

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENT

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Rationale:

Contemporary Australian society is composed of more than 130 ethnic groups who speak over 90 languages. New South Wales is Australia's most populous and multicultural state. Almost a quarter of the state's population was born overseas, with 54% coming from Europe and 22% from Asia.

Approximately 18% of people over the age of four speak a language other than English at home with the languages most commonly spoken being Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, Spanish and Indonesian. Even the original indigenous population displayed great cultural and linguistic diversity, with our state's Aboriginal population, approximately 100,000 people, being the largest in Australia.

The policy of Multiculturalism recognises, accepts and values the diversity of cultural, racial, religious and political origins of the multitude of Aboriginal and ethnic groups of English and non-English speaking people who have contributed to the development of Australia. By encouraging people to understand and appreciate the cultural diversity within Australian society, multiculturalism promotes harmonious coexistence and enhances the life options available to its people.

Definitions:

Multiculturalism is a social value that recognises cultural diversity as a positive and enriching component of society.

The concept of multiculturalism also recognises that both the independence and the interdependence of cultural groups are important for social cohesion. Similarly, equality among Australian cultural groups depends on the opportunity to participate equally in the economic, social and political life of Australia.

Multiculturalism allows for national unity within which there is cultural diversity. Therefore, an individual's affiliation with an Aboriginal group or ethnic group is seen as complementary to, not in conflict with, his or her Australian national identity. Individual affiliation need not detract from interdependence or mutual support amongst Australian peoples.

Ethnicity or ethnic identity results from an individual's affiliation with the culture of a particular ethnic group. Ethnic awareness forms part of the self-concept of the child.

Multicultural perspectives to the curriculum concentrate on the cognitive domain, and become a process of awareness raising which encourages schools to place a cultural dimension within all subjects.

Intercultural education is that education which deals primarily with beliefs, attitudes and values and concentrates on the affective domain.

Organisation of Multicultural Education Programs:

All students need to be made aware of the cultural diversity that exists within Australia and is reflected in the multicultural nature of our school. All Australians have an ethnic identity whether they are from English speaking or other language backgrounds. Students need to see themselves and their background culture in a positive light and have an awareness of the worthwhile contribution being made historically and in the present by ethnic groups within Australia.

The promotion of knowledge and understanding of the various cultural groups through studies of their beliefs, values and attitudes will help to foster harmony amongst all students. The recognition and celebration of

various ethnic national days, weeks and festivals related to the wide range of cultural groups throughout the school will provide a wealth of information and understanding for all. The literacy, library and H.I.S.E. programs will ensure that a variety of literature depicting people from varying cultural backgrounds is studied.

Goals:

The aims of multicultural education encompass the provision of educational experiences which will develop in all students:

- an understanding and appreciation that Australia is multicultural in nature
- an awareness of the contribution which people of many cultural backgrounds have made and are making to Australia
- intercultural understanding through the consideration of attitudes, beliefs and values of all members of the school community
- behaviour that fosters interethnic harmony, acceptance and tolerance of others
- an enhanced sense of personal worth through an acceptance and appreciation of their Australian national identity and their personal cultural identity and heritage.

Strategies for Implementation:

To foster in staff, students and the community an understanding of, and respect for, values of cultures other than their own.

- The policy statement will be reflected in the curriculum
- The policy statement will be reflected in school communications, systems and procedures
- The school executive and staff will oversee implementation of the Multicultural Education Policy statement.