



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy

Classification

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1. Introduction and Purpose

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the original inhabitants and custodians of Australia. Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) embraces the richness and diversity which exists within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Nations of Australia.

SCS values the histories, cultures, spiritualities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and acknowledges the shared history of our stories.

The purpose of the SCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (the Policy) is to

state SCS' commitment to the achievement of the best educational outcomes and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to affirm SCS commitment to reconciliation through education.

The policy is placed in the context of meeting the 'Closing The Gap' targets (2022-2032) and in light of SCS commitment to reconciliation through the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney [Reconciliation Action Plan](#).

2. Scope

This policy applies to SCS staff and parents/carers of students enrolled in an SCS school. In this policy, SCS staff means all employees or members of religious orders engaged in schools.

3. Guiding Principles

- 3.1. SCS acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Custodians of the Lands upon which our schools stand.
- 3.2. SCS values the histories, cultures and spiritualities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- 3.3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are confident and strong learners, empowered to succeed and shape their own futures and supported to embrace their cultures and identity.
- 3.4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in SCS schools includes the education of all students and the provision of a curriculum that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as first peoples of Australia.

4. Policy Commitments

SCS commits to:

- Maximize the educational outcomes and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students so that they excel and achieve in every aspect of their education.
- Achieve the goal that, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader population.
- Increase the participation, engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in our schools.
- Promote, encourage and maintain high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and encourage the pursuit of personal excellence and a commitment to learning:
 - all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will have a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) that is developed in consultation with the students, their families/carers and teachers to promote engagement for success.
 - the development and implementation of PLPs is an active and continuous process.
- Improve the lifelong learning pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. This will include transitions:
 - from home to preschool, where appropriate and to school
 - through primary and secondary education
 - from school into further study and employment
- Provide supportive and culturally inclusive learning environments for Aboriginal students through which their identities and cultures are valued and acknowledged.
- Develop quality partnerships, characterised by listening and responding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' families and communities
- Promote and increase knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, perspectives and contributions for all students through the implementation of the cross curriculum priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.
- Provide Aboriginal cultural education for all SCS staff and education about Aboriginal Australia for all students.
- In line with the [SCS Recruitment Policy](#), employ, promote, retain and support Aboriginal people in a broad range of positions across all areas of SCS.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. SCS Central Office staff

SCS Central Office staff are required to:

- Provide policy and strategy support in areas of SCS commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education relevant to the directorate's portfolios.
- Promote understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, spiritualities and appropriate cultural protocols by incorporating 'Acknowledgement of Country' led by Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people before gatherings and meetings and 'Welcome to Country' led by Aboriginal people where possible.
- Foster and develop quality and meaningful partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities.
- Support education that is culturally aware and responsive.
- Value and acknowledge the identities of Aboriginal students.
- Provide supportive and culturally inclusive learning environments for Aboriginal students.
- Complete SCS Aboriginal cultural education for staff.

5.2. Principals

Principals (or their delegate) are required to ensure that the school complies with its obligations with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. These being to:

- Welcome and encourage the enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within the context of the [SCS Enrolment Policy](#).
- Develop and implement school accountabilities through Annual Implementation Plans aligned with the [SCS School Improvement Framework](#) to progress the learning, engagement and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Ensure that processes to develop, implement and monitor Aboriginal student personalised plans for all Aboriginal students are in place.
- Incorporate curriculum and pedagogical strategies that comply with this policy into the school annual implementation plan.
- Incorporate Student Wellbeing strategies that comply with this policy into the school Annual Implementation plan
- Incorporate cultural protocols within the school annual implementation plan that comply with this policy
- Support staff to participate in their learning of Aboriginal cultural knowledge.
- Ensure the implementation of NESA cross curriculum priority area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Develop quality and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities recognising the significant role of family and kinship relationships.

- Support the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by respecting and valuing their cultural backgrounds and identities and providing supportive and culturally inclusive learning environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Ensure that all members of the school community are educated with regard to the implementation and compliance with this policy.

5.3. School staff

- Implement the SCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy in their teaching and learning programs.
- Contribute to developing, implementing and monitoring a PLP for each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student they teach in collaboration with family, carers and student voice.
- Provide a supportive and welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities through the provision of cultural safety.
- Complete SCS Aboriginal cultural education.

5.4. Parents/Carers

Parents/carers of students enrolled at an SCS school are required to:

- Encourage high expectations for their children.
- Support the development of positive and collaborative relationships within the schools and wider communities.
- Support the [Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools](#).

6. Further Information

For further information in relation to this policy, please contact the Student Wellbeing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander team via email at studentwellbeing-contact@syd.catholic.edu.au.