



F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2021

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. (*firecarriers Sandhurst.pdf*)

OUR SCHOOL

(What do we mean by Reconciliation? What responsibility do we have as individuals as a group? Why is Reconciliation important in 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

(Describe how you developed your Reconciliation Covenant, who sits on your Reconciliation Covenant working group and any other relevant information ie. Our school community was presented with ideas for Reconciliation in our local community by the Sandhurst Aboriginal Team, who were and are involved in the continuing development of our Covenant)

Our covenant was originally developed by students and staff. Today our Principal Paul Dullard has developed the covenant in consultation with the Catholic Education Sandhurst Aboriginal team. Our school community was 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 Holy Rosary Heathcote 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.

- **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 Holy Rosary 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.**

OUR SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM TARGETS

6 Months 12 Months 2 Years

Spirituality

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

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
<p>Engage, collaborate and consult with Aboriginal people to enrich and enhance spiritual experiences for staff, students and community.</p> <p>Honour the Aboriginal significant days through prayer.</p> <p>Perform the Aboriginal rituals in Mass and prayer e.g. Acknowledgment of country and Message Stick.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Work with colleagues with the Aboriginal Network and CES staff.➤ Work with Elders and Aboriginal people locally to ensure protocols and knowledge are accurate.➤ Encourage students that identify as Indigenous to be proud and celebrate their culture.➤ Use the message stick during reading of the Word at assemblies, liturgies and Masses.➤ Participate in retreats and immersion opportunities to significant Aboriginal Sites i.e. Lake Mungo.➤ Use the prayer and liturgy materials provided by CEO Staff for Staff Meetings and PDs prepared during Aboriginal significant days.➤ Assist and take part in the preparation and attend the National Reconciliation Week Masses each year.

Cultural Recognition & Awareness

Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
<p>Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within Office ceremonies.</p> <p>Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people.</p> <p>Engage in professional development and cross cultural opportunities to better cater for the needs of Aboriginal students in our schools.</p>			<p>Acknowledge Country at staff meetings and all public events.</p> <p>Invite Elders to Welcome visitors to Country at significant events where appropriate.</p> <p>Localise Acknowledgment of Country as much as possible using local photos/images.</p> <p>Work with staff to assist them to Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum. Share knowledge of culture at staff meetings and learning days.</p> <p>Acknowledge Country on schools website, email messages and printed material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Appoint a senior staff member as a FIRE Carrier leader and perform a ceremony early in the year with the FIRE Carriers Lou Levy and the team from CES.➤ Educate the school community of the Aboriginal story of the land and people on which Doxa is situated. <p>Tell the story of the local landscape and how it relates to our school.</p>

Practical Reconciliation & Justice

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

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measurable Target
<p>Take Practical Measures toward Reconciliation and Justice.</p> <p>Acknowledge and teach the 'true' history of Australia.</p> <p>Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school.</p>			<p>Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.</p> <p>Teach and learn the truths of history.</p> <p>Display and maintain Aboriginal artefacts in the front office. Add to this display over time.</p> <p>Attend significant gatherings such as Reconciliation Masses.</p> <p>Make links to Victorian curriculum.</p> <p>Provide learning opportunity for FIRE Carrier teachers & students to grow their knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for FIRE Carrier leaders to pass on their knowledge and learning.</p>

Ecological Stewardship

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

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measurable Target
<p>Take Practical Measures toward teaching and learning of how Indigenous people cared for and lived off the land.</p> <p>Develop knowledge and skills of our Sustainability leaders and FIRE Carriers.</p> <p>Engage in Sandhurst switches off.</p> <p>Celebrate Earth Hour.</p> <p>Have a nude food policy at school and home!</p> <p>Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school.</p> <p>Share the story of Totems how they are attached to the environment and what that means for us today regarding Ecological Stewardship.</p>			<p>Teach and learn the Indigenous way of living.</p> <p>Sustain learning and teaching practices.</p> <p>Make links to Victorian curriculum.</p> <p>Sustainability leaders share learning and provide opportunities for the whole school to be engaged and immersed in particular ways to help the land and country.</p> <p>Provide learning opportunity for our Sustainability and FIRE Carrier students to grow their knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>➤ Provide opportunities for FIRE Carrier leaders to pass on their knowledge and learning.</p> <p>Students will be able to recall and retell the story.</p> <p>Create an Indigenous space as a learning space to tell this story.</p>

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 the school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier.