

Inclusion and Diversity Policy

(Includes Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment)



Waratah Special Developmental School



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain Waratah SDS's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. This policy should be read alongside the following Department of Education and Training policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- For staff, the [Respectful Workplaces](#) policies (including [Equal Opportunity and AntiDiscrimination](#), [Sexual Harassment](#) and [Workplace Bullying](#)) as these whole of Department policies apply to all staff at Waratah SDS.

POLICY

Definitions

Personal attribute: a personal characteristic that is protected by State or Commonwealth antidiscrimination 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: an action taken in relation to the person's disability that is reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress the person.

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

Waratah SDS strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment which values the human rights of all students and staff.

Waratah Special Developmental School caters for approximately 75 students who have a moderate to severe intellectual disability aged from 5 to 18 years. More than 50% of these students have an additional diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder; a number also have physical and sensory impairments. All students have communication difficulties and many are non-verbal. The students have delayed social skill development and have difficulty interacting appropriately with peers, staff and people in the community. Students have little understanding of potential dangers and are vulnerable to abuse.

Approximately 50% of students come from a family where another language is spoken at home, and over 5% identify as indigenous. Students come from a wide area including Richmond, Collingwood, Northcote, Fairfield, Carlton, Fitzroy, West Heidelberg, Ivanhoe, and parts of Rosanna. With such a diverse student base, the school attempts at all times to maintain its commitment to cultural safety for all of its students.

Waratah SDS 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.

The 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 Waratah SDS, 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.

Waratah SDS 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 (eg schools sports, concerts, excursions, work experience) 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.

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 Waratah SDS. We will take appropriate measures, consistent with our *Student 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

All students who attend the school have been diagnosed as having an intellectual disability. The school 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.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

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 Department's Policy and Advisory Library are:

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2025
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2029