



Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children and Families Policy

Rationale

Alice Miller School places a premium on ensuring that Aboriginal children and young people feel safe whilst under the school's care.

The term 'Aboriginal', in this policy, includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We note the importance of respecting the ways in which individual children, students, their families and communities refer to themselves, and our use of appropriate language.

Cultural safety includes being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where Aboriginal children:

- feel comfortable being themselves
- feel comfortable expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems
- are supported by carers who respect their Aboriginality and encourage their sense of self and identity.

We recognise that the key elements of cultural safety in the school are as follows:

Understanding identity

Identifying as Aboriginal is one part of a child or young person's identity. Like everyone, Aboriginal people have different life experiences and characteristics. We recognise that each person is unique with their own characteristics, strengths and challenges.

Respecting culture

Culture and identity are linked. By supporting Aboriginal children to feel strong in their identity we also help them enjoy their cultural rights.

Australia's colonial history has caused significant trauma and hurt that many individuals, families and communities still feel today. We respect the resilience shown by many Aboriginal communities in relation to such trauma and hurt.

Eliminating racism and abuse

We oppose racial discrimination and will do all that is within our capacity to keep Aboriginal children and young people in the school community safe from abuse and harm.

Actions we take are as follows:

We encourage and actively support a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights in the following ways:

- We equip staff, students, volunteers and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students.
- We do our utmost to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated.
- We address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences, as always using our 'case-by-case approach' to such incidents.
- We actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal children, students and their families.
- We ensure school policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, students and their families.

Relevant standards

- [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises \(PDF, 363KB\)](#)
- [Child Safe Standard 1](#) – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

In implementing this standard, we note that we also have in place other policies regarding such issues as bullying and mandatory reporting, which should be considered in conjunction with this policy. However, with specific reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people, we encourage teachers to consider some or all of the following, but keeping in mind that this should not be considered a definitive or finite list:

- Beginning events with a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country, as appropriate.
- Displaying signs of various kinds to acknowledge country and traditional owners.
- Making Aboriginal voices a part of decision-making in matters which affect Aboriginal students.
- Celebrating the local Aboriginal community.
- Learning more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia.
- Speaking with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Building school wide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.
- Acknowledging and drawing on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
- Asking for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about the school's practices.

- Working with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and promoting cultural inclusion.
- Finding out as much as possible about the traditional owners of the land where the school is located.
- Developing resources which support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.
- Engaging with local Aboriginal communities via traditional owner groups and other appropriate groups.
- Visiting an Aboriginal Cultural Learning Centre.

We recognise the document 'Building Respectful Partnerships', subtitled 'The Commitment to Aboriginal Cultural Competence in Child and Family Services' which can be found at [VAC.0001.003.0074.pdf \(childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au\)](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/VAC.0001.003.0074.pdf) as a thoughtful discussion of ways in which partnerships can be built on cultural respect and understanding, leading to improved outcomes for Aboriginal children. Building cultural competence and following respectful practices is of the greatest importance in all 'group dynamics' in all organisations and communities.

We acknowledge the importance in Australian history of the dates in the following appendix, which are regarded as key events and anniversaries for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

We review our child safety and wellbeing policies:

- after any significant child safety incident
- at least once every 2 years.

John Marsden

30 September, 2022

To be reviewed by 30 September, 2024.

APPENDIX

1. 2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations – 13 February
2. Close the Gap Day – 18 March
3. Harmony Day – 21 March
4. Sorry Day and Anniversary the 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart – 26 May
5. Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum – 27 May
6. Reconciliation Week – 27 May to 3 June
7. Mabo Day – 3 June
8. Anniversary of the 1988 Barunga Statement – 11 June
9. Coming of the Light – 1 July
10. NAIDOC week – First week of July
11. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day – 4 August
12. International Day of Indigenous People – 9 August
13. 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petition to Parliament anniversary – 14 August
14. Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 13 September