

## NORTHERN BAY COLLEGE

### Culturally safe environment statement



#### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact your campus office

#### Guidance on Child Safe Standard 1:

Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

### Overview

This is a new standard that requires schools to make sure Aboriginal children and young people feel safe. This guidance applies to all schools, even if there are no students who have identified themselves as Aboriginal. The term 'Aboriginal' includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important to be respectful of how individual children, students, their families and community refer to themselves, and use 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.

### Benefits of cultural safety

Being able to express their culture makes Aboriginal children stronger and safer. Aboriginal children and young people who don't feel safe being themselves and expressing their individuality may be less willing to report abuse.

Providing safe environments for children has positive, lifelong impacts that cannot be underestimated, and cultural safety is a key dimension of safety for Aboriginal children.

### Key elements of cultural safety

#### Understand 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. Northern Bay College will recognise that each person is unique with their own characteristics, strengths and challenges.

#### Respect culture

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

Australia's colonial history has caused significant trauma and hurt that individuals, families and communities still feel today. However, Aboriginal communities have a long history of resilience and growth in the face of adversity and trauma. Northern Bay College will show respect for the deep resilience of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

#### Eliminate racism and abuse

Making Northern Bay College culturally safe means taking the specific action needed to keep Aboriginal children and young people safe from abuse and harm.

Northern Bay College will address all forms of racism and consider attitudes and practices that are a barrier to providing a culturally safe environment and to address all forms of racism.



## Actions

To comply with this standard, at minimum, Northern Bay College will encourage and actively support a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights in the following ways:

- 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
- adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated
- address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences
- actively support participation and inclusion in the college by Aboriginal children, students and families
- ensure college policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, students and their families
- Northern Bay College has this statement detailing the strategies and actions the college will take to both create and sustain a culturally safe environment and reviewed bi annually.

## 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

## Implementing the standard

Implementing this standard has and will require ongoing effort, not just a once-off change.

### To develop child safety policies

Northern Bay College has consulted with families, students and the local Aboriginal community when developing policies to address this standard using additional guidance from the following document: [Guidance on Family Engagement \(CCYP\)](#).

## Actions at Northern Bay College to support cultural safety

### Build a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion

- Begin events with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school newsletters, school assemblies, parent information nights.
- Lead on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.

### Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children

- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
- Ask for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about what the school does well, and what can be improved.
- Implement the [Koorie Education Policy](#) to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities (Government schools).
- Use [Koorie Engagement Support Officers \(KESOs\)](#) to provide advice to government schools about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.



- Use the [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026](#) to guide the school’s support for Aboriginal self-determination.

### Actively address racism

- Express zero tolerance of racism in the college statement of commitment to child safety included in your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and other documents.
- Address racism from students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the culture of the college works to prevent incidents from occurring.
- Encourage non-Aboriginal school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families and communities.

### Guide and train staff and volunteers

- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
- Arrange [Community Understanding Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) or equivalent for staff.

### Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum

- Include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.
- Develop a resource bank of digital, hardcopy print and other artefacts that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.

### Partner with Aboriginal communities

- Support local Aboriginal businesses through school procurement.
- Engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups, corporations or the Registered Aboriginal Party to review cultural safety in school environment, systems and processes.
- Engage with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) and/or the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).
- Visit an Aboriginal cultural learning centre, such as
  - [Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre](#)(Geelong).

### Review and assess how the college supports cultural inclusion

- Use the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency [cultural safety continuum reflective tool](#) to make a tailored learning and development plan focused on staff cultural competence learning needs.
- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

### Northern Bay College will recognise key events and anniversaries

1. 2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations 13 February
2. Harmony Day 21 March
3. Reconciliation Week 27 May to 3 June
4. NAIDOC week First week of July
5. International Day of Indigenous People 9 August

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2022
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	End 2024