

STUDENT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact school administration.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

1. our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
2. expectations for positive student behaviour
3. support available to students and families
4. our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Birrale PS is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that student progress is better when they are happy, healthy and safe. A positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are intricately linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

Scope

This policy applies to all school activities, including visits, camps and excursions.

Contents

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations and management
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

Policy

1. School profile

Birralee PS is a government primary school situated in Doncaster. It was established in 1970 and is located approximately 17km north-east of the CBD. In 2025, our student enrolment is 570(+7) students with a considerable proportion of students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Birralee PS offers a range of subjects tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Within the local community, Birralee is known for its excellent academic program and the pastoral care.

Birralee PS has grown considerably in size, and a new building (South Building) project was completed for use in 2024, with further plans for more building projects in forthcoming years which are aligned to our masterplan.

2. School philosophy, vision and values

Philosophy

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

Our school is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Our school acknowledges that student learning outcomes and student wellbeing are inextricably linked.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with diverse abilities.

Our core learning focus is confident knowledge of literacy and numeracy skills, taught using explicit teaching practices, careful grouping of students and learning that is adjusted to student needs. We have high expectations for all our students and set clear learning goals.

We support and respect all children, as well as staff, volunteers and visitors.

Vision

Birralee PS's vision is to empower students to be confident, curious learners, and to provide them with the skills, abilities and attributes to be successful and effective contributors to society.

Values

Our main values include Care & Kindness, Integrity, Respect and Responsibility (CK.I.R.R). We state our values at every assembly when we say the following School Declaration:

*At Birralee we learn to live and work together:
to show **care and kindness**,
to behave with **integrity**,
to be **respectful** and **responsible**,
and strive to achieve our goals.*

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Birralee PS has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the whole-school, group, and individual engagement strategies used by our school, is included below:

Universal Strategies

- High and consistent expectations of all staff, students, parents and carers.
- Prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing.
- Creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and acknowledges diversity, and empowers all students to participate and feel valued.
- Welcoming parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning.
- Analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, *Attitudes to School Survey*, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data.
- Teachers at Birralee PS follows the *Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0* (VTLM 2.0) to ensure that a clear, common and shared model of instruction is consistent across the school. Our teaching model includes evidenced-based and high-yield teaching practices that are incorporated into all lessons.
- Teachers at Birralee PS adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- Our school's *Statement of Values* and *School Philosophy* are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community.
- Carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into various stages of their schooling.
- Positive behaviour and student achievements are acknowledged in the classroom, and formally at school assemblies and in communication to parents.
- Monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, grade and individual levels.
- Students can contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the *Student Representative Council*, The *Student Reference Group* (policy linked), and other forums, including year group meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, a Year Level Coordinator, an Assistant Principal and/or Principal when they have any questions or concerns.

- Create opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and Buddies.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to their class teacher, Student Wellbeing Coordinator/Assistant Principal, Year Group Leaders and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as *Respectful Relationships* and *Play is The Way*.
- Programs, visits and excursions are developed to address issues, specific needs or behaviour (i.e., Cybersafety, Body Safe, anger management programs or first aid),
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e., sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities).
- Buddy program (Prep and Year 5).
- Measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted Strategies

- Each year group has a Team Leader, i.e., a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and acts as a point of contact for students who need additional support.
- Koori students are supported to engage fully in their education in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. A school Marrung Leader is appointed each year.
- English as a Second Language (EAL) students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school.
- Students from refugee backgrounds receive supported learning and monitored wellbeing.
- We provide a positive and respectful learning environment for all (our students and staff) who identify as LGBTQI+ and follow the Department's policy of inclusion.
(Ref: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy>)
- All students in a formal *Out of Home Care* program, are supported in accordance with the Department's policy including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Education Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG), and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment.
(Ref: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/outofhomecare/Pages/about.aspx>),
- Students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and in school activities in accordance with the Department's policy through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, agencies and therapists, Student Support Groups (SSGs) and an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
(Ref: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/policies.aspx>),

- Wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year.
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma (i.e. based on the impact on the individual rather than the event, and to help with recovery).

