

SINGLETON HEIGHTS PRE-SCHOOL INC.



RECONCILIATION POLICY

GOAL: Singleton Heights Pre-School Inc. aims to promote understanding, through actions that build on our community's capacity to value and respect the cultures, rights and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous peoples. Through ongoing learning experiences, together we will learn, talk and recognise reconciliation as a positive journey. We acknowledge and take an active role in learning about our shared histories, cultures and achievements and in building respectful attitudes and relationships.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION / LINKS:

ACT: Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) 2010 Act: Sections 165, 166, 168, 323,

REGULATIONS: Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 73-76, 155, 156, 162

NQS: 1.1, 3.2, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.2

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

POLICY:

Reconciliation is:

Reconciliation is about unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians. It is about respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians

“At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.”

From Reconciliation Australia

The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets a high, national benchmark for early childhood education and care in Australia, with key principles being:

- The rights and best interests of the child are paramount.
- Children are successful, competent and capable learners.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the framework.
- Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.
- The role of parents and families is respected and supported
- Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services

The importance of relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

There are many ways of living, being and of knowing. Children are born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities. Respecting diversity means within the curriculum valuing and reflecting the practices, values and beliefs of families. Educators honour the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families. They value children's different capacities and abilities and respect differences in families' home lives.

The responsibility for fostering pride in and respect for Australia's First Peoples, and for increasing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, must be a shared one. It is cultivated when early learning services become more knowledgeable about, engaged with, and respectful of, the experiences and aspirations of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In turn, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need to be familiar with, confident about, and engaged in, the early learning service. Communication, collaboration and consultation are key to sustaining a successful partnership with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Building relationships is an important part of creating learning environments that demonstrate respect for, and pride in, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions, families and children. These culturally respectful environments ultimately improve learning outcomes for all children.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way of showing respect for the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which learning is taking place or a meeting or event is being held, as well as being an ongoing reminder of the importance of Country and place to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Singleton Heights Pre-School recognises the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the Country on which we live, work, learn and grow, with the act of being welcomed to and acknowledging Country are a continuation of protocols that have been practiced for thousands of years.

All children, staff and Management have the opportunity to show respect to Traditional Owners and Custodians by regularly conducting an Acknowledgement of Country at meetings and events throughout the year.

Singleton Heights Pre-School practices Acknowledgment in a number of ways:

- a daily Acknowledgement is shared with the children. It was created specifically for this purpose.
- The Pre-School created a formal Acknowledgement in consultation with local Elders which is shared before meetings at the Pre-School.
- The Acknowledgement created is on display on the noticeboard in the front foyer and on a sign adjacent to the ramped entry to the Pre-School.
- A physical Acknowledgement of Country is located in the garden adjacent to the ramped entry to the Pre-School.

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country, is a formal welcome onto land and can only be conducted by Traditional Owners or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been given permission from Traditional Owners to welcome visitors to their Country. Singleton Heights Pre-School will maintain relationships with local Elders, inviting them to officiate at important events, as well as inviting them to join us for social occasions.

Days of Significance

The Pre-School commits to organising and participating in events to celebrate or commemorate days/weeks of national significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the reconciliation movement to show our pride in, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. A calendar is shared with Educators at the beginning of each year and significant dates are discussed at staff meetings to ensure consultation and organisation of activities within the program.

These days include:

- National Sorry Day
- Reconciliation Week
- Naidoc Week

Elders Share Histories and Culture

We are committed to forging a meaningful and ongoing relationship with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, and people recognised in their community as Traditional Owners. We hope this relationship can be of mutual benefit, and that our local Elders and Traditional Owners will feel safe, and confident, to share their historical and cultural knowledge with our staff, students and children

Inviting local Elders and Traditional Owners to speak to students and staff about the histories and cultures of the area on which the Pre-School is situated, greatly enhances learning experiences.

Aboriginal People in the Classroom

Singleton Heights Pre-School is committed to welcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into our classrooms as guests to work alongside the children and Educators in learning activities. We believe that having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence in our learning environments, is vital when teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. This is especially meaningful when local perspectives are shared in relation to the Country where the children are living and learning.

Teach about Reconciliation

Our early learning service community is committed to learning about reconciliation in Australia. Having an understanding of the concept, history and progress of reconciliation is an important part of continuing the reconciliation journey.

Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the benefit of all Australians. Teaching and learning about the concept, history and progress of reconciliation can help to provide children and staff, with an understanding of how your early learning service's RAP fits into the broader story of reconciliation in Australia.

By defining reconciliation through five dimensions, we share the language for reconciliation for all Australians. The five dimensions are:

- historical acceptance
- race relations
- equality and equity
- institutional integrity
- unity

The five dimensions of reconciliation.



1. Race Relations

All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism.

Goal: Positive two-way relationships built on trust and respect exist between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians throughout society.

2. Equity and Equality

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.

Goal: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians participate equally and equitably in all areas of life—i.e. we have closed the gaps in life outcomes—and the distinctive individual and collective rights and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are universally recognised and respected. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are self-determining.

3. Institutional Integrity

The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.

Goal: Our political, business and community institutions actively support all dimensions of reconciliation.

4. Unity

An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.

Goal: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights are a valued and recognised part of a shared national identity and, as a result, there is national unity.

5. Historical Acceptance

All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Australia makes amends for past policies and practices ensures these wrongs are never repeated.

Goal: There is widespread acceptance of our nation's history and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated— there is truth, justice, healing and historical acceptance.

Local Sites

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to Country, and their histories and cultures are contextualised by the local area and practices. Singleton Heights Pre-School believes that finding out as much as possible about the histories and cultures of our local area is a priority when learning and teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Local knowledge is important because of the shared connection with the particular place in which our early learning service operates and this connection greatly enriches relationships, understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culture, Country and place.

This is achieved by working with our local Aboriginal community and Elders, talking about significant sites that are appropriate for children and Educators to learn about, visit or attend.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Singleton Heights Pre-School maintains a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). A sub-committee consisting of the Aboriginal Program Coordinator, Nominated Supervisor and a Committee representative meet at least termly, to review RAP progress and ensure the actions nominated by the Pre-School are completed.

The RAP sub-committee forward information to the Management Committee, Educators and families for consultation and to report progress. All progress is also reported to the Narra Gunna Wali RAP portal, to ensure updates of our goals and actions.

Training

It is important for all Australians to have an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including their unique connection to the land, seas, skies and waterways. Cultural competence opportunities help to improve the level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures amongst staff, which is the basis for building better relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community,

Singleton Heights Pre-School is committed to the professional development of all Educators in relation to Aboriginal cultural competence and local knowledge. We employ an Aboriginal Program Coordinator who liaises with local Elders and Community groups, liaises with a local Aboriginal Educator and shares information with Educators.

Building educator's competence in relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families is a process that is underpinned by relationships, skills and knowledge. Cultural competence is a two way learning process. A culturally competent organisation that values and respects diversity helps everyone feel like they belong. More specifically, being familiar with the rich and long history of Australia, including our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, enriches all of us. In implementing this Framework educators must embed and sustain processes to:

- Make decisions that are genuinely inclusive
- Negotiate and set goals for children's ongoing learning • Model leadership, respect, responsibility and accountability
- Refine, reflect on and apply skills for quality teaching and learning • Share responsibility for teaching and learning
- Strengthen policy making, service delivery and practice and continually monitor, reflect on and refine this process
- Implement their professional obligation to embrace the principles of equal access, opportunity, and maintain a journey of learning.