

Inclusion Policy

Purpose	This policy outlines the school's purpose to meet the needs of our diverse learning community through commitment to and alignment with the current and relevant Inclusive Education policies and research literature.	
Scope	This policy applies to students, parents and employees of The River School, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term and casual employees as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements while they are in class, on school grounds or involved in school activities on or off school grounds-	
Responsibility	School Principal	
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSE (Disability Standards for Education 2005) • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 • The River School Disability Discrimination Policy • Alice Springs (<i>Mparntwe</i>) Education Declaration (December 2019) • United Nations (UN) General Comment No.4 on CRPD Article cru.org.au 24 (the right to inclusive education) • Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 	
Status	Approved by AMEL Board	Supersedes: Inclusion Policy 2022
Authorised by	School Board	
Last Review Date	August 2023	Next Review Date August 2024
Review Cycle	Annually	Version ID TRSIP 2023
Authorisation	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation September 2023
Policy Owner	AME Ltd Board	

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The River School is committed to fostering an inclusive school environment that is supportive, respectful, compatible with human rights and provides all students with opportunities to engage in quality learning. *The River School's* Neohumanist philosophy nurtures and values each student as an individual with absolute potential. Our holistic approach ensures that children feel loved and safe, and that they are given every opportunity to grow academically, spiritually, emotionally and socially.

Inclusive education at our school means that students from all backgrounds (including economic & cultural), of all identities and all abilities are able to access and participate all areas of school life. Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life, and is supported by culture, policies and everyday practices.

2. IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

In today's interconnected global society, it is crucial for children to be prepared for diverse communities and workplaces. By teaching children about identity, diversity, and inclusion we provide them with the knowledge and understanding necessary to embrace differences, challenge stereotypes, and build a more inclusive and compassionate society. It equips them with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate and respect diverse perspectives including but not limited to race, language, gender, spiritual affiliation, physical, social, and emotional abilities, and socioeconomic means. This prepares children for future interactions with people from different backgrounds and identities, fostering a more inclusive society overall.

Neohumanism encompasses identity, diversity, and inclusion by recognising the inherent worth of all individuals, promoting equality and non-discrimination, creating inclusive spaces, emphasising education and awareness, advocating for social justice, and cultivating compassion and empathy. By integrating these principles into our lives, we can contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious world that celebrates and embraces the diversity of all identities.

At the River School we recognise that identity, diversity, and inclusion are fundamental pillars of a harmonious and equitable society. We use the Australian Curriculum to guide the content, and our Neohumanist philosophy to guide our values and ways of teaching.

Teaching children about identity, diversity and inclusion requires a thoughtful and age-appropriate approach. The following strategies form the basis from which teachers individualise their classroom teaching and learning according to their cohort and context.

1. **Promote Inclusive Language:** Teach children to use inclusive language that respects diverse identities. Identity education recognises that gender intersects with other aspects of an individual's identity, such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Pronouns can be explored within the context of grammar. We encourage teachers to blend this learning into their lessons rather than it being an explicit, stand-alone learning episode.

Content (sample) — Australian Curriculum

- *Exploring ways to create safe and inclusive schools for minority groups*
 - *Exploring how people feel when they are included and excluded from groups and activities (Yrs. 1&2 HPE)*
 - *Listen to others' ideas and recognise that other may see things differently from them (PSC Level 1, Prep – Yr.1)*
 - *Explain how the portrayal of societal roles and responsibilities can be influenced by people and places, and how we can create positive self-identities (Yrs. 5&.6 HPE v.9)*
2. **Be Open to Questions:** Create a safe and non-judgmental space where children feel comfortable asking questions. Encourage their curiosity and provide clear and age-appropriate answers.

Content (sample) — Australian Curriculum

- *Recognise similarities in individuals and groups and explore how these are celebrated and respected (Yrs. 1&2 HPE)*
 - *Assessing the impact of different relationships on personal health and well-being (Yrs. 5&6 HPE)*
 - *Exploring initiatives that sporting and community groups use to counter all forms of discrimination and support the well-being of their communities (Yrs. 5&6 HPE)*
3. **Shine a light on Respect and Kindness:** Emphasise the importance of treating others with respect and kindness, regardless of their identity or expression. Teach children that everyone deserves to be valued and respected for who they are.

