



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY FEBRUARY 2017

1. **PURPOSE**

- i. To achieve improved educational outcomes for all students.
- ii. To promote, maintain and support the teaching of indigenous studies, cultures and languages to indigenous and non-indigenous students.
- iii. To strengthen relationships between indigenous communities and the school.

2. **POLICY STATEMENT**

It is recognised that indigenous and non-indigenous students alike benefit significantly from programs that encompass aspects of the contemporary cultural heritage and lifestyle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as the historical and traditional aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history. Furthermore, indigenous students benefit greatly from culturally inclusive school environments that recognise and support their particular needs.

3. **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students, staff and families at St Patrick's.

4. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families add to the rich diversity of our school and community. The Awabakal people are the traditional owners of the area on which our school stands. The school community shows respect for Aboriginal culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship that the traditional custodians have with the land. The "Acknowledgement of Country" is used to open each Friday morning assembly, and on important occasions such as the end-of-year presentation evening.

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- i. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education within our school will be consistent with the Catholic Schools Office Policy Statement "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education" (May 2013).
- ii. An appropriate teaching staff member will be assigned the task of coordinating and managing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education across the school, and to establish links with the wider community.
- iii. Aboriginal studies and appropriate resources will feature in the curriculum at all year levels.
- iv. Specific needs of Aboriginal students will be identified and addressed.
- v. All data relating to performance of Aboriginal students and parent involvement in schools will be collected as required.
- vi. Partnerships will be developed between the school and the community to jointly enhance educational outcomes and to encourage active involvement of indigenous people in school decision-making processes.
- vii. Partnerships will be developed with Aboriginal organisations and agencies as required.
- viii. Special days and events will be recognised, e.g. NAIDOC Week.
- ix. The school will send a delegation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to the annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liturgy at Sacred Heart Cathedral – an event which coincides with "Sorry Day", the anniversary of the tabling of the Bringing Them Home Report in Federal Parliament.
- x. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will be supported through fundraising projects. We will raise funds to support:

- a. **The Indigenous Literacy Foundation.** This organisation works to provide access to books and literacy resources to over 200 remote indigenous communities in Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales. In conjunction with Book Week each year, “The Great Book Swap” is organised to provide financial to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.
 - b. **The Mary MacKillop Foundation.** The Mary MacKillop Foundation provides grants to organisations for small life-changing projects in the areas of self-determination, spirituality and strengthening of culture. Each year, a fundraiser is organised to support the Mary MacKillop Foundation.
- xi. The Aboriginal flag is flown on appropriate occasions throughout the school year.
 - xii. Strategies that promote and increase involvement of parents of Aboriginal students in school activities will be implemented.
 - xiii. School anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies will be developed and implemented.
 - xiv. Policy, curriculum and program advice will be sought from the Aboriginal Education Officer at the Catholic Schools Office.

6. BUDGET

The school will make provision each year in its annual budget for professional development opportunities for the staff and educational opportunities for the students.

7. NEXT REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed in 2020 in consultation with relevant staff.

8. DEFINITIONS

- i. Diversity: The inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, colour, religion, socioeconomic status, etc.
- ii. NAIDOC Week: National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Week, which lasts from the first Sunday in July until the following Sunday.
- iii. Sorry Day: The anniversary of the tabling of the Bringing Them Home Report in Federal Parliament.

9. LEGISLATIVE / PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education”, Catholic Schools Office Policy Statement, May 2013.