



Horsham Special School

Inclusion and Diversity Policy

May 2019

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to explain Horsham Special School's (HSS's) commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. HSS strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students and members of our school community.

Horsham Special School is cognisant of its obligations under the **Child Safe Standards** (Ministerial Order 870 – effective August 1, 2016) to protect students from all forms of child abuse. To this end, all necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that our management of inclusion and diversity poses no risk to child safety.

Horsham Special School is committed to creating and sustaining a safe, equitable, respectful and inclusive learning environment for every student and staff member, same-sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students and staff.

AIMS

At all times Horsham Special School (HSS) will adhere to the DET guidelines for inclusion and diversity. This policy should be implemented in alignment with:

1. DET Bullying Policy
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx>
2. DET Student Engagement Policy
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/engagement.aspx>
3. HSS Bullying Prevention Policy
4. HSS Visitors Policy
5. HSS Statement of School Values and Philosophy
6. HSS Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy
7. HSS Digital Technologies Policy
8. HSS Duty of Care Policy
9. DET PROTECT Guidelines;
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>
10. VRQA Child Safe Standards;
<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/default.html>
11. Any other current or future policy related to the inclusion and diversity of students of our school

IMPLEMENTATION

Definitions

Personal attribute: a feature of a person's background or personal characteristics that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. For example: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion etc.

Inclusion and diversity

HSS 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.

HSS 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.

HSS will:

- ensure that all students and members of our school community are treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that students are not discriminated against and where necessary, are accommodated to participate in education and all 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.

Bullying, harassment and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals because of their personal attributes will not be tolerated in our school community. 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. Where students have been subjected to bullying, the school will take appropriate courses of action to respond (e.g. mediation, parent contact, counselling, etc.) to ensure that victims emotional needs are being met.

HSS will take appropriate mediation measures, consistent with its *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying Prevention* policies to respond to discriminatory behaviour or harassment at our school. Students that are involved in bullying or harassing others on the basis of their personal attributes will be supported to understand the impact of their behaviour.

HSS also understands that it has a special obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist all students to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities through our Student Support Group and communication processes in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers and if appropriate, their treating practitioners.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in May 2021.