

Inclusion and Diversity Policy and Procedures

Introduction

At St Francis Catholic College (SFCC) we believe that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teachings and is intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image of God is central to the mission of our College.

This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching. It is intended to value respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each student regardless of their cultural, linguistic or identified orientation.

The College will actively promote inclusion messages, and alert students, staff and parents of the need to be vigilant.

As a community we wish to create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student well-being, personal growth and positive self-esteem amongst our diverse range of learners (eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities).

Purpose

This policy provides guidelines to ensure all students and families at SFCC are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, level of ability, additional needs, family structure or lifestyle, and that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

This policy shall:

- Support the school's Mission and Vision Statement and guidelines of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS)
- Encourage a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour
- Create a culture in which inclusion is experienced and articulated in all the dimensions of schooling including relationships between all members of the school community
- Articulate how inclusive practices are defined and encouraged
- Actively promotes inclusive practices, alerting students and staff of the need to promote and review socially inclusive practice.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians and families.

They apply in all college environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, onsite and offsite College grounds (e.g., extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas travel).

Principles

This policy is grounded in the belief that:

- Every person has the right to be treated respectfully and to feel safe from any form of verbal, physical or emotional abuse.
- The College is committed to building and nurturing a community that values diversity
- Parents are the prime educators of their children
- The College community is involved in the development of school policies
- Identification and reporting of unacceptable behaviours are essential to the effective implementation of this Policy.

Commitment

The College will:

- Actively nurture and promote a culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that students are not discriminated against and where necessary, are accommodated to participate in education and all school activities (e.g. school sports, assemblies, theatre productions) on the same basis as their peers
- Acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
- Encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- Challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
- Contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students.
- Respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimized.
- Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promote the safety of children with a disability.

Definitions

Ableism

The discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities or who are perceived to be disabled. Ableism characterizes people as defined by their disabilities and inferior to the non-disabled.

Bigotry

An unreasonable attachment to an outdated belief and or prejudice against minorities, different identities, and beliefs.

Body shaming

The action or practice of humiliating someone by making mocking or critical comments about their body shape or size.

Bullying

When a person uses their strength or power to frighten or hurt or intimidate weaker people.

Child safety is building consciousness of the need to have heightened awareness of the safety and well-being of students.

Colourism

Prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial groups.

Derogatory is a targeted term or statement toward a specific group of people intended to defame or degrade.

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, sex, or disability.

Diversity

The practice of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, and sexual orientations, in all aspects of the College.

Exclusion

The process of excluding or the state of being excluded. Not being inclusive or allowing all persons into your friendship group.

Gang

A group of criminals.

Homophobia

Discrimination towards those included in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Inclusion

The action or state of being a part of a group or structure, regardless of race, age, gender, or social class. Without having to change to a setting where they are supposed to feel safe and secure, we believe students should have the right to feel accepted at school no matter who they are.

By accepting and valuing people's differences in terms of age, gender, race, religion, handicap, sexual orientation, educational attainment, and country of origin, we can empower them and prepare them for life after school.

Intersex

A person born with a mixture of male and female biological traits.

LGBTQIA+

A person people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or those questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation), intersex, asexual (or their allies) or other.

Racism is prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism belief by an individual, community, or institution against an individual's basis of racial or ethnic groups, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

Sectarianism

An excessive attachment to a particular group/ religion.

Sexism

Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, based on sex.

Slur

An insulting word used to degrade and offend a group of people.

Stereotyping

Widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

A Transgender

A person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.

Transphobia

A dislike of or prejudice against transsexual or transgender people.

Whitewashed

When a person of colour acts white and seems to deny their cultural heritage.

Language

Language can be used to empower and disempower people. Language also changes frequently. The following are terms that can be seen as discriminatory or offensive, but the usage of language and words may change.

Therefore, offensive language can be seen, but is not limited to, in the following examples:

Blackwashed

When a person takes on characteristics of a particular race, appearing to be coloured while having no particular cultural affiliation.

Coconut

Refers to a racial term used in Australia and New Zealand to describe someone from the Pacific Islands (mainly Tonga and Samoa). It can sometimes be synonymous with Fob.

Coon

A term used to denigrate, defame and ridicule Aboriginal people.

Curry muncher

A derogatory term for a person from the Indian subcontinent.

Deadnaming

Using a transgender person's pre-transition name.

N-word

A contemptuous and derogatory term for a black or dark-skinned person

Poofta

A derogatory term toward homosexual people particularly males.

Queer

An offensive term for a homosexual person.

