

## **Mary Help of Christians School Community Engagement Plan**

This is an agreement between the staff of **Mary Help of Christians**, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students and their parents/caregivers/families.

We agree to work together so that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students at our school have optimal opportunities for success. By fostering and developing the talents, abilities and interests of the students, we will provide the best environment for their social, emotional, spiritual and academic achievement at school.

We want students to receive a quality education, to feel supported at school and at home and to be proud of their identity and culture(s). We want the students to feel a sense of belonging to this school community.

In order to achieve these goals we will need to involve the staff and school community, the families of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students and local Aboriginal community organisations and representatives.

### **Action Plan**

#### **Existing Strategies in place**

- Employment of Indigenous Education Worker
- Raising of the Aboriginal flag daily.
- Indigenous students have a weekly session with the IEW if they choose .
- IEW shares knowledge with staff at staff meetings and through general discussions with class teachers.
- Welcome/ acknowledgement of country at assembly and significant events.
- planned NAIDOC week activities across the whole school.
- Annual activity with a special focus for Indigenous students ( Yarrowarra visit, bush tucker excursion, craft & food day, Aboriginal artist in residence).
- Creation and display of a Gumbaynggirr welcome sign for the front of the school created (with involvement of indigenous students & friends).
- Creation and display of a painting depicting a local Gumbaynggirr dreaming story (with involvement of indigenous students & friends).
- Creation and display of story poles depicting a local Gumbaynggirr dreaming story (with involvement of indigenous students & friends).
- Two planning meetings per year for each Indigenous student at school.
- Talking to families to develop awareness of their heritage.
- Concerns about learning and well-being of students are followed up with families and other health professionals where required.
- IEW to contact families after planning meetings to provide opportunity for questions, follow-up discussion, etc.

## **Proposals for increased awareness of and engagement with our Indigenous community**

- Including local aboriginal language in morning assemblies through prayer and song.
- Aboriginal perspective to be incorporated into all KLAs.
- Greater contact with families will be sought through direct approach of IEW and others.
- Increase awareness of Indigenous organisations for school staff and families.
- School to provide information to families about services, events and other relevant opportunities for Indigenous students and their families.
- Strengthen the connections between school and the local Indigenous community through invitations to visit school and presence at community meetings, events.
- Planned sequence of development of cultural knowledge and understandings for Indigenous students.
- Encourage parents to be involved with P & C, Canteen and other volunteer positions. Also encourage parents of indigenous students to be involved in NAIDOC activities/cultural activities and excursions.

### **School staff members will:**

- develop understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, languages, traditions and ways of learning;
- respect and value students and acknowledge their cultural background (s);
- have high expectations of students and their abilities to learn and succeed;
- ensure that what students learn and how they learn is relevant to their lives and aspirations
- strive to meet students' learning needs and use up to date resources, learning aids and equipment;
- develop individualised learning plans for students where appropriate;
- protect, value and care for students while they are at school, creating a school that is free from discrimination and harassment;
- inform parents/caregivers/families of their children's attendance and progress at school and show them examples of their children's work;
- investigate any concerns that students and parents/caregivers/families raise with them;
- welcome parents/caregivers/families to the school so they can see where their children learn and share local knowledge with the school;
- work with parents/caregivers/families on school policy and planning
- be flexible with school organisation and resources; and

- encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who want to work at the school or wish to become teachers or education workers.

**Parents/caregivers/families will:**

- expect school staff to provide quality teaching for their children;
- make sure their children attend school and do their homework;
- have high expectations of their children's abilities to learn and succeed;
- support their children's learning (for example, by reading to them or asking about their school work);
- encourage their children's interest in learning and let them know about the importance of education;
- meet with school staff to discuss their children's progress at school;
- praise their children's achievements and success;
- assist with the selection of the school principal and teaching staff;
- take part in school policy and planning;
- help school staff to understand local Indigenous history and cultures; and
- volunteer to help around the school where possible.

**Students will:**

- expect school staff to provide quality teaching that meets their needs and aspirations.
- Set goals for their learning and work to achieve these.
- seek help when they don't understand a task or instruction.
- ask teachers, parent/caregivers for help if they feel they need more support.
- know that teachers and families want to help students to have positive outcomes and attitudes from their time at school.
- respect and work with other students, the school and its staff, parents/caregivers and community members.
- make suggestions about ways to improve their school.

**Local Aboriginal Community organisations and representatives will:**

- Join in celebrations of student success.
- respect the school, its vision and ethos.
- provide Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training to school staff when required.
- provide health and well-being advice to support students when required.
- engage with the school to help close the gap in Indigenous health issues.

We agree that this document will remain in place if we have a new principal and that we will regularly reaffirm our commitment to it and renegotiate it when our needs and circumstances change.

**This agreement was completed on 6th August, 2018**

Together, the undersigned school staff members and parent/caregivers (and students, or student representatives, where appropriate and community organisations or other parties if identified above) believe they can work together to make a difference in education and the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Parent/caregivers	School staff	Students/Student Representatives (if applicable)	Community organisation Representatives (if applicable)
	KELLY BIKONSKI K. Bikonski		Mark Flanders N.P.W.S (OEA)
CLAUDE McDONALD C. McDonald			C