Individual Strategies

- Student Support Groups
- Individual Learning Plans
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Student Support Services
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Mental health toolkit
- Headspace
- LOOKOUT

Birralee PS implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include;

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances,
- meeting with students and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school,
- developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up,
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports,
 - Student Support Services,
 - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First.

Where necessary, the school will support the student's family to engage by;

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances, health, and wellbeing,
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student,
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans (AIP), in collaboration with the student and their family,
- engaging with our regional Koori Engagement Support Officers (KESOs),
- running regular Student Support Group (SSG) meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - Aboriginal heritage
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Birrilee PS is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Birrilee PS will use the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- Personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled.
- Attendance records.
- Academic performance.
- Observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation.
- Attendance and suspension data.
- Engagement with families.
- Self-referrals or referrals from peers.

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity.

At school, students have the right to:

- Participate fully in their education.
- Feel safe, secure and happy at school.
- Learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation.
- Express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

At school, students have the responsibility to:

- Participate fully in their educational program.
- Display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community.
- Respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school, are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers, and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Ref:

- Appendix 2: Student Code of Behaviour
- Appendix 3: Process for Responding to Breaches of Behaviour Expectations

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and Student code of Behaviour.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Birralee PS will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline, and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive, restorative and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies, to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include;

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate,
- teacher controlled choices and/or consequences such as moving a student within a classroom,
- withdrawal of privileges,
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal,
- restorative practices,
- detentions,
- behaviour support and intervention meetings,
- suspension,
- expulsion.

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged eight or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Birralees PS is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Birralees PS values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by;

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website,
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy,
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities,
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities,
- involving families in school decision making,
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families,
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Birralees PS will collect information each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include;

- the *Student Attitude to School Survey*,
- incident reports on Compass,
- school reports,
- parent survey,
- case management,
- attendance and absence data (CASES21),
- SOCS.

Birralees PS will also regularly monitor available data dashboards (Compass) to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways.

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes.
- Included in transition and enrolment packs.
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- Suspension process: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- Expulsions - Decision: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>

Further Information and Resources

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*:

- Attendance.
- Student Engagement.
- Child Safe Standards.
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care.
- Students with Disability.
- LGBTQI+ Student Support.
- Behaviour - Students.
- Suspensions.
- Expulsions.
- Restraint and Seclusion.

The following school policies are also relevant to this *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*:

- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Bullying Prevention Policy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*

Appendices

1. School Philosophy
2. Student Code of Behaviour
3. Responding to Breaches of Behaviour Expectations
4. Statement - Creating a place of cultural safety for Aboriginal children.

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	25/08/2024
Consultation	School Council 10/12/2024
Approved by	Principal Ashley Ryan
Next scheduled review date	Term 4, 2026

Appendix 1

STATEMENT OF SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY, VISION AND VALUES

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

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Birralee Primary School's philosophy, vision and values

Philosophy

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive.

Our school is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are inextricably linked.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with diverse abilities.

Our core learning focus is the confident knowledge of literacy and numeracy skills using explicit teaching practices, careful grouping of students and learning that is adjusted to student need. We have high expectations for all our students and set clear learning goals.

We support and respect all children, as well as staff, volunteers and visitors.

Vision

Birralee PS's vision is to empower students to be confident, curious learners who can meet challenges at school and beyond, and to provide students with skills, abilities and attributes to sustain ongoing learning to be successful and effective contributors to society as happy, healthy and productive adults.



Birralee PS's vision is to empower students to be confident, curious learners, and to provide them with the skills, abilities and attributes to be successful and effective contributors to society.

Values

Our main values include Care & Kindness, Integrity, Respect and Responsibility (CK.I.R.R). We state our values at every assembly when we say the following School Declaration:

*At Birralee we learn to live and work together:
to show **care and kindness**,
to behave with **integrity**,
to be **respectful and responsible**,
and strive to achieve our goals.*

Department of Education and Training Expectations

The programs and teaching at Birralee PS support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to;

- elected government,
- the rule of law,
- equal rights for all before the law,
- freedom of religion,
- freedom of speech and association,
- the values of openness and tolerance,

To embed our values and philosophy in our school community, we;

- display posters that promote our values,
- display permanent totem poles on sites and temporary standards with the school values during whole school events,
- highlight our values in the school newsletter and at assemblies,
- provide awards and recognition for students who actively demonstrate the school values,
- discuss our values with students in the classroom, at meetings and at assemblies.