Note: We address individual supports as needed through our student support program

Content (sample) — Australian Curriculum

- *Recognise that being kind, fair and respectful to others can support class health and well-being (Prep — HPE)*
 - *Describing behaviours that show empathy and respect for the rights of others (Yrs. 3&4 HPE)*
 - *Describe and implement strategies to value diversity in their communities (Yrs. 5&6 HPE v.9)*
4. **Individual Empowerment and Self-Expression:** Embracing identity and inclusion empowers individuals to embrace their authentic selves and express their unique identities. When individuals are accepted and valued for who they are, they experience increased self-esteem, confidence, belonging and overall well-being. Celebrating diversity allows individuals to explore their passions, talents, and perspectives, contributing to personal growth and fulfillment.

Content (sample) — Australian Curriculum

- *Appreciate diverse perspectives (PSC – sub element)*
- *Describe ways to include others to make them feel they belong (Yrs. 1 &2 HPE)*

- Describe how valuing diversity influences wellbeing and identify actions that promote inclusion in their communities (Yrs. 3&4 HPE v.9)
 - Explain how identity can be influenced by people and places, and how we can create positive self-identities (Yrs. 5&6 HPE v.9)
5. **Lead by Example:** Model inclusive behaviour and language. Children learn by observing and imitating, so it's important for educators and parents to be mindful of their own attitudes and actions regarding identity, diversity, and inclusion.

Content (sample) — Australian Curriculum

- Talking about where and when they have witnessed fairness and inclusion – (Yrs. 3&4 HPE)
- Discuss the value of diverse perspectives and describe a point of view that is different from their own (PSC Level 3 - Yrs. 3&4)

Explanation of Terms

PSC — *personal & social capabilities*

HPE — *health and physical education*

3. WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Education is inclusive when it:

- provides equitable access to education and promotes full participation and engagement with similar aged-peers
- provides a safe and supportive environment, free from discrimination and harassment
- creates an environment where students can achieve academically and socially with reasonable adjustments (see Appendix 1,) and supports tailored to meet their learning needs
- welcomes all students within a school culture that embraces diversity and nurtures all people through a commitment to wellbeing for all.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At *The River School* we treat everyone with respect, courtesy and fairness, and aim to act compatibly with human rights. Recognising our responsibility to work with ISQ (Independent Schools Queensland) and support the nine core features for inclusive education (United Nations 2016), the River School will promote inclusive education through:

- participating in a system-wide approach using policies, programs and practices to remove barriers to education
- supporting the accountability of school staff to implement a culture of shared values that support inclusion and remove barriers to education

- whole-staff collaboration to ensure all students can access the curriculum that can be universally designed and adjusted to meet diverse and individual learning needs
- collaboration with the learning community to include the voice of students, families, teachers, and other stakeholder organisations as respected and valued partners in inclusive education
- a commitment to build awareness of biases and language use that causes harm to diverse and marginalised communities
- respecting and valuing diversity to ensure all students and families are welcomed, respected, included and safe in our school
- supporting staff to build their expertise and practice with evidence-based strategies by providing professional learning and mentorship. Inclusive education practices are implemented and shared and cultural capability is strengthened.
- developing a consistent, structured support system (e.g. multi-tiered)
- providing, where possible, accessible learning environments that are designed to enable students of all backgrounds, identities and abilities to fully participate in learning
- developing effective partnerships with students, families, relevant community organisations and allied health professionals to support successful transitions along the learning journey
- using preferred pronouns and identity affirming language in all school based interactions.

5. CREATING PARTNERSHIPS

To develop a supportive and successful learning environment, it is important parents work with school staff to determine realistic expectations. External specialists will work with parents and the school to ensure they are part of a support team that is working towards the same goals. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are a collaborative investment in identifying student needs, supports and resources.

6. DIFFERENTIATED AND EXPLICIT TEACHING FOR ALL STUDENTS

Inclusive education strategies are supported through differentiated and explicit teaching and learning practices. These practices are used as a strategy within the regular provision of the curriculum and are designed to respond to the diverse and individual learning needs of all students.

Teachers differentiate instruction in response to documentation and data. Teachers purposefully plan a variety of ways to engage students; support them to achieve the expected outcomes; and to demonstrate their learning through effective and relevant monitoring and assessment.

