

## CULTURAL AWARENESS POLICY

### **Policy Statement:**

St Andrew's Little Saints and After School & Vacation Care (LS&ASVC) has a responsibility to provide an environment where children are able to develop self-worth and positive attitudes to social justice, Indigenous Australia and Reconciliation. We recognise that Indigenous people were the first inhabitants of Australia and that they have suffered greatly over the past 200 years. While stereotypes, negative attitudes and misinformation surround Indigenous culture and history, we aim to build awareness to children, parents and the wider community about Indigenous cultures, both traditional and contemporary. We recognise that it is important to maintain a positive, non-bias attitude towards negativity and misinformation surrounding Indigenous culture and history.

The Services recognise that Australia is a multicultural society composed of people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, we aim to help foster within each child, an awareness and acceptance of other cultures through integrating multiculturalism into the children's daily programme while providing and promoting an inclusive environment.

LS&ASVC respects and values families of all cultures, races and religions. Enrolments of new families do not discriminate against their culture, additional needs, race or religion. Parents and staff work together to take into account any needs or requirements families may have.

It is important that cultural awareness is not tokenistic, but integrated throughout the programme. This means that we share a commitment to human rights, dignity of the individual and social justice.

This policy has been designed to contain a range of practices to help staff actively counteract bias or prejudice.

### **Aims:**

At LS&ASVC people will not be discriminated against on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability or family structure.

- To incorporate an anti-bias approach in all interactions with children, their families and fellow staff.
- To develop educational and developmental programmes that support the goals of the anti-bias program.

For each child to be able to:

- a) feel good about who they are
- b) feel comfortable with similarities and differences in others
- c) recognise bias and stereotypes and know they can hurt

- d) stand up for themselves and others when bias occurs.
- To regularly assess the physical environment for inclusiveness and undertake to plan changes in the environment where appropriate.
- To recognise the diversity of cultures in Australia and to provide opportunities for all children to learn and respect such cultures.
- For children to learn about Indigenous culture and educators to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum without being tokenistic.

### **Rationale:**

“ Most Australians, if they trace their family histories, will find that they have mixed ethnic origins, whether they are English, Irish or some other combination. None of us are ‘just Australian’. Seven million Australians have three or more ethnic ancestries, another four million have four or more, with some having as many as eight. Most of us, in reality are multicultural” (Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Farmer and Richards, 1993).

The staff, parents and management of LS&ASVC endorse the concept of a cross-cultural and non-discriminatory curriculum, and believe that this perspective should be implemented throughout all centre programmes.

Educational programmes must support the child’s self-esteem and pride in family, community, ethnic and linguistic origins.

### **Strategies/Practices/Procedures:**

We seek to recognise, appreciate, and respect the uniqueness of each child within the Centre. This can be done at an obvious level through books, music, cooking, craft, singing, role-play, posters, and recourses from the community. Where parents are from non-English speaking backgrounds, they will be invited and encouraged to contribute knowledge off their own culture to enhance the overall programme so everyone feels like they belong and are respected.

#### **Parents will:**

- ✓ Inform staff of the family and child’s primary language, religious/cultural requirements or requirements for disabilities or special needs on enrolment or whenever identified.
- ✓ Be encouraged to contribute to the centre programmes by sharing information and celebrations from their culture.
- ✓ Be invited to attend the centre to share opportunities for celebrating special cultural events.

#### **Staff will:**

- ✓ Ensure that through their programmes:
  - a) boys and girls have equal right to develop to their full potential
  - b) all children will have an equal right to develop to their full potential regardless of their race or culture
  - c) all children will have an equal right to develop to their full potential irrespective of their abilities or disabilities
- ✓ Ensure that their language and daily practice are inclusive and non-discriminatory.

- ✓ Have the opportunity to develop their understanding of anti-bias education through education and professional development experience.
- ✓ Self-evaluate and monitor their biases concerning gender, stereotypes or other differences between children.
- ✓ Adjust their responses and behaviours accordingly to comply with centre policies after self-evaluation (above).
- ✓ Utilise parent's expertise with regard to the culture and religion that is shared in the household to enhance continuity of care.
- ✓ Explore languages other than English to ensure that first home languages are appreciated.
- ✓ Provide inclusive models when discussing gender roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Provide inclusive models when discussing family structures.
- ✓ Provide inclusive resources and materials regarding gender, race, religion, culture, ability and family structure.
- ✓ Ensure the physical environment of the centre reflects the commitment to a cross-cultural and non-discriminatory perspective.
- ✓ Observe the community served by the centre and identify the socio economic and cultural groupings of its families.
- ✓ Show respect for the various ways that families care for their children and be aware of the range of child-rearing practices and attitudes of different cultures and groups within Australian society.
- ✓ Incorporate into the programme the goals that other professionals (paediatricians, child-welfare workers, psychologists or other therapists) have identified in consultation with the family for children with additional needs (language, abilities, cultural, health, behavioural or gifted and talented).

***Management will:***

- ✓ Support staff in their professional development opportunities to ensure the provision of cross-cultural non-discriminatory programs.
- ✓ Assess centre documents and communications to ensure that it is inclusive and takes into account the language needs of parents.
- ✓ Ensure all enrolment policies to be inclusive.
- ✓ Ensure that all equipment and resources purchased are inclusive regarding gender, race, religion, culture, ability and family structure.
- ✓ Whenever possible, ensure a diversity of staffing to ensure that role models are inclusive to a broader society.

Staff are expected to have a positive acknowledgement to differences among people ie. Gender, race, language, beliefs, culture, religion, etc. Children and staff are encouraged to interact, respond positively and respect other children and people who may be different from themselves. The centre supports families regarding multiculturalism, child protection, health and safety matters, we will access information for families or refer them to the correct agencies.

## **Measuring Tools:**

The centre reflects diversity through:

- Valuing individual differences
- Providing diverse resources
- Providing culturally diverse care practices
- Broadening children's perspectives
- Challenging unfair behaviour

All staff are encouraged to attend in-service training on multicultural programming for children. Activities at the Services will be checked to ensure that negative and discriminating images of particular cultures are avoided.

Ongoing Action Research Project about incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum.

## **Sources & Further Reading:**

National Quality Standard

Early Years Learning Framework

My Time Our Place

Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline

<http://www.ncac.gov.au/factsheets/factsheet4.pdf>

Playcare and MultiLink Logan

Inclusion Support Agency

Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Farmer and Richards, 1993

Action Research about incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum.

## **Links to Other Policies:**

Sustainability Policy

Orientation and Settling In Policy