Statement Review and Approval

This statement will be reviewed as part of the *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* review (2026).

Appendix 2

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact school administration.

Purpose

The purpose of this code of behaviour is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand school expectations of behaviour standards.

Policy

At Birralelee PS, students have the right to learn, and teachers have the right to teach, in a safe and supportive environment.

We all have the right to:

1. Be respected and be treated well.
2. Express ourselves and be listened to courteously.
3. Feel and be safe.

We understand that rights also imply obligations and to reinforce the responsibility of all, the following expectations apply:

1. Be considerate of others.
2. Co-operate with others.
3. Respect other people's property.
4. Respect personal space and privacy.
5. Respect the right of others to hold an opinion.
6. Obey school rules and obey all reasonable requests from school staff.
7. Be polite.
8. Not to leave the school grounds without permission from a staff member.

Expectations of parents

1. To ensure children arrive at school on time and are ready to begin classes at 8:50am.
2. To ensure children arrive at school in a clean, appropriate uniform, well-fed, and in a healthy state ready for learning.
3. To take a positive interest in the progress of their child's academic, social, emotional and physical efforts.
4. To encourage and support their child in all endeavours and aspects of school life.
5. Absence notifications with reason for absences to be logged on the Compass attendance portal.
6. Late arrivals at school to be signed in and early leavers to be collected from the office and signed out.

Teachers' expectations

1. To act in accordance with teachers' Duty of Care and Professional Standards.
2. To maintain the professional values of integrity, respect and responsibility.
3. To maintain contact with parents, especially regarding student wellbeing & welfare.
4. To treat students compassionately and impartially.
5. To teach students that we make choices about our efforts, behaviour and interactions with others and to accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
6. To ensure students are aware of the consequences of their behaviour.

Consequences

- Students will be held accountable for their behaviour.
- Where serious or serial inappropriate behaviour occurs, parents will be contacted.
- Refer to Appendices 3 – 7 of the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy for behaviour expectations and management.
- External agencies will be contacted as appropriate for particular areas of concern or serious misdemeanours.

Review and Approval

As part of the *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, this *Code of Behaviour* will be reviewed at the next scheduled review date (Term 4, 2026)

Minor Behaviour Steps

Non-verbal Prompt Provide non-verbal and/or visual cues to student. (get student attention, point or redirect them).

Positive Reframing "James you need to be safe."

Brief Directive "James move in bounds, thanks."

Restate the Expectation "Remember, to **be safe** James, **we stay in bounds.**"

Choice and consequence "James you either return to the in bounds area or you will have to walk with me."

If unresolved, follow Major Behaviour steps

Junior

Birralee Primary Behaviour Flow Chart

Minor Behaviours

- Talking during instructions
- Distracting others during learning
- Not keeping hands to ourselves
- Not following instructions
- Running inside
- Throwing items
- Taking hats off other student's heads
- Using class time to go to the toilet
- Leaving rubbish/ property around the school
- Not sharing or being inclusive
- Lying
- Not taking care of our property
- Sharing food
- Not wearing hats

Major Behaviours

- Physical violence (hitting, kicking, punching, pushing etc.)
- Using play objects as weapons
- Swearing/ bad verbal language
- Intentional damage to furniture/ property
- Deliberately ignoring teachers
- Spitting
- Running away from the classroom/school
- Put downs towards other students/ teachers
- Threatening others (verbally or physically)

Major Behaviour Steps

Chronicle the events on compass and contact parents. **Chronicle**

Teacher to decide if leadership needs to be involved. **Leadership**

Restorative conversation with the student and teacher (and exec if involved). **Restorative Conversation**

Appropriate consequence determined by teacher and leadership. **Appropriate Consequence**

Notify parent of events and outcomes. **Notify Parent**

Minor Behaviour Steps

Non-verbal Prompt Provide non-verbal and/or visual cues to student. (get student attention, point or redirect them).

