

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Written: 2014
Next Review: 2017

RATIONALE:

Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Australia. Catholic education embraces the richness and diversity which exists within the Aboriginal nations of Australia. Catholic education is committed to maximising the learning opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Catholic school communities have a responsibility to create an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal people, their histories, cultures and spirituality. Catholic schools will play an important role in the formation of their students to develop as active and contributing members of Australian society. 'Catholic schools can serve as models for all within Western Australia who seek to create genuine communities. Such communities are always founded upon shared commitment to the common good' (Mandate paragraph 6).¹

2. DEFINITIONS:

- 2.1 The term Aboriginal refers to the original inhabitants of Australia and includes the Torres Strait Islander people.
- 2.2 The term Aboriginal education applies to all areas within the school including learning and teaching, reconciliation, employment, career pathways and community partnerships.
- 2.3 The term Aboriginal Education Plan refers to schools developing a formalised approach through the development of a strategic action plan to address Aboriginal education in the school.
- 2.4 The term 'Aboriginal Nation' refers to Aboriginal society as one

3. PRINCIPLES:

- 3.1 Aboriginal people have a rich history, culture and spirituality that can be shared with all Australians.
- 3.2 Catholic education is committed to increasing knowledge and understanding of the histories, cultures and experience of Aboriginal people as the first peoples of Australia.
- 3.3 Catholic schools recognise that parents are the first educators of their children.
- 3.4 Catholic education is committed to collaborative decision making and capacity building with Aboriginal people, parents, caregivers, families and communities.
- 3.5 Aboriginal students in Catholic schools have the right to be provided with educational experiences comparable to all Australians whilst maintaining their cultural identity.
- 3.6 Catholic education is committed to reconciliation which promotes the principles of inclusivity, equity, justice and consultation.
- 3.7 Catholic education is committed to increasing employment and promotional opportunities for Aboriginal people.

PROCEDURES:

- 4.1 St Joseph's adopts an Aboriginal Education Plan which is consistent with guidelines provided by national and state agreements.
- 4.2 St Joseph's prides itself in integrating Aboriginal education across all areas of curriculum through the uses of a variety of resources and mediums.
- 4.3 Aboriginal language and cultural education programs for use in schools shall be developed in collaboration with the Aboriginal community (Noongar – in Pinjarra) which are consistent with relevant documents developed by the Catholic Education Aboriginal Committee (CEAC).
- 4.4 Ongoing professional learning in Aboriginal understandings shall be provided to all staff working in Catholic education. Members of the local Aboriginal community shall be invited to be involved in the delivery of this professional learning.
- 4.5 St Joseph's actively encourages and supports our Aboriginal teacher assistant (ATA) to be represented appropriately on school decision making committees in regards to the Aboriginal students in our school.
- 4.6 St Joseph's actively encourages and supports our ATA to undertake training and further education.
- 4.7 Catholic schools shall encourage the employment and promotion of eligible, qualified Aboriginal people to leadership roles.
- 4.8 St Joseph's takes pride in their involvement in the reconciliation process through the recognition, acceptance and celebration of Aboriginal cultural traditions and values by regularly visiting the Pinjarra Massacre Site, Storytelling during Book Week, NAIDOC and Sorry Day celebrations.