

Koorie Education Policy

The purpose of this policy is to support schools in providing quality and meaningful education to Koorie students, where Koorie students engage fully in their schooling years, and gain the knowledge and skills to excel at year 12 or its equivalent.

A note on terminology used

The term Koorie is used inclusively and refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria. The Department of Education and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), use the term throughout education documentation.

Koorie is a contemporary collective group term and may not be familiar to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As such, it is important to be respectful of how individual students, their families and community refer to themselves, and use this to guide the language used when referring to individuals or Community.

Terms such as Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous and First Nations Peoples are also commonly used in teaching and learning resources and practice guidance.

Cultural Safety at Kerrimuir Primary School

Cultural safety includes being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where Koorie children:

- feel comfortable being themselves
- feel comfortable expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems
- are supported by leaders, systems and carers who respect their Aboriginality and encourage their sense of self and identity

Key elements of cultural safety:

Understand identity

Identifying as Koori is one part of a child or young person's identity. Like everyone, Aboriginal people have different life experiences and characteristics. Schools must recognise that each person is unique with their own characteristics, strengths and challenges.

Respect culture

Culture and identity are linked. By supporting Koori children to feel strong in their identity, schools also help them enjoy their cultural rights.

Australia's colonial history has caused significant trauma and hurt that individuals, families and communities still feel today. However, Aboriginal communities have a long history of

resilience and growth in the face of adversity and trauma. Schools should show respect for the deep resilience of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

Eliminate racism and abuse

Making your school culturally safe means taking the specific action needed to keep Koori children and young people safe from abuse and harm.

Schools need to address all forms of racism and consider attitudes and practices that are a barrier to providing a culturally safe environment and to address all forms of racism.

At Kerrimuir Primary School we actively participate in the following to ensure we are continually improving our cultural safety and awareness process:

- CUST training
- Marrung Network Key Contact and commitment to Marrung Education principals
- Inclusion in local Marrung Education Community Networks
- Engagement with local KESOs

Details

Schools are expected to:

- work in partnership with the local Koorie community to develop place-based approaches to improving student outcomes
- support the development of high expectations and individualised learning for Koorie students
- ensure all Koorie students have an individual education plan
- create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Koorie cultures and identities
- view success for their Koorie students as core business.

Background

Consistent with the principle of self-determination, [Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 to 2026](#)

(Marrung) was developed in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI). Strong partnerships with the Koorie community will be the foundation for achieving outcomes for Koorie students in Victoria.

Programs and reforms

Programs and actions under Marrung include:

- extending the [Early Years Koorie Literacy and Numeracy support](#)
- to Koorie students not meeting year 3 reading and numeracy benchmarks in years 4, 5 and 6

- working with schools with high Koorie absences and sharing effective practice
- reviewing the Koorie Academy of Excellence and exploring opportunities to roll out an expanded model across the 4 Department regions
- supporting schools to use [Individual Education Plans](#)
- including trialling Koorie student and family support plans through the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)
- undertaking research to identify factors that contribute to academic achievement (including higher NAPLAN and ATAR score) and implement supporting strategies
- Marrung Education Scholarships for high achieving Aboriginal students studying years 11 and 12 in government schools.

Koorie Education Workforce

The Koorie Education Workforce assist early years services and schools by providing guidance to enhance cultural inclusion practices, and to support the engagement, attendance, wellbeing and achievement of Koorie learners.

Koorie Education Managers (KEMs)

In Victoria there are four Koorie Education Managers, one in each region, who work collaboratively to ensure delivery of consistently high quality and culturally inclusive practices across education settings for all learners. KEMs lead cohesive, consistent and strategic implementation of Koorie Education priorities and provide programmatic and cross portfolio oversight and expertise in their region supporting learners from 0-18 years.

The KEM supports contextually informed and evidence based practice to be embedded, and facilitates constructive relationships and collaborative networks through effective consultation, governance and in partnership with Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and other community agencies, government departments and local communities to support improved student learning outcomes for all Koorie learners.

Koorie Education Coordinators (KECs)

Koorie Education Coordinators lead consistent area-based coordination and provision of support to early years services and schools from the regional Koorie Education Workforce through multi-disciplinary area teams. Early years' service providers, schools, parents and community can obtain assistance with Koorie cultural inclusion, Koorie education guidance and support through their region by contacting the KEC with enquiries.

The KEC is able to arrange for a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) to work with early year's services and schools providing guidance to enhance cultural inclusion practices, and to support the engagement, attendance and wellbeing of Koorie learners. KECs provide high level expertise to lead the implementation of education initiatives, Koorie specific programs and inclusive practices that privilege engagement with Koorie community and support parent/carers partnerships in education.

Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESOs)

KESOs are area based professionals who are members of the local Aboriginal community with an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the histories. KESOs provide advice to schools about culturally inclusive learning environments, and the co-ordination of services to facilitate improved engagement of Koorie children and young people.

KESOs play an integral role to engage families, communities, education and service providers to facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to participate fully in education. They support all learning settings to transition students and families across all learning stages where appropriate: into early years, primary, secondary and further education.

Other initiatives

Other initiatives to support the learning, development and educational outcomes of Koorie learners include:

- [Education State catch-up funding](#)
- [Education Justice Initiative](#)
- [Team Around the Learner](#)
- [School Wide Positive Behaviour Support](#)
- [Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support Initiative](#) (secondary years support)
- [LOOKOUT](#)
- [The Navigator Program](#) may also be relevant for individual learners dependent upon their context

Related DET policies

- [Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Welcome to Country in Schools](#)
- [Aboriginal Employment](#)
- [COVID-19 — Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Workforces](#)

Related local policies

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (see [Policies & Procedures | Kerrimuir Primary School](#))
- Bullying Prevention Policy (see [Policies & Procedures | Kerrimuir Primary School](#))
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy (see [Policies & Procedures | Kerrimuir Primary School](#))