Positive Reframing "James you need to be safe."

Brief Directive "James move inbound, thanks."

Restate the Expectation "remember, to **be safe** James, **we stay in bounds.**"

Choice "James you either return to the inbounds area or you will have to walk with me."

If unresolved, follow Major Behaviour steps

Senior

Birralee Primary Behaviour Flow Chart

Minor Behaviours

- Talking during instructions
- Distracting others during learning
- Not keeping hands to ourselves
- Not following instructions
- Running inside
- Throwing items
- Taking hats off other student's heads
- Using class time to go to the toilet
- Leaving rubbish/ property around the school
- Not sharing or being inclusive
- Lying
- Not taking care of our property
- Not wearing hats

Major Behaviours

- Bullying
- Physical violence (hitting, kicking, pushing, pushing etc.)
- Using rocks and sticks as weapons
- Swearing/ bad verbal language
- Destroying property
- Breaking ICT Contracts
- Spitting
- Stealing
- Put downs towards other students/ teachers
- Threatening others (verbally, physically or online)
- Lying (multiple offense)

Major Behaviour Steps

Chronicle the events on compass and contact parents. **Chronicle**

Teacher to decide if leadership needs to be involved. **Leadership**

Restorative conversation with the student and teacher (and exec if involved). **Restorative Conversation**

Appropriate consequence determined by teacher and leadership. **Appropriate Consequence**

Notify parent of events and outcomes. **Notify Parent**

Appendix 4

Responding to Breaches of Specific Behaviour

Additional Information

- **ICT agreements**

- If an ICT agreement is breached, a student may not access ICT equipment at school again until the agreement form has been resigned by the student and their parent(s). The teacher must assess the student's knowledge and understanding of the content of the signed form by asking questions, so that the student appreciates that this is not just a re-access process, but that they have read and absorbed the agreement content.
- In the meantime, the student may only watch another student (if working in partnerships) when digital devices are needed.
- During assessment periods, the tests must be completed in hard copy until the necessary permission process has been completed.

- **Online incidents whilst at home**

- Due to the effect of detrimental behaviour and impacted wellbeing aspects on students at school from home-use of digital devices, and the interruptions to learning from time out of class for investigations and counselling etc. the same outcome will be implemented as above, where online bullying or harassment has occurred. Students need to understand that the same standards of use and respect are expected everywhere.

- **Electronic devices (e.g., computers, toys & games)**

- Electronic devices (e.g., computers, toys & games), must not be used without direct permission (ref *ICT Policy*). Mobile phones and watches (any devices) that access the internet must be handed in to the classroom teacher and retrieved at the end of the day. Internet sites are not to be shared between students on school property (including, song/dance, movie, YouTube or porn sites).

Specific School Rules

- Students are to respect all school property (no vandalism, graffiti or damage)
- Students must not enter the staff room or administration offices unless supervised by teachers or ES staff, or on office duty (for which they are trained).
- Students must not have the following at school:
 - Liquid paper
 - Chewing gum
 - Fashion jewellery
 - Permanent markers
 - Cigarettes & vapes
 - Alcohol
 - Blades
 - Drugs/medications (excluding Ventolin & anaphylactic medications). All medications must be registered and most stored at the school admin office. Parents must complete a *Medicine Administration Form* for all medication to be given out at school (ref: *Medications Policy*).
- Students must return borrowed school items (e.g., library books, learning tools, ICT equipment) on time and in good condition. Wilful damage and or repair will be charged to parents.
- Students must keep belongings in order and lockers tidy and school bags must be stowed in lockers.
- The school is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal items brought to school.

Appendix 5

STATEMENT: CREATING A PLACE OF CULTURAL SAFETY FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

At Birralee Primary School;

- all children have the right to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights, and to be encouraged and actively supported in doing so
- staff, students, volunteers, and the school community are equipped to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Indigenous culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Indigenous students
- measures are in place to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences
- active support for the participation and inclusion of Indigenous children and students and their families

Benefits of cultural safety

Being able to express their culture makes Indigenous children stronger and safer. Indigenous children and young people who do not 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 Indigenous children.

