



### Related Policies

Curriculum Policy  
Retention Policy

### Preamble

*The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ speaks all languages. It esteems and embraces all cultures. It supports them in everything human and, when necessary, it purifies them. Always and everywhere the Gospel uplifts and enriches cultures with the revealed message of a loving and merciful God.*

#12 Address of John Paul II, To The Aborigines And Torres Strait Islanders in "Blatherskite Park", Alice Springs (Australia), 29 November 1986.

*A duty most appropriate in our times, especially for Christians, is to work untiringly to the end that fundamental economic and political decisions are taken, nationally and internationally, which will ensure the recognition and implementation everywhere of everyone's right to human and civil culture in harmony with personal dignity, without distinction of race, sex, nation, religion, or social circumstances.*

#60, The Church in the Modern World.

*The greatest value ... is respect for the dignity and growth of the human person.*

#11 Address of John Paul II, To The Aborigines And Torres Strait Islanders in "Blatherskite Park", Alice Springs (Australia), 29 November 1986.

### Purpose

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 Indigenous people 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 Indigenous people in contemporary society.

We need to develop working partnerships with Indigenous peoples to achieve more equitable outcomes in education and to promote the inclusion of Indigenous studies/perspectives across the curriculum.

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 *Report of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Taskforce on Indigenous Education (March 2000)*, the *Joint Policy Statement of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy of 1989*, the *National Indigenous English Literacy, Numeracy and Attendance Strategy 2000 – 2004* and the discussion paper *Achieving Educational Equality for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Discussion Paper by MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education (November 1999)*.

Consultation meetings with Indigenous parents/carers and community people were held in regional centres and the ACT in 2004. Many of the procedures are a result of this consultative process with Indigenous people

Achieving parity and equitable outcomes are objectives of the Archdiocesan Indigenous 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 2005–2008.

### 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century and works to achieve improved and equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

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

- **Access and Participation**  
Encourage the enrolment of Indigenous students, provide environments that value the individuality of each, acknowledge the diversity of their backgrounds and support them to achieve improved educational outcomes and success.
- **Attendance & Retention**  
Ensure Indigenous students receive support services at school to address absenteeism, truancy and alienations from school to improve and maintain regular school attendance, retention and attainment rates for Year 10 and Year 12.
- **Literacy**  
Provide the foundation for students to learn; demonstrate literacy awareness and understanding; demonstrate comparable performance and achieve outcomes equitable with non-indigenous students in literacy in the primary, secondary and college years.
- **Numeracy**  
Develop Indigenous students' understanding of the language of mathematics and mathematical concepts and practices, accommodating the diversity of student learning needs.

- **Culturally Inclusive Curricula**  
Promote and implement the explicit teaching of Indigenous Studies and the inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives to create an enhanced learning environment for Indigenous students and to ensure all students deepen their understanding of, and respect for, Indigenous people.
- **Involvement of Indigenous Parents and Community in Educational Decision Making**  
Encourage and affirm the contribution of Indigenous people to the life of the school community and seek to work in partnership with them to achieve equitable outcomes for Indigenous students.
- **Indigenous Employment & Professional Development**  
Encourage the employment of Indigenous people at all levels of the school community and across the system.

### Definitions

An *Indigenous* person is an *Aboriginal* or *Torres Strait Islander* person who:

- 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.

### Procedures

#### 1 Access and Participation

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

- 1.1 Ensuring Indigenous communities know that Catholic Schools welcome the presence of Indigenous students.
- 1.2 Promoting information relating to Catholic school programs to the Indigenous community and families through other agencies and Indigenous organisations.
- 1.3 Assisting the enrolment of Indigenous students through flexible and culturally sensitive processes and procedures that recognize the needs of Indigenous families and their membership in extended families.
- 1.4 Communicating with Indigenous families when students are not enrolled to ascertain the reasons for their non-enrolment at the school.
- 1.5 Supporting students and their families in times of transition.
- 1.6 Monitoring and case managing the progress of Indigenous students.
- 1.7 Liaising with specialist Catholic Education Office Indigenous Education Staff.

### 2 Attendance and Retention

Catholic schools will endeavour to increase the attendance rates of all Indigenous students, improve the retention of Indigenous students in Years 8-12 and improve the attainment of Year 10 and Year 12 Certificates or equivalents by Indigenous students, by:

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

### 3 Literacy

Catholic schools will endeavour to improve the levels of literacy awareness and understanding of all Indigenous students by:

- 3.1 Establishing processes and procedures to identify and cater for Indigenous students not achieving equitable outcomes in literacy.
- 3.2 Developing and implementing in collaboration with Indigenous staff, parents and community members, culturally sensitive processes, content and resources for language and literacy development across the curriculum.
- 3.3 Establishing language programs that encourage and assist Indigenous students to achieve proficiency in Standard Australian English, and are inclusive of the student's home language.
- 3.4 Developing language and literacy performance measures and assessment methods at the school level that are culturally sensitive to Indigenous students.

