



Bentleigh West Primary School

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY POLICY

(Includes Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment)

Rational

In accordance with the Disabilities Standards for Education 2005 (DSE) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), Bentleigh West Primary School is committed to inclusive education whereby children of all abilities, different cultural, racial, ethnic and social and religious backgrounds have the right to participate fully in the education process and activities of the school alongside their similar age peers. Research shows that all children do better academically and socially when educated in inclusive classrooms. Inclusive practices maximises the outcomes of all students.

Students with disabilities are included in regular classrooms. They access quality instruction and support by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies to meet their individual needs, with a focus on maintaining high levels of engagement, belonging and equitable learning experiences.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain Bentleigh West Primary 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. Bentleigh West Primary 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 Bentleigh West Primary 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

Bentleigh West Primary 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.

We have high expectations of all students acknowledging that with the right support, all students can succeed.

Bentleigh West Primary 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 Bentleigh West Primary 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.

Bentleigh West Primary 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 and events (e.g. schools sports, concerts, camps and excursions, graduation, swimming carnivals, special event days/multi-age days) on the same basis as their peers
- acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students and we embrace diversity as a strength
- 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.

Bentleigh West Primary School will eliminate barriers to access, these include:

- *Physical Barriers* - These are architectural and structural barriers, such as but not limited to, access for wheelchairs, lighting for students with low vision and sound field system for students with hearing impairment
- *Instructional Barriers* - Staff who do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to support learners with specific needs
- *Attitudinal Barriers* - These are behaviours, perceptions and assumptions that discriminate against a person with a disability. Such as forming an idea about someone through lack of knowledge or because of stereotype
- *Curriculum barriers* - A rigid curriculum that does not allow for different teaching methods to meet a diverse range of learners.

Every member of the school community, including teachers, support staff, volunteers, families and students, works collaboratively to ensure students can access and participate in all areas of school life. Curriculum is provided to all students in ways which are age appropriate and responsive to diverse learning needs.

We collaborate with students, parents and caregivers, and other organisations, including teacher and professional associations, as respected and valued partners in inclusive education. We support students, parents, caregivers and families to have a voice and be heard. Their views are considered in decision making at all levels.

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 Bentleigh West Primary 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

Bentleigh West Primary 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 or contact our Assistant principal, Sarah Acome for further information.

Related Policies and Resources

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 School Policy and Advisory Guide are:

- [Inclusive Education](#)
- [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 21 May 2019 and is scheduled for review in May 2023.