Key elements of cultural safety

1. Understand identity

Identifying as having Indigenous heritage is one part of a child or young person's identity. Like everyone, Indigenous people have different life experiences and characteristics. Schools must recognise that each person is unique with their own characteristics, strengths and challenges.

2. Respect culture

Culture and identity are linked. By supporting Indigenous children to feel strong in their identity schools 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, Indigenous communities have a long history of resilience and growth in the face of adversity and trauma. Birralee PS will show respect for the deep resilience of Victorian Indigenous communities.

3. Eliminate racism and abuse

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

Actions being taken at Birralee PS

To comply with this standard, Birralee PS will encourage and actively support a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights in the following ways by;

- equipping staff, students, volunteers and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Indigenous culture, and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Indigenous children and students
- adopting measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated
- addressing any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences
- actively supporting participation and inclusion in the school by Indigenous children, students and their families
- ensuring school policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Indigenous children, students and their families
- developing and endorsing a statement detailing the strategies and actions the school will take.

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 Indigenous children and young people are respected and valued

Develop child safety policies:

- *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy template*
- *Bullying Prevention Policy guidance and template*
- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*

Consultation

- with families, students and the local Indigenous community when developing policies to address the *Child Safe Standard 1*.

Examples of actions used to support cultural safety

1. Building a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion

- Begin events and meetings with an *Acknowledgement of Country* as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion.
- Fly the Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.

- Make Indigenous people's voice part of decision making in matters that affect Indigenous students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Indigenous community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families when opportunities arise.
- Lead on safety and inclusion for all Indigenous students and their families. Learn more about Indigenous history and culture, both locally and across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about Indigenous culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build schoolwide knowledge of Indigenous people's history, culture, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.

2. Providing a welcoming environment for Indigenous children:

- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Indigenous students and their families.
- Ask for feedback from Indigenous students and their families about what the school does well, and what can be improved.
- Implement the DET *Koorie Education Policy* to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Indigenous cultures and identities (Government schools); <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/Koorie-education/policy>
- Use *Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs)* to provide advice to government schools about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.
- Use the *Marrung Indigenous Education Plan 2016–2026* to guide the school's support for Indigenous self-determination; <https://www.vic.gov.au/marrung?Redirect=1>

3. Actively address racism

- Express zero tolerance of racism in our 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 school, works to prevent incidents from occurring.
- Put school leaders at the front of anti-racist action. Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the school community.
- Encourage non-Indigenous school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Indigenous students, their families and communities.

4. Guide and train staff and volunteers

- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Indigenous culture to the wellbeing and safety of Indigenous students.

- Work with the local Indigenous community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Indigenous culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
- Arrange *Community Understanding Safety Training (CUST)* or equivalent for staff.

5. Build knowledge of Indigenous culture in school planning and curriculum

- Find out about the Traditional Owners of the land/s where the school is situated on the *Map of Indigenous Australia* and learn about the importance of acknowledging Traditional Owners.
- Include Indigenous history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.

6. Partner with Indigenous communities

- Engage with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) and/or the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).
- Visit an Indigenous cultural learning centre, such as
 - *Koorie Heritage Trust* (Melbourne)
 - *Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre* (Melbourne)

7. Review and assess how the school 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.

8. Recognise key events and anniversaries.

National Apology to the Stolen Generations (2008)	13 February
Close the Gap Day	March
Harmony Day	March
Sorry Day and Anniversary the 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart	26 May
Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum	27 May
Reconciliation Week	27 May to 3 June
Mabo Day	3 June
Anniversary of the 1988 Barunga Statement	12 June
Coming of the Light (Torres Strait Islands)	1 July
NAIDOC Week	First week of July
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day	4 August
International Day of Indigenous Peoples	9 August
1963 Yirrkala Bark Petition to Parliament anniversary	14 August
Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People	13 September
Redfern Address	10 December