



# St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Cultural Safety and Inclusion Action Plan

## Rationale

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe. This policy provides an overview of the School's approach to the inclusion and implementation of Ministerial Order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

## Policy Statement

Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises (MO 1359) came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 in all Victorian Schools.

A key change included in the new requirements is for a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people linked to Child Safe Standard 1.

**Child Safety Standard 1** – Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

The term 'Aboriginal' includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important to be respectful of how individual children, students, their families and community refer to themselves, and use appropriate language.

Cultural Safety includes being able to provide a safe, nurturing and positive environment where Aboriginal children:

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

Being able to express their culture makes Aboriginal children stronger and safer. Aboriginal children and young people who don't feel safe being themselves and expressing their individuality may be less willing to report abuse.

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School we will continue to support and strengthen Child Safe Standard 1 – Culturally Safe Environments in our school community by building a strong support of cultural awareness with the following actions:

- When gathering as a school community with students, begin with our school composed Acknowledgement of Country (student version);
- When gathering as a school community with only adults present, such as School Board Meetings, P&F Meetings, Parent Information Sessions etc, begin with Acknowledgement of Country;
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds;
- Actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal children and their families;
- Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children;
- Actively address racism;
- Embed First Nations histories and cultures when planning and delivering curriculum;
- Recognise key events and anniversaries, such as National Sorry Day, Harmony Day, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week.