Queer baiting

When a person falsely identifies as part of the LGBTQIA+ community to spread false pretenses and discriminate.

Race fishing

Present oneself as a different ethnicity than you are with the intent of creating false stereotypes.

Wog

A slur used for a foreigner or immigrant, especially one from southern Europe.

Procedures

Promoting an inclusive school environment.

SFCC considers the following strategies to support inclusive practice:

- Recognize dates that connect with the school community to increase awareness through participation, e.g., Reconciliation week, NAIDOC week, Harmony Week, Cultural Diversity Week, Refugee Week.
- Promote understanding of diverse personal attributes through guest speakers, incursions and workshops (e.g., Cultural and Linguistic workshop, Melton Youth Forum) etc.
- Promote a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (refer to [Culturally Safe Environments](#))
- Provide students with non-English speaking backgrounds with access to English as an Additional Language programs and supports (refer to [English as an Additional Language](#) below).
- Provide interpretation services (via our Community Liaison and Education Support Officer) to facilitate communication between parents, teachers and support staff, and ongoing support via tutors to support students academically.
- Support students with disabilities to receive the necessary adjustments to curriculum and school activities to participate equally with their peers (refer to [Students with Disability](#) below).
- Conduct staff professional development to provide teachers with knowledge and resources on how to respond to discriminatory language in the classroom, use of inclusive language and create a safe and supportive environment for students and staff.
- Provide support and assistance to learners from diverse backgrounds, including academic support, pastoral care, and access to counselling services (refer to [Gender Diversity](#) and [Learning Diversity](#) below).
- Respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimized (refer to [Reporting and Responding](#) below).

Culturally Safe Environments

Respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) culture, values and practices is at the heart of creating a culturally safe organisation. Cultural safety includes being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where ATSI students:

- Feel comfortable being themselves

- Feel comfortable expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems
- Are supported by staff who respect their culture and encourage their sense of self and identity.

At SFCC, we practice a culturally safe environment in the following ways:

- Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Program based on the CECV Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan.
- Acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the school is built in formal meetings such as school assemblies, mass and staff meetings) to demonstrate respect for the traditional custodians of the land on which a meeting or event is being held.
- Participate in the FIRE (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier Program that promotes respect, fairness and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within and beyond the school community with its FIRE Carrier leaders.
- Appointment of the Project Officer – Indigenous Students to advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, support them from a pastoral and academic perspective, and facilitate programs that support student and build relationships with teachers and students and support where necessary.

Students with Disability

All schools must comply with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* and also the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*.

At an in-class level, teachers and support staff follow a personalized student-based approach and will:

- Differentiate and make adjustments to curriculum or introduce alternative curricula.
- Prepare Personalised Learning Plans in collaboration with students/families and where applicable specialist services such as occupational therapists and/or speech therapists.
- Encourage students with disability to participate in all activities inside and outside the classroom (e.g., school performances, excursions, athletics carnivals)
- Plan for a supportive transition for the student as they move to the next year level or another school.

Gender Diversity

SFCC supports gender diverse (LGBTIQ+) students by:

- Providing a positive, supportive and respectful environment
- Respecting privacy and confidentiality in relation to all students
- Supporting students who want to affirm or transition gender identity at school
- Challenging all forms of homophobia and transphobia to prevent discrimination and bullying
- Giving proper consideration to the impact of any requirement to participate in school activities according to gender identity or an assumption of heterosexuality (e.g. school graduations, sports activities, camps).
- The referencing of and recording of student's affirmed name, gender identity, and pronouns (he, she, they etc.).

- The use of toilets, showers and change rooms that meet the needs of the student. This should be based on the student's gender identity and whichever facilities they will feel most comfortable using. Students without a disability should not be required to use disabled toilets or facilities.
- Inviting the student and family representative/carer to be part of the formulation of a school management plan.

Learning Diversity

At SFCC we recognize that sometimes a student's academic, physical or social and emotional learning needs can be very different from those of their peers. The role of the Learning Diversity team is to address the learning needs of any student facing individual challenges of this nature. The team works collaboratively with teaching staff to provide a learning environment for students that acknowledges and supports different needs and skills through focused and targeted teaching. The team consists of the Learning Diversity Leader and is supported by a number of Learning Diversity Assistants. There are also Learning Support Officers that assist in the classroom. The team can also help teachers modify tasks and assessments and support teachers and students in the classroom to implement these personalized programs.

