



Our Lady of Mt Carmel School Mullewa

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY

Originally released: 1997

Revised: 2008

Due for Review: 2013

RATIONALE

Within the process of reconciliation, and recognising cultural traditions and values, aboriginal students have the opportunity to develop their full potential academically, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Aboriginal parents are the primary educators of their children and are concerned with issues of education and participate in the process of change in partnership with the school. Non-Aboriginal students are empowered to participate in the reconciliation process through access to experiences that promote understanding of Aboriginal issues.

PRINCIPLES

1. Aboriginal students have the right to access Catholic education if sought, and to achieve equitable learning outcomes to all Australians whilst maintaining their cultural identity.
2. Non-Aboriginal students have access to appropriate learning experiences, which promote an understanding of the historical contexts of the indigenous people, their Aboriginality and the process of reconciliation.
3. Aboriginal parents determine the educational needs of their children in partnership with the school, and support the school in its endeavours to provide appropriate educational experiences.
4. The development of sound educational practices is the enabling process for the implementation of the reconciliation strategy.

PROCEDURES

1. The Curriculum Framework shall be used to develop and implement Aboriginal Studies across the Curriculum using an integrated approach in all relevant subject areas. Teachers will integrate the teaching and learning of Aboriginal culture according to the needs and characteristics of their students.
2. In accordance with the school's Reconciliation Strategy there shall be a partnership approach to education where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people learn from each other. This approach to education will be demonstrated by the participation of Aboriginal people in the development of appropriate educational experiences.
3. The "Aboriginal Studies Across the Curriculum" document produced by the Catholic Education Office shall be used as an extensive, informative resource for teachers planning discrete units of work linked to Society and Environment within the Curriculum Framework document. (See page 15 of the Staff Handbook).
4. The school recognizes the importance of, and respects the use of, Aboriginal English by Aboriginal students within the school. Where appropriate, the correct use of Standard

Australian English will be encouraged alongside Aboriginal English during the teaching and learning process.

5. The school shall be involved in ongoing Aboriginal cultural awareness training for all staff at appropriate times. Wherever possible, the local Aboriginal community will be involved in the delivery of this training to ensure that local perspectives are provided.
6. The school shall actively encourage and support Aboriginal people who undertake training and higher education to further the goals of the Catholic education system.
7. The school shall encourage the employment and promotion to leadership roles of eligible, qualified Aboriginal people who are acceptable to the local Aboriginal community.
8. The school celebration of NAIDOC Week shall operate with organisation and leadership provided by the Aboriginal parents assisted by classroom teachers. Activities are to be selected appropriate to the number of parents willing to be involved.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICE

Teachers are encouraged to use the following suggestions in order to develop appropriate learning experiences and a positive environment within their classrooms and across the school.

- Encourage Aboriginal Teaching Assistants to work within classrooms as per the daily timetable, with all students, in all areas of instruction as per need.
- Involve Aboriginal Teaching Assistants in the planning and implementation of special Aboriginal programs operating within the school, including the celebration of special events.
- Make contact with, and establish an effective working relationship with the local Youth Development Officer employed by the Mullewa Shire. Consider areas the officer can be of assistance with students.
- Become familiar with, and use, the resources for the implementation of Aboriginal Studies Across the Curriculum (including curriculum document yellow folder), special celebrations, cultural events etc and suggesting ways in which Aboriginal culture and history can be integrated during particular units of work, and used incidentally in their teaching programs.
- Make use of Aboriginal Teaching Assistants and/or Aboriginal Studies Co-ordinators as a resource for developing programs.
- Be aware of the list of Aboriginal guest speakers/Dance Groups etc available for use within schools in the MidWest and beyond, with consideration given to their use at appropriate times, and the amount of funding available. Use the Regional Office guidelines for the application for guest speakers.
- Support the close working liaison between the staff of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the staff of Mullewa District High School in areas of professional development, staff and student programs and in particular strategies of benefit for use with Aboriginal students.
- Ensure some liturgies recognise the symbols and spirituality of Aboriginal Australia through the use of stories from the Dreaming, Aboriginal prayers, talk about the Aboriginal spiritual ancestor's role in significant events and ceremonies, use of tapping sticks and didgeridoos, blessing with water

- A yearly celebration of NAIDOC week. Suggested ideas for celebrations include - student-centred activities focusing on Aboriginal history, culture, artwork, music, bush tucker, traditional hunting techniques; flying of Aboriginal flag; visits by sporting personalities, musicians, artists, community elders or influential identities from within local and wider Aboriginal community; shared lunch or barbeque with parents and grandparents and wider school community; paraliturgy or whole school mass to celebrate Aboriginal reconciliation and achievements; shared lunch and activities with Wandalgu Catholic School, Tardun.
- Communicate with local organisations to promote and raise awareness of programs operating in Mullewa Shire for Aboriginal youth and adults. Classes to visit local workshop when applicable to view programs' successes.