross-curricular priorities embedded in the Australian curriculum and provides for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world’s oldest continuous living culture.

Catholic schools have a role to play in developing attitudes, knowledge and behaviours which continue to promote Reconciliation at all levels in our school communities.

This policy has been written in line with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014, CEC Aboriginal Education Strategic Planning Policy 2009,

http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/cross_curriculum_priorities.html and

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Documents/AdminGuide2011Update.pdf> (page 22)

Achieving parity and equitable outcomes are objectives of the Archdiocesan Aboriginal Education Funding Agreement with the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training and reflected in the performance indicators negotiated for the quadrennial funding period 2009 – 2012.

Definitions

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person

- is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; or
- identifies as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; or
- is accepted as such by the community in which he/she lives or has lived.

Policy

The Catholic Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn supports the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy and the National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century and works to achieve improved and equitable educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The seven key focus areas for the Catholic Education System are:

- Access and Participation
- Readiness for school
- Engagement and connection
- Attendance & Retention
- Literacy & Numeracy
- Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- Pathways to real post-school options

Procedures

1. Access and Participation

Catholic schools will encourage the enrolment and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, through the development of welcoming and supportive environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families, by:

- ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities know that Catholic Schools welcome the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting information relating to Catholic school programs to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and families through other agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
- assisting the enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through flexible and culturally sensitive processes and procedures that recognize the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their membership in extended families
- supporting students and their families in times of transition
- monitoring and case managing the progress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- liaising with specialist Catholic Education Office Aboriginal Education Staff

2. Readiness for School

Catholic schools will provide culturally inclusive high quality early childhood education and care that can assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get the best start in life by:

- developing outreach strategies to connect with early childhood education centres
- ensuring the delivery of quality early education programs through partnerships with families
- providing culturally appropriate on-entry assessment program to assess students pre-literacy, literacy, pre-numeracy and numeracy skills to assist with the implementation of early intervention strategies

3. Engagement and Connection

The Catholic Education System will promote the involvement of parents/carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, community by:

- providing a climate in schools that welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as valuable members of the education community through personalising invitations to families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to all school events and encourage attendance
- planning for and utilising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as special teachers of the culture, history, contemporary society and languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the area. Knowledge of who the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents/carers are and what gifts they may have to contribute to the school community will benefit schools in the Archdiocese
- providing information and opportunities for parents/carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to participate confidently within the school and encourage participation on School Boards and committees
- providing information to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents/carers and students about the range of support programs available through the CEO Aboriginal Education Team and other agencies
- ensuring parents' understanding of school life is clarified in collaboration with Aboriginal Education Staff and support programs available through the CEO Aboriginal Education Team and other agencies

4. Attendance and Retention

Catholic schools will endeavour to increase the attendance rates of students and improve the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 8-12 and improve the attainment of Year 10 and Year 12 Certificates or equivalents by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by:

- Providing welcoming, culturally sensitive and supportive school environments.
- Developing and implementing programs and procedures in school for students, staff and school communities to combat racism.
- Establishing processes for positive and effective relationships between the staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Establishing mentoring, role modeling and student centered programs at the school level to promote and encourage the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students throughout the secondary years.
- Providing school and inter-agency support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families to encourage and assist regular school attendance.
- Providing quality structured workplace opportunities and vocational education programs at the school level for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Establishing community and industry education clusters to encourage attainment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 10 and Year 12 Certificate levels, and to increase post-compulsory schooling options.

5. Literacy and Numeracy

Catholic schools will endeavour to improve all levels of literacy and numeracy awareness and understanding of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, by:

- establishing processes and procedures to identify and cater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students not achieving equitable outcomes in literacy and numeracy
- promoting and demonstrating the recognition and valuing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of learning and cultural differences
- developing and implementing in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, parents and community members, culturally sensitive processes, content and resources for literacy

and numeracy development across the curriculum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- developing and implementing at the school level a framework, including the collection of baseline data, for reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy
- developing literacy and numeracy performance measures and assessment methods at the school level that are culturally sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- establishing language programs that encourage and assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve proficiency in Standard Australian English, and are inclusive of the students' home languages

6. Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development

Catholic schools will provide opportunities in professional development to support Principals and teachers in fostering student engagement to improve student educational outcomes by:

- representing the Church's view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Reconciliation
- developing and implementing learning programs and experiences that are based on culturally inclusive pedagogy and allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be strong in their own culture and language and reposition their culture, languages, histories, beliefs and lifestyles in a way which affirms identity and the ability to operate in cross cultural situations
- providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed by the Catholic Education Office to complete teacher training or other qualifications which will equip them to develop/improve their opportunities within the Catholic Education System
- informing all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff of training and career opportunities and encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage in professional learning
- recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by advertising positions widely, including in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media
- developing a database of Aboriginal employees who can provide relief support in schools

7. Pathways to Real Post-school Options

Catholic schools will maximise opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to make successful transition from school to work and further study by:

- strengthening partnerships between schools, VET providers, universities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to broaden the horizons and post-school options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- liaising with universities regarding opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to undertake their teaching practicum in Catholic Schools
- developing innovative uses of interface technologies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

References

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014.
- CEC Aboriginal Education Strategic Planning Policy 2009
- National Curriculum - Cross Curriculum Priorities:
http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/cross_curriculum_priorities.html
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategic Initiatives Programmes Target and Performance Indicators (2010 - 2014 Quadrennial).
- DEEWR School Programs Admin Guide 2011

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Documents/AdminGuide2011Update.pdf> (page 22)

- Address of John Paul II, To the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in “Blatherskite Park”, Alice Springs (Australia), 29 November 1986.

http://www.natsicc.org.au/popes_speech.htm

- The Church in the Modern World

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

Forms

Nil

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