“Targeted support can help learners such as those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those from regional, rural and remote area, migrants, refugees, learner in out of home care, homeless young people, and children with disability to reach their potential. This means tailoring to the needs of individuals across a system that priorities equity of opportunity and supports achievement.” [Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (December 2019 – pg. 11)]

7. CONTINUING THE INCLUSION JOURNEY

The River School commits to supporting the journey within education towards a more inclusive education system for all students.

This important work is ongoing, and our school will continue to seek guidance through alignment to all current legislation and policies.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

The River School will take the following steps to ensure full implementation and effective operation of this policy:

- **Awareness**
 - Inclusion as a response to the social and academic needs of **all** students
 - Recognise that inclusion concerns us all, not just specific groups, inclusive classrooms benefit all students
 - Must begin with a process of reflection and self-evaluation, to generate specific proposals for improvement and change agreed upon by all stakeholders
 - Place the students at the core of the design and development of the curriculum
 - Regularly raise awareness of inclusive practices, resources and latest research/information.
 - Strengthen school community awareness and understanding through forums with experts in specialist fields providing researched information.

- **Access**
 - This policy is to available on the school’s website and in hardcopy through the office.
 - Inclusion includes access to ordinary classrooms for all students

- **Training**
 - Educate and facilitate professional training for students and staff.
 - Inclusive education is a combination of pedagogical ideology and implementation that allows every student to feel respected and confident to learn and develop their full potential.

- **Culture**
 - Inclusion as the creation of fair and equitable communities

- Promote a system of values and beliefs to be shared by the whole school community

9. RELATED INFORMATION

United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crpd>

United Nations (UN) General Comment No 4 on CRPD Article 24 cru.org.au

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-4-article-24-right-inclusive>

Advancing education – An action plan for education in Queensland – Every student with disability succeeding plan

<https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/strategies-and-programs/every-student-with-disability-succeeding-plan>

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (December 2019)

<https://www.dese.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>

Students with diverse needs – QLD Government

<https://education.qld.gov.au/students/student-health-safety-wellbeing/students-with-diverse-needs>

Appendix: 1



Reasonable Adjustments

The list below provides examples of reasonable adjustments that teachers may consider necessary if they are to provide the most appropriate support for all students.

• **Low Level Adjustments**

- Explicit, minor adjustments, including differentiated teaching and assessments
- Specific and relevant teaching strategies to support challenges of communication
- Active monitoring and supervision to meet health, personal care and safety requirements (These students may have a plan in place to support monitoring of their condition).
- Provision of all printed material in enlarged and/or dyslexic font on coloured paper, if necessary
- Providing a scribe to assist students with note-taking

• **Medium Level Adjustments**

- Adapted, additional instruction in specific learning areas or activities
- Personalised and explicit instruction to support one or more areas of communication
- Access to specialised technology
- Additional supervision to enable participation in activities on the playground.
- Provision for access to specialist advice on a regular basis
- Allowance for allied health professionals such as Speech Pathologists to work with students during class time
- Allowance for a student with anxiety to present their project to a small group of peers rather than to a whole class
- Adjustment to activities at the annual sport's carnival to enable participation by all students, including those with physical disability
- Social skills groups

- **Extensive adjustments**

Where students have very high support needs, extensive targeted measures and sustained levels of intensive support are provided. These adjustments are highly individualised, comprehensive and ongoing.

- Specific, individualised instruction or support in a highly structured or specialised manner for all courses and curricula, activities and assessments
- Where possible, specialised and/or intensive health, personal care and/or safety support or intervention
- Enabling access to learning through specialised equipment and extensive support from specialist staff.
- Individual behaviour support plans

The impact of adjustments on relevant parties, such as other students, staff members, the student's family and the education provider have to be taken into account along with (in specific cases)

- costs and benefits of making the adjustment
- need to maintain the essential requirements of the course or program.

- **Definitions of Social Inclusion and Development of Social Competence**

Social inclusion incorporates attitudes, expectations and perceptions about what it means to belong to a group. Belonging is embedded in personal beliefs and social structures that set forth criteria that determine how individuals and groups are accorded value and esteem.

- Although prosocial behaviour is certainly a prime factor in defining social competence, many non-social internal behaviours (e.g. staying on task or emotional regulation), which may facilitate socialization, fall under the social competence umbrella.
- Awareness of the various ways that social competence is understood and interpreted in school settings enables educators to then consider the many possible ways that social competence can be promoted in the classroom.
- Cultural identity influences students' goals and behaviours in the classroom as well as others' perceptions of social competence.