Learning Diversity practices are implemented in the following ways:

- Clearly defined processes in place to identify at-risk students
- Collaboration with the learning community to include the voice of students, families, teachers, the school psychologist, the Wellbeing team, and Learning Diversity team at Program Support Group (PSG) meetings to understand the student's individual profile and develop Personalised Learning Plans and use of intervention programs to support students with learning difficulties.
- Targeted workshops for teachers and Learning Support Officers to teach NCCD learners and increase their knowledge on differentiating NCCD learners in the classroom.
- Empower students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families through participation in the I CAN Network program. I CAN Network partners with schools to develop inclusive culture and their mentoring program directly helps with autistic students develop optimism, sense of belonging, self-acceptance, pride and confidence.

English as an additional language

Support for students learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) allows them to achieve the same educational success as other students. The EAL department plays a crucial role in supporting the integration, inclusion and wellbeing of EAL students, and as such, the following strategies are in place at the College:

- Identifying who our EAL learners are, through EAL Coordinator notification email and Dashboard on SIMON portal.
- Supporting EAL students in the classroom via the EAL Learning Support Officer in the classroom, one-on-one or in small groups to develop English language competency in speaking and listening, reading and reviewing, and writing.
- Targeted workshops for teachers and Learning Support Officers to increase their knowledge on differentiating for EAL students.

Student Voice

SFCC actively promotes student participation as a means to improve student inclusiveness and outcomes. Student participation ranges from students sharing opinions of problems and potential solutions, to students provided feedback associated with school strategic planning. It also includes our students sharing their 'voice' in class by collaborating with teachers to engage with the curriculum and improve education outcomes.

Other ways students are encouraged to share their voice:

- College leaders are selected by staff and students to represent the school in an official capacity, as ambassadors, hosts and spokespeople.
- Students in the Student Representative Council (SRC) represent the student body.
- Involvement in policy development
- Leading of whole school assemblies, and organizing and assisting with fundraising events
- Class discussions
- Personal goal setting through Aspire Day for Year 11 students to introduce them to the final years of academic learning at the college.
- Year 10 students participate in the Leadership Day to develop leadership, communication, teamwork and collaboration skills required for their senior studies.
- Retreat Day, Reflection Days, camps, sporting activities, assemblies reinforce the message that students can speak to staff when needed and promote the availability of psychologists and counselors that students can reach out to.
- Student leaders attend the Melton City Council Youth Forum where they collaborate with other local secondary schools and discuss their views on Social Connection.

Access to information and support

The College uses several communication methods to ensure all relevant information reaches students and families. This includes the Parent Access Module (PAM), the weekly College newsletters, the College website, social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram and emails sent to parents and students as required. Parents can also contact staff via email or phone to discuss issues, the student's progress and other learning-related concerns.

There are also various opportunities throughout the school calendar year to meet with parents and guardians. This includes the Parent-Student-Teacher Interviews, the Parents and Friends meetings, morning teas, and information nights etc. The College also partners with external services to deliver various webinars and onsite presentation to parents and students.

Staff utilize the SIMON learning and management platform for information sharing, communication and collaboration to support each student's learning needs. This includes confidential communication to an individual's teachers or access to the NCCD Register for NCCD learners via SIMON.

In addition, there is also targeted assistance for Year 7 – 10 students through the Tutor Program to help reach the required standards in numeracy and literacy, the Mathematics and Homework clubs, tutorials run at lunchtime for VCE students and the Tutor Learning Initiative available for Year 7 – 10 students.

Reporting and Responding

The following guidance has been developed to respond to inappropriate non-inclusive behaviours.

Student to Student

First Instance

- Report to the classroom teacher.
- The classroom teacher will speak to the student involved. **REMIND** them of the Inclusion Policy and record the incident on SIMON.
- Report to HOUSE LEADER if non-inclusive behaviour occurs outside of a classroom.
- The HOUSE LEADER will **REMIND** the student, educate them regarding the Inclusion Policy and record the incident on SIMON.

Second Instance

- The student will be asked to remain after school at the regular Thursday Restorative to complete a 1 page-scaffolded report on the harmful effects of the specific non-inclusive behaviour.
- Peer Mediation will occur during recess or lunch to discuss the effects of the non-inclusive behaviour
- HOUSE LEADER will record on SIMON.

Third Instance

- The student will be internally suspended. A parent meeting will be called to discuss the consequences. Record on Simon.

Teacher to Student

First Instance

- Students should first speak to the relevant Domain leader or House Leader if the matter is House Mentor related. The Domain leader will discuss with the teacher and **REMIND** the staff member of the Inclusion Policy.

Second Instance

- The Domain Leader will ask the DP Staffing and Strategic Intent or DP Student Wellbeing to discuss the incident with the teacher.

