

Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

Policy



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1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the position of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) in relation to student diversity, equity and inclusion.

This policy views student diversity as encompassing all learners across cultural, academic, social, emotional, personal and physical attributes noting these are not mutually exclusive. The Policy guides SACCS in ensuring equitable access for all students within a Catholic school recognising that students may require educational adjustments specific to their needs and that inclusion is at the heart of our mission as Catholic educators.

2 Scope of Policy

SACCS is the Approval Authority for the Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

SACCS exercises responsibility and authority for the Strategies that relate to the Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy in collaborative partnership with Religious Institute/Public Juridic Person entities.

For Diocesan Catholic schools, the procedures and guidelines generated by the Policy operate under the authority of the Directors of Catholic Education. They apply to all Diocesan Catholic schools.

SACCS recognises the opportunities to be found in the diverse approaches adopted in schools with different charisms and governing authorities.

Therefore, SACCS defines the scope of procedures and guidelines as applying to Diocesan Catholic schools in the first instance. It is recognised that non-Diocesan Catholic schools may have their own policy which applies in lieu of this document.

3 Context

Founded on Catholic teaching and tradition, Catholic Education's mission in South Australia is *"animated by our Catholic faith and in partnership with families, our schools are communities which create opportunities for encountering life to the full – in all its personal, religious, political, ecological and cultural richness"*.¹

The Student Diversity Equity and Inclusion Policy is founded on the belief that every person is made in the image and likeness of God, and is equal in worth and dignity.

In Catholic Education South Australia each child or young person is welcomed as having inestimable value. To be welcomed, each child or young person has access to places, spaces, and approaches to be a thriving person, capable learner and leader for the world God desires.

¹ SACCS Towards 2027: Expanding Horizons and Deepening Practices, February 2022

4 Key Understandings

Diversity

Diversity encompasses all learners across cultural, academic, social, emotional, personal and physical attributes noting these are not mutually exclusive. Diversity is celebrated and valued as integral to the identity of the whole community and is seen as a source of mutual enrichment.²

Equity

Equitable access for all students within a Catholic school recognises that each individual requires educational adjustments specific to their needs. Recognising that the same approach may not apply for all students, educators make adjustments to facilitate access, participation and learning. Educators work together to ensure that adjustments are individually tailored and designed to maximise growth for each learner.³

Inclusion

At the heart of the work for Catholic educators is the formation of each young person. Thus, inclusive learning experiences are designed with a view that every child or young person should be actively engaged in learning. Consideration is given to the range of learning opportunities offered to meet the needs of each child or young person through the provision of various places, spaces and approaches. Curriculum and assessment practices are flexible, build on learner's strengths, support academic and social capabilities, and cater for each child or young person's learning needs.⁴

5 Guiding Principles

The Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- 1) the uniqueness and dignity of each child or young person, with the understanding that each child and young person is made in the image of God;
- 2) the recognition of parents, as the first educators of their children in human values and faith;
- 3) the respectful relationships that define a supportive Christian community;
- 4) the holistic development - intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural, social, emotional, personal, and physical – for each child and young person;
- 5) learning for each child or young person that is formative, challenging, engaging, life-long, and life-wide;
- 6) learning for each child or young person that is high quality and responsive to their individual needs;
- 7) a whole-of-system approach to learning, wellbeing, and inclusion;
- 8) educational practices informed by the principles of Christian anthropology, Catholic teaching and tradition, evidence and research, legislative requirements, and societal expectations; and

² Adapted from "Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Learning Diversity in a Catholic School", Catholic Education Melbourne, 2017

³ Adapted from "Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Learning Diversity in a Catholic School", Catholic Education Melbourne, 2017

⁴ Ibid.

- 9) funding and fee arrangements that provide a quality education which is accessible to parents and families from diverse religious, social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

6 Policy

“An inclusive education finds a place for all.”⁵

The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools is committed to:

- Increasing the accessibility of, and experiences of diversity, equity and inclusion in our schools and centres inspired by Catholic teaching and tradition.⁶
- Aligning and strengthening student-centred strategies that enhance the diversity within, the equity for, and the inclusive practices which support our students and their respective school communities.

The Policy is based on six interdependent strands that define Catholic Education’s commitment to student diversity, equity and inclusion.

Catholic Education will actively and systematically promote the policy through:

- a culture of inclusion
- student agency
- partnership with parents, carers, and families
- focusing on learning and wellbeing of all students
- leaders and staff focusing on each student; and
- increasing services for diversity, equity and inclusion.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

The SACCS Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy applies to all Catholic schools and Catholic Education offices in South Australia.

School Principals, together with other school leaders, are responsible for ensuring the culture, policies, and educational practices of their school are inclusive of each child or young person.

Leaders in Catholic Education Offices are responsible for ensuring the policies, strategies, and resources of the Catholic system of schools maximise the inclusion of each child or young person and achieve equitable outcomes for them.

Parents, carers and families are responsible for working in partnership with school leaders, teachers and staff to identify the most effective place, spaces and approaches which address the learning and wellbeing needs of their child.

8 Supporting Procedures or Policy Support Documents

The following documents are to be read in conjunction with, and are additional to, any other relevant SACCS, school or CEO policy, procedure or support document.

⁵ Address of Pope Francis to the Association Of Catholic School Parents, December 2015

⁶ SACCS Towards 2027: Expanding Horizons and Deepening Practices, February 2022

- Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Procedures
- Made in the Image of God: Human Sexuality Education program for SA Catholic schools
- Developing Responsible Student Behaviour: Guidelines
- Responding to Harassment and Bullying: Procedures
- Parent Engagement: Guidelines
- Student Enrolment: Policy and Procedures
- Languages and Cultures Education in CESA Schools Policy and Procedures
- Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools Procedure
- Education of Gifted and Talented Students Policy and Procedures
- LearnWell Framework
- Cultural Diversity and Learning Policy
- School Uniform Policy.

9 Definitions

SACCS: The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) has oversight of education in all Catholic schools and sets directions, allocates resources and develops policies for Catholic schools in South Australia.

The Commission and its four Standing Committees are supported by a number of permanent committees and working parties. Catholic Education South Australia through its schools, colleges and centres, implements SACCS' decisions and policies.

Diocesan School: a school recognised as a Catholic school or college by the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie.

Separately Governed School: a school recognised as a Catholic school and founded on the principles of specific religious orders. These schools are overseen by ministries of specific religious orders and are separately incorporated legal entities.

Religious Institute / Public Juridic Person entities: a legal entity under Canon Law that allows various Church ministries to function in the name of the Catholic Church.

10 Revision Record

Document Title	Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
Document Type	Policy
Document Date	August 2022
Process Owner	Learning, Wellbeing and Inclusion Standing Committee
Contact	Senior Education Advisor: Learning, Diversity and Wellbeing  8301 6600
Approval Authority	SACCS
Review Date	August 2026
Revision History	Not Applicable (new document)