

F.I.R.E Carrier Covenant est 2026



Covenant

We recognise the special place and culture of Aboriginal peoples 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 Dodson, 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.

Covenants emphasize the ethos and faith belief of Catholic schools and the Social Justice response they are committed to make as part of their Christian identity. Schools expressed commitment is reflected in practical goals and actions which they strive to achieve in the year ahead.

School covenants express in ways, specific to each school, recognition of the special contribution Aboriginal peoples and their cultures make to Australian society, their relationship and connection to the land, their present position of disadvantage and social exclusion. They declare the school and school community's commitment to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples to achieve true reconciliation and acknowledgement, by all Australians, of their rightful position within Australian society.

Our School

Our vision for reconciliation is to be a place of learning and teaching that respects Aboriginal protocols, history and culture. We will have strong and mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal communities. These relationships will provide for the sharing of knowledge and ideas, and the opportunity to listen and learn from Aboriginal Australians about the past, their current circumstances, and their vision for the future. We will be a place where Aboriginal culture is respected and celebrated.

Our Covenant

Our covenant was originally developed by students & staff in consultation with the Aboriginal team from Catholic Education Sandhurst. Our school community will be presented with ideas for Reconciliation in our local community by the Sandhurst Aboriginal Team, who were and are involved in the continuing development and review of our Covenant.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Culturally safe environments

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety is defined as an environment that is safe for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience. (Williams 2008)

The school (insert school name here) takes account of and makes reasonable efforts to accommodate for the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards relating to following standard.

1.1 Schools and school boarding premises must establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued

Actions

1. In endorsing and documenting the following activities contained within this FIRE Carrier covenant, Our School St Joseph's Primary School, Quarry Hill commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all actions through measurable targets outlined by the dates set out in the timeline included.
2. This FIRE Carrier covenant will be made accessible on the school's website to ensure adherence to the child safe standard referred to in the document.
3. 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 coordinator.



Spirituality

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

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
Through Prayer and knowledge gain/engage a deeper awareness of justice issues.		Ongoing	➤ Continue to incorporate First Nations prayers and symbols in liturgy by using the message stick during reading of the Word and at school masses. ➤ Learn and use the Aboriginal Our Father for the opening of the school year mass, so that it may be used by the community at other year level liturgies. ➤ Introduce Richard Campbell's Stations of the Cross to the St Joseph's Community. ➤ Perform 'Turning of the Coolamon Ceremony' using the Coolamon Liturgy in a staff liturgy for Advent. ➤ Introduce and begin using "Australians Together" in classrooms ➤ Reading Dreamtime stories appropriate to our Source of Life and Humanities units. ➤ Investigate local Indigenous sites as possible excursion locations for all students. ➤ Use of Ochre novels in grade 3-6. Linking to other subject areas where possible
Explore the significance of spirituality in Aboriginal Art.	Art teachers	Begin in 2026 during Reconciliation Week	
Create an Australian identity during time of Advent.	REC	December 2026 - ongoing	
Listen to Aboriginal Stories.	All	Ongoing	



Cultural Recognition & Awareness

Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives and Demonstrate Awareness

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within school ceremonies	All	Ongoing	➤ Continue to Acknowledge Country at School Assemblies, gatherings and Masses ➤ Make connections with local Elders where possible ➤ Maintain Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum throughlines ➤ Continue to acknowledge Country on school website and newsletter ➤ Annually elect FIRE Carriers and be involved with the Sandhurst Diocese ceremonies ➤ Exhibit FIRE Carrier Flame in prominent position in school office. ➤ Educate the school community of the Aboriginal story of the land on which the school is situated. ➤ Identify Indigenous Perspective resources in the library ➤ Display of Aboriginal posters in classrooms or corridors and teach meaning ➤ Develop, maintain and update a Reconciliation Board. ➤ Engage with local Aboriginal groups and organisations
Publicly display our school's respect for Aboriginal People	All	Start of 2026 school year	
Seek advice from ACM on cultural wisdom and seek knowledge of the local Aboriginal Community.	Indigenous Ed Leader		
Engage in professional development and cross cultural opportunities to better cater for the needs of Aboriginal students in our schools	All	Ongoing– Term 2 & Term 4 – x 1 staff meeting	

			➤ Commemorate National Sorry Day and Celebrate NAIDOC week
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Practical Reconciliation & Justice

Focus Area: Walk the Journey together, Put Learnings into Practice

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
Take Practical measures toward Reconciliation and Justice		Ongoing	➤ Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags ➤ Teach and learn the truths of history ➤ Display and maintain Aboriginal artefacts in the front office. Add to the display over time. ➤ Attend significant gatherings such as Reconciliation Masses. ➤ Make links to Victorian Curriculum ➤ Provide learning opportunities for FIRE carrier teachers and students to grow their knowledge and understanding ➤ Provide opportunities for FIRE Carrier leaders to pass on their knowledge and learning ➤ Possible excursions to Sacred places of the Dja Dja Wurrung people
Acknowledge and teach the 'true' history of Australia	Class teachers	As per curriculum throughlines	
Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school	REC	December 2026 - ongoing	
Listen to Aboriginal Stories.	All	Ongoing	



Ecological Stewardship

Focus Area: Ecological renewal and sustainability depends upon spiritual awareness and an attitude of responsibility – Caring for Country

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
Take Practical measures toward teaching and learning of how Indigenous people cared for and lived off the land	Teachers	Ongoing	➤ Teach and learn the Indigenous way of life ➤ Sustain learning and teaching practices ➤ Make links to Victorian Curriculum ➤ Sign up to Earth Care ➤ Provide opportunities for the whole school to be engaged and immersed in particular ways to help the land and country ➤ Provide learning opportunities for our FIRE carrier students to grow their knowledge and understanding ➤ Provide opportunities for FIRE Carrier leaders to pass on their knowledge and learning. ➤ Students will be able to recall and retell the story of Bunjil the Eagle ➤ Create an Indigenous space as a learning space to tell this story
Develop knowledge and skills of our leaders and FIRE Carriers	Indigenous Ed leader	Ongoing	
Engage in Sandhurst switches off.	REC	December 2026 - ongoing	
Have a nude food policy at school and home.	All	Ongoing	
Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school	Indigenous Ed leader & CESL staff	Term 4 workshop with students	

Share the story of Totem's and how they are attached to the environment and what that means for us today regarding Ecological Stewardship	FIRE Carriers with support from Indigenous Ed leader	Yearly	
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The FIRE Carrier Project is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, the Opening the Doors Foundation and the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office, to promote and assist Reconciliation through Education in our Schools.

Our School commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all Actions through Measurable Targets outlined above by the dates set out in the timeline above. A review at the end of school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier.