

# INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY POLICY

## (includes Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment)

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain Western English Language School's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. Western English Language School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment which values the human rights of all students and staff. For staff, this policy should be read alongside the Department of Education and Training's [Respectful Workplaces](#) policies (including [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#), [Sexual Harassment](#) and [Workplace Bullying](#)) as these whole of Department policies apply to all staff at Western English Language School.

### POLICY

#### Definitions

*Personal attribute:* a personal characteristic that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These include: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious belief or activity, political belief or activity, age, intersex status, physical features, pregnancy, carer and parental status, breastfeeding, marital or relationship status, lawful sexual activity, employment activity, industrial activity, expunged homosexual conviction or personal association with anyone who is identified with reference to any protected attribute.

*Direct discrimination:* unfavourable treatment because of a person's protected attribute.

*Indirect discrimination:* imposing an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that disadvantages a person or group of people with a protected attribute.

*Sexual harassment:* unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards another person which could reasonably be expected to make that other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It may be physical, verbal, visual or written.

*Disability harassment:* humiliating comments or actions about a person's disability.

*Vilification:* conduct that incites hatred towards or revulsion or severe ridicule of a person or group of people on the basis of their race or religion.

*Victimisation:* subjecting a person or threatening to subject them to detrimental treatment because they (or their associate) has made an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected attribute (or asserted their rights under relevant policies or law).

## Inclusion and diversity

Western English Language School is a multi-campus school in Melbourne's South Western Region. WELS delivers intensive English language programs as well as the cultural information newly arrived refugee and migrant students need to perform successfully in mainstream schools.

Western English Language School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all newly arrived refugee and migrant students from language backgrounds other than English. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning.

Western English Language School is committed to creating a school community where all members acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community. We will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.

We promote a school community in which everybody feels valued, respected and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood, and accepted.

We acknowledge our role as educators, peers and role models to provide a positive and safe place where our students are free to explore themselves and their world, and to practise the skills necessary for them to become fully educated, aware, compassionate and empowered citizens.

Western English Language School is committed to creating a school community where all members of our school community are welcomed, accepted and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes such as race, language, religious beliefs, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.

Western English Language School acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others. At Western English Language School we value the human rights of every student and we take our obligations under anti-discrimination laws and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities seriously.

Western English Language School will:

- Actively nurture and promote a culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that students are not discriminated against (directly or indirectly) and where necessary, are reasonably accommodated to participate in their education and school activities on the same basis as their peers
- acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
- encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
- contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students
- respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimised.

Western English Language School promotes inclusion and diversity by:

- nurturing an environment that celebrates diversity (racial, cultural, sexual and gender diversity) through the use of media (posters, brochures), presentations at assemblies and discussions in classrooms.
- conducting staff PD to provide teachers with knowledge and resources on how to respond to discriminatory (including sexism, racism, homophobic and transphobic) language in the classroom, and create a safe and supportive school environment for students and staff.
- Committing to the delivery the Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships (RRRR) classroom programs
- publishing articles in the school bulletin to highlight the school's commitment to equal opportunity and the provision of a safe, supportive non-discriminatory environment.
- developing and maintaining links with community organisations that can provide support to same sex attracted and gender diverse students, and referring students to these services where appropriate.
- supporting students with disabilities to receive the necessary adjustments to curriculum and school activities to participate equally with their peers.
- scheduling and supporting school activities and initiatives which celebrate an acceptance of diversity and the rights of individuals such as: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia Biphobia and Intersexism (IDAHOTB Day), Multicultural day/s, International Women's Day, R U OK Day, National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence and NAIDOC Week activities.

Bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals or groups because of their personal attributes will not be tolerated at Western English Language School. We will take appropriate measures, consistent with our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying* policies to respond to students who demonstrate these behaviours at our school.

Students who may have experienced or witnessed this type of behaviour are encouraged to speak up and to let their teachers, parents or carers know about those behaviours to ensure that inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

### **Reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities**

Western English Language School also understands that it has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist students with disabilities to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers and if appropriate, their treating practitioners. Our school may consult through Student Support Group processes and in other less formal ways. For more information about support available for students with disabilities, and communicating with us in relation to a student's disability, please refer to our school's [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#).

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

[Bullying Prevention Policy.docx](#)

[Student Wellbeing and Engagement-WELS 21.2.21.docx](#)

For staff, please see the Department's [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying Policy](#) which apply to all staff working at our school.

Other relevant Department policies and resources on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library are:

- [Students with Disability](#)
- [Koorie Education](#)
- [Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Supports and Services](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

## REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on 05.03.2021 and is scheduled for review in 03/2024.