

POLICY: Student Diversity and Inclusion

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) approach to student diversity and to promote inclusion that ensures positive attitudes and responsiveness to diversity in race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability.

This policy must be read in conjunction with: Student Wellbeing policy; Student Protection policy; Student Behaviour Support policy; Student Attendance policy; Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying and Harassment in Schools policy; School Uniform policy and the Code of Conduct.

2. RATIONALE

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission position statement on inclusive practices informs us of our responsibility to recognise and respect the rights and needs of every child. This is achieved by providing equitable access to the curriculum, offering maximum learning opportunities and meeting the educational and social needs of all students.

BCE educates all to live the gospel of Jesus Christ as successful, creative and confident, active and informed learners empowered to shape and enrich our world. It is the role of all employees in BCE schools to ensure that each student is given the support and encouragement they need to flourish as a human person loved by God. We are challenged by the Church to reach out to all our brothers and sisters in love, acknowledging their diversity, immediate needs, and specific situations (*Deus Caritas Est, On Christian Love*).

Supporting diversity and being inclusive is about building communities that value, celebrate and respond to diversity, underpinned by respectful relationships between learners, teachers, and caregivers. It is supported by collaborative relationships with communities and governments and shapes the society in which we live and the type of society to which we aspire. Education is recognised as the key pathway to improving equitable economic and social, emotional, and wellbeing outcomes for students.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Every student deserves to flourish and has the right to learn in a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. BCE supports all students, regardless of background, identities, and abilities to access and fully participate in their learning.

4. PRINCIPLES

BCE believes that every learner:

- is created in the image and likeness of God and inspired by the Spirit, responds with passion and creativity to life
- seeks to find meaning in life and learning and in the Catholic Tradition we find meaning in the person and teachings of Jesus to grow as pilgrim people
- is a lifelong learner, with a desire to search for truth and do what is right, is accountable for choices and responsible for actions

- is in some respect, like all others, like some others, like no other and we respond creatively, flexibly and with a futures orientation to ensure dignity and justice for all
- can achieve success in life and learning where diversity is valued, and shared wisdom contributes to decision-making that enriches and enlivens our world
- brings to the learning experience their own richly diverse life journey to contribute to a community in communion, empowered by the Spirit to be at the service of others.

BCE schools cater for students who have a diverse range of personal characteristics and experiences. As these different student groups experience different barriers to inclusion, BCE commits to continue to develop and implement strategies and policies, and support practices that address the unique needs of:

- students with a disability
- gifted and talented students
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- students from a refugee or migrant background
- students living in out-of-home care
- students who identify as gender diverse or LGBTIQ+
- students from rural and remote communities
- students with mental health and wellbeing concerns
- disengaged and marginalised students.

5. REFERENCES

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth)
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwlth)
- Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Intersex Status) Act 2013
- Molum Sabe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2017-2020
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2021.