### 4 Numeracy

Catholic schools will endeavour to improve the levels of mathematics and numeracy awareness, understanding and outcomes for Indigenous students at all levels of education, by:

- 4.1 Promoting and demonstrating the recognition and valuing of Indigenous ways of learning and Indigenous cultural differences.
- 4.2 Developing and implementing in collaboration with Indigenous staff, parents and community members, more culturally sensitive processes, content and resources for mathematics and numeracy development across the curriculum for Indigenous students.
- 4.3 Using support programs to assist the achievement of mathematics and numeracy outcomes for Indigenous students.
- 4.4 Developing and implementing at the school level a framework, including the collection of baseline data, for reporting on Indigenous student progress and achievement in mathematics and numeracy.

### 5 Culturally Inclusive Curricula

Catholic schools strive to promote the implementation of culturally appropriate programs to assist the provision of curricula that are inclusive of Indigenous perspectives, by:

- 5.1 Representing the Church's view of Indigenous people and Reconciliation.
- 5.2 Providing professional learning opportunities for teachers to critically evaluate existing Indigenous Studies programs and to develop these programs in innovative and creative ways.
- 5.3 Developing and implementing learning programs and experiences that are based on culturally inclusive pedagogy and allow Indigenous 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.
- 5.4 Providing learning opportunities about Indigenous culture within the Archdiocesan Catholic Education System.

### 6 Involvement of Indigenous Parents and Community in Educational Decision Making

The Catholic Education System will promote the involvement of parents/carers of Indigenous students and Indigenous community in decision-making, by:

- 6.1 Providing a climate in schools that welcomes Indigenous people as valuable members of the education community through personalising invitations to families of Indigenous students to all school events and encourage attendance.
- 6.2 Planning for and utilising Indigenous people as special teachers of the culture, history, contemporary society and languages of Indigenous people in the area through knowing who the Indigenous parents/carers are and what gifts they may have to contribute to the school community.

---

---

## Indigenous Education

---

---

- 6.3 Providing information and opportunities for parents/carers of indigenous students to participate confidently within the school and encourage participation on School Boards and committees, through:
- Setting up structures within the schools that enable the participation of Indigenous parents/carers.
  - Providing opportunities, which enable the voices of Indigenous parents/carers to be heard.
  - Providing information and training sessions about serving on School Boards and Archdiocesan committees to encourage involvement.
- 6.4 Ensuring parents' understanding of school life is clarified in collaboration with Indigenous Education Staff.
- 6.5 Providing information to Indigenous parents/carers and students about the range of support programs available through the CEO Indigenous Education Unit and other agencies.

## 7 Indigenous Employment & Professional Development

The Catholic Education Office will encourage the employment of Indigenous people across the system by:

- 7.1 Implementing policies and provide training for all staff in relation to:
- Equal Opportunity in the Workplace.
  - Anti-Discrimination.
- 7.2 Providing a supportive and welcoming work environment free of racist and discriminatory practices.
- 7.3 Providing orientation and support structures, including mentoring programs, performance management processes and appropriate grievance procedures, for Indigenous employees.
- 7.4 Recruiting Indigenous staff by advertising positions widely, including in the Indigenous media.
- 7.5 Informing all Indigenous staff of training and career opportunities and encouraging Indigenous employees to engage in professional learning.
- 7.6 Providing opportunities for Indigenous people 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.
- 7.7 Liaising with universities regarding opportunities for Indigenous students to undertake their teaching practicum in Catholic Schools.
- 7.8 Developing a database of Aboriginal employees who can provide relief support in schools.

### References

- *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.*  
[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous\\_education/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/national\\_goals\\_for\\_indigenous\\_education.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/policy_issues_reviews/national_goals_for_indigenous_education.htm)
- *Report of the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Taskforce on Indigenous Education (March 2000).*  
<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/pdf/reportm.pdf>
- *Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programmes Target and Performance Indicators (2005-2008 Quadrennial).*
- *National Indigenous English Literacy, Numeracy and Attendance Strategy 2000 – 2004.*  
[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous\\_education/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/national\\_indigenous\\_english\\_literacy\\_and\\_numeracy\\_strategy.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/policy_issues_reviews/national_indigenous_english_literacy_and_numeracy_strategy.htm)
- *Achieving Educational Equality for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Discussion Paper by MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education (November 2000).*  
<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/pdf/reporta.pdf>
- *A Model Of More Culturally Inclusive and Educationally Effective Schools by MCEETYA (2000).*  
<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/pdf/model.pdf>
- *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](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](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)

### Forms

Nil

<b>Approved by:</b>	Catholic Education Commission (C&G)
<b>Issuing Group:</b>	Religious Education and Curriculum Permanent Committee
<b>Implementation Date:</b>	October 2006
<b>Supersedes Policy Dated:</b>	1993
<b>Revision Date:</b>	2010
<b>CEO Contact Officer:</b>	Dr Michael Gaffney, Head of Education Services