Third Instance

- The Principal will request a meeting with the staff member to discuss the College Inclusion Policy and the impact of behaviour on individuals and the school community.

The teacher hears students while in class or Student to Teacher

First Instance

- A gentle REMINDER of the Inclusion Policy.
- 1:1 Quiet conversation regards Inclusion Policy.

Second Instance

- The second reminder of the Inclusion Policy.
- Peer Mediation – referral to Peers from the Inclusion team for a discussion of the Inclusion Policy.

- Send student to the Restorative Room during recess or lunch.
- Student Representative Council and Senior Students will be given Peer Mediation Training.

Third Instance

- Referral to the HOUSE LEADER if the behaviour is observed over three or more occasions.
- HOUSE LEADER issues behaviour card – 10 days (one cycle).
- Reissue behaviour card if behaviour reoccurs.
- Internal withdrawal to Restorative Room if the behaviour continues.

Education

All staff who are new to the College will receive induction upon joining the St Francis Catholic College Community.

Senior students will schedule a time to speak with junior year levels, particularly year 7 about our Inclusion Policy.

The Inclusion group are currently developing a video to highlight student voice and perspective.

Responsibilities

Students

Show respect toward students and staff by using inclusive language and refraining from slurs, discriminatory language and actions.

Be kind to all at the College regardless of beliefs, opinions and characteristics within themselves.

Apply the hands-off rule and have absolutely no aggressive physical behaviour toward staff or student including hitting, punching, grabbing, pushing, tackling, biting, scratching, or kicking.

Respect people's cultural and learning customs and habits, not stereotyping students and teachers of different ethnicities, religions and personal identifications.

Solve conflicts peacefully and respectfully by communicating and taking accountability for your behaviour.

Model for communities inclusive and respectful behaviours and value diversity within our broader community.

Know your teacher's name and use it respectfully.

Parents/Carers

Parents are expected to **work in partnership** with the College to educate students about the dignity of the individual, discrimination and exclusion.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Communicating with the school to ensure awareness of their child's specific needs, and raise any issues or concerns regarding their child's participation in the educational programs.
- Being involved in, keeping fully informed about, any individualized adjustments or support proposed or provided for their child.
- Attending student support team meetings
- Adhering to SFCC policies at all times.

Staff

Welcome all students and demonstrate value for diversity and difference

Show respect toward students and staff by using inclusive language and refraining from slurs, discriminatory language and actions.

Know the student's name and preferred pronouns as soon as practicable.

Show consistency when applying school expectations to all students.

Validate the feelings of the students by showing understanding and compassion.

Use inclusive language in the classroom.

Refrain from using any derogative terms in the classroom (e.g., N-word).

Understand and be able to uphold the school inclusion policy.

Maintain and Model education about inclusion within the school environment.

Show respect and acceptance of different cultures and family composition both within our school community and outside.

Speak positively to students without using humour/sarcasm.

Actively listen to all parties without judgement.

Be Responsive - to the needs, experiences, and histories of different groups within our communities.

Adhere to SFCC policies at all times.

In some instances, offensive language may appear in material that is presented in class. For example, in a text that may be studied in English. It is therefore essential that staff are aware of the content of the material and the potential for offence. Staff should provide a safe space for academic discussions of such material. This might include trigger warnings, whole class discussions about appropriate use etc. Staff might also decide that certain words (such as the 'n-word') should not be read aloud under any circumstances.

School Leadership team

The school leadership team will ensure:

- The enrolment process is fair and equitable, and facilitates access for all children.
- Facilities are designed or adapted to support access by every students and family including adaptive equipment where necessary.
- Staff have access to professional development activities that focus on inclusion, skill development and resources.
- Language services are available to assist with communication where required including the employment of interpreters to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families.
- Any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice is dealt with in an appropriate manner.

- Programs are reflective of, and responsive to, the values and cultural beliefs of families, and of those within the local community and broader society.
- Staff, parents/carer, specialist services and other professionals work collaboratively to implement educational programs based on the development needs, interests and experience of each student.
- SFCC policies are adhered to at all times.

References

eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic schools communities

Victorian Human Rights Commission has some education material that could be used in school community:

<https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/discrimination/#:~:text=Under%20the%20Equal%20Opportunity%20Act,opportunity%20to%20prevent%20unlawful%20behaviour.>

Everyday Racism App:

<https://alltogethernow.org.au/our-work/everyday-racism/>

School Support:

<https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-organisations/obligations-to-your-students/>

Australian Anti-Discrimination Act- <https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/australias-anti-discrimination-law>

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Pastoral Care of Students relating to Gender Policy

Complaints Handling Policy

Privacy Policy

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