

Culturally Safe Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create a culturally safe environment at Oxygen College, where the diverse and unique identities, cultures, and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected, valued, and actively supported. This policy recognizes the distinct cultural heritage and historical experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the importance of creating an environment where their voices are heard and honored.

In line with *Child Safe Standard 1*, this policy commits to fostering a welcoming and inclusive space that prioritizes the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It also acknowledges the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma and the need for continuous engagement with Aboriginal communities to ensure that our practices remain respectful and relevant.

1. Objectives

Oxygen College is dedicated to:

1.1 Respect and Recognition

Acknowledge and respect the unique cultural and historical experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our commitment includes recognising the significance of Aboriginal cultural practices and histories in all interactions, educational activities, and organisational processes.

1.2 Culturally Appropriate Practices

Develop and implement culturally appropriate protocols and practices to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe and supported within our organisation. This includes respecting cultural practices, using culturally inclusive language, and recognising Aboriginal cultural events and symbols.

1.3 Education and Training

Provide ongoing education and training to all staff, contractors, and volunteers to enhance their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and worldviews. This

training will ensure that all staff can contribute to creating a culturally safe environment and that they are equipped to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

1.4 Community Engagement

Engage in continuous consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop culturally safe strategies and practices. This involves building relationships based on trust, collaboration, and mutual respect to ensure our policies and procedures remain relevant and supportive.

1.5 Continuous Improvement

Regularly review and assess the effectiveness of our cultural safety policies and practices. This includes seeking feedback from Aboriginal students, their families, and the broader community to identify areas for improvement and ensure ongoing cultural safety.

1.6 Zero Tolerance for Racism

Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards racism and discrimination. Any occurrence of racist behavior will be addressed promptly and seriously, with clear consequences. All members of the organization are encouraged to report incidents of racism, with a strong commitment to addressing such reports.

1.7 Cultural Celebration and Inclusivity

Encourage and support students, staff, contractors, and volunteers in celebrating their cultural heritage. Oxygen College will provide a safe and inclusive space for sharing and recognizing cultural practices, ensuring all members of the community feel valued and respected.

2. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

Oxygen College is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals throughout their educational journey, including:

2.1 Community Engagement

Actively seek input from local Aboriginal communities to understand cultural values, beliefs, and traditions, particularly in relation to curriculum development and individual student projects.

2.2 Barrier Identification and Reduction

Identify and address barriers that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals may face when accessing training, including geographical isolation, financial challenges, and cultural

factors. Oxygen College is committed to creating an environment that encourages participation by removing these barriers.

2.3 Culturally Appropriate Content

Incorporate culturally relevant content and learning methods into course delivery. This may involve including traditional knowledge, language, and cultural perspectives within learning activities and assessments to ensure that educational experiences are culturally respectful.

2.4 Inclusive Learning Environment

Ensure that the learning environment is culturally inclusive and respects the diversity of Aboriginal students. This includes providing language and literacy support and fostering a sense of belonging where Aboriginal students are encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences.

2.5 Flexible Learning Options

Offer flexible learning options such as part-time or online courses to accommodate the unique needs and commitments of Aboriginal students, making education more accessible.

2.6 Ongoing Support Services

Provide tailored support services to ensure the academic and personal success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This includes assigning a Student Engagement Officer or Education Support Officer and other relevant staff to offer guidance, support, and individualized learning plans when needed.

2.7 Cultural Respect in Training Programs

Integrate cultural protocols and respect into all training programs, ensuring that the richness of Aboriginal culture is recognized and honored throughout the educational experience.

2.8 Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Oxygen College is dedicated to continuous improvement in creating culturally safe and inclusive practices. We actively seek feedback from Aboriginal students, communities, and other stakeholders to refine our training programs and ensure that cultural safety remains a core priority.

3. Key aligned documents:

- Australians together learning framework. - [AT-Education-Learning-Framework-2022.pdf](#).
- Advocacy support poster - [333572_advocacy-support-poster.pdf](#)
- YouTube clip on keeping Aboriginal Children safe <https://youtu.be/1GKm8quTgUk>
- YouTube clip on 'Keeping our kids safe - a guide for cultural safety'
<https://youtu.be/On93YTvP7ew>
- Deadly and Proud – information and stories on cultures around Victoria -
<https://deadlyandproud.vic.gov.au/stories>
- The healing foundation <https://healingfoundation.org.au/heal-together/>
- The equal opportunities and human rights commission – Aboriginal rights
<https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/hub/aboriginal-rights/>