



St Joseph's Primary School, Rochester Reconciliation Covenant (Established 2013 - 2014)

Covenant

We recognize the special place and culture of Aboriginal people within Australia. We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have been the caretakers of this land for more than 60,000 years. We respect their spiritual connection to Mother Earth through the Dreaming.

“An apology begins the healing process. Apology means understanding, a willingness to enter into the suffering. It implies a commitment to do more” (The late Sir Ronald Wilson, Chair of the National Inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families). We understand that practical measures need to address the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in education, health, employment, and general opportunity.

“Reconciliation is an active pursuit – it's about getting on with what's needed and what we know to get the results we all want, and that's a mixture of measures that target the body, the mind and the spirit.” (Mick Dobson, Australian of the Year, National Press Club address, 17 February 2009) True Reconciliation requires national and local solutions achieved through positive and purposeful partnerships not just for today but for tomorrow. We work for Reconciliation, in partnership with those who believe that there can be an alternative to the present order.

Our School

St Joseph's Primary School, Rochester is committed to Reconciliation and sees it as the process of bridging the gap that has developed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non Indigenous Australians due to the events of history. Reconciliation is a way of developing lines of communication recognizing the integrity and dignity of all parties so that both cultures can walk together in friendship. We recognise, as Oodgeroo Noonuccal said 'that our liberation is entwined.'

We hope to develop a relationship marked by equality, empathy and an understanding of culture and difference. We want the Reconciliation we are involved in to be a process of healing and a process of putting right.

Our Covenant

The Sandhurst Catholic Education Office- Indigenous Education Officers, who are involved in the continuing development of our Covenant presented our school community with ideas for Reconciliation in our local community. This covenant has been developed by the St Joseph's Primary School staff and students and authorised by the Principal. The students in the school range from Year Prep to Year Six.



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FIRE (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier Project

The FIRE Carrier Project is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the Opening the Doors Foundation with the Sandhurst CEO to promote and assist Reconciliation through Education in Victorian Schools.

St Joseph's Primary School commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all Actions through Measureable Targets outlined below. These will be completed by the dates set out in the timeline. A review at the end of the school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier at the Opening School Mass.

OUR TARGETS FOR 2013-2014 ARE:

Spirituality

Focus Area: Learn, Teach, Share, Grow towards understanding Aboriginal Spirituality (Holistic)

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Activities
Through Prayer and knowledge gain/engage a deeper awareness of justice issues.	All Staff	ongoing	Continue to incorporate Aboriginal prayers and symbols in liturgy by using the message stick during reading of the Word and at school masses.
	Emma	Feb 2013 ongoing	Learn and use the Aboriginal Our Father for the opening of the school year mass, so that it may be used by community at other year level liturgies.
Explore the significance of spirituality in Aboriginal art.	Staff	July	Discuss and implement a strategy that will educate the community and reflect on the massacres of Aboriginal people at 68 sites around Victoria.
	Matt/Emma	March	Use Art work purchased for the school.
	Emma/Peter	April	Investigate possible resources to purchase for use in the Grade 5/6 Religious Education Program, to break open the Indigenous perspectives.
	Peter	July	Investigate local Indigenous sites as possible excursion locations for all students.



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OUR FUTURE TARGETS ARE:

Cultural Recognition & Awareness

Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Activities
Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within school ceremonies.	Students	ongoing	Continue to Acknowledge Country at School Assemblies.
	Emma All Teachers	2014 2013	Elders to welcome visitors to Country at significant events (e.g. Opening School Mass. Maintain Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum throughlines.
Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people.	Peter	2014	Acknowledge Country on School website and school's printed material such as St Joseph's Staff Handbook St Joseph's Information Booklet and St Joseph's Annual Report, School newsletter.
	All Staff	2013 - ongoing	Appointment of student & staff FIRE Carriers and be involved with the Sandhurst Diocese ceremonies.
	Peter	2013	Exhibit Fire Carrier Flame on Prayer table at front office. Exhibit Aboriginal crosses in prominent positions around school
Seek advice from ACM on cultural wisdom and seek knowledge of the local Aboriginal community.	All Teachers	2013	Educate the school community of the Aboriginal story of the Yorta Yorta people and land on which the school is situated.
	Emma	2013	Develop an Indigenous Perspective section in the library.
	All Teachers	2013	Display Aboriginal posters in classrooms or corridors.
	All Staff	2013	Engage with local Aboriginal groups and organisations.
	Peter/Emma All staff	2013 2013	Celebrate National Apology Day. Commemoration of National Government Apology.



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Practical Recognition & Justice

Focus Area: *Walk the Journey together, Put Learning's into Practice*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Activities
Take practical measures toward Reconciliation and Justice	Year 5/6's	2013	Continue to fly, display and maintain the Aboriginal Flag.
	Peter	2013	Continue to display and maintain Acknowledgement of Country displays.
	Emma	2013	Advertise and encourage a strong school presence in community events e.g. Reconciliation Week (May 27 th – 31 st) and NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week.