

# Inclusion and Diversity Policy

## (includes Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment)

<b>Ratification Date:</b>  Update by RNS Principal 02/2023 <b>RNS Board 15/03/2023</b>	<b>Next Review:</b>  <b>By 1 July 2024</b> or after an event or changes to the minimum standards as advised by the VRQA	<b>Availability:</b> <table><tr><td><b>Web</b></td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td><b>Office</b></td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td><b>On Request</b></td><td>X</td></tr></table>	<b>Web</b>	X	<b>Office</b>	X	<b>On Request</b>	X	<b>Actions:</b>
<b>Web</b>	X								
<b>Office</b>	X								
<b>On Request</b>	X								

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

River Nile School (RNS) is a specialist reengagement senior-secondary school for young women who are Humanitarian refugees and new arrivals to Australia. In general, our school's students are highly vulnerable with backgrounds of complex trauma in their lives. Most RNS students live as independent young adults, and those with parents/carers commonly have parents/carers who are also new to Australia, with low levels of English oracy and literacy and which are not yet well informed about child safety expectations and obligations in Australia. Some RNS students have significant responsibilities as young parents or carers/guardians of younger siblings.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain River Nile School's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. This policy should be read alongside the following Department of Education and Training policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- For staff, the [Respectful Workplaces](#) policies (including [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#), [Sexual Harassment](#) and [Workplace Bullying](#)) as these whole of Department policies apply to all staff at River Nile School.

### POLICY

#### Definitions

**Personal attribute:** a personal characteristic that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These include: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious belief or activity, political belief or activity, age, intersex status, physical features, pregnancy, carer and parental status, breastfeeding, marital or relationship status, lawful sexual activity, employment activity, industrial activity, expunged homosexual conviction or personal association with anyone who is identified with reference to any protected attribute.

**Direct discrimination:** unfavourable treatment because of a person's protected attribute.

**Indirect discrimination:** imposing an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that disadvantages a person or group of people with a protected attribute.

**Sexual harassment:** unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards another person which could reasonably be expected to make that other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It may be physical, verbal, visual or written.

**Disability harassment:** an action taken in relation to the person's disability that is reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress the person.

**Vilification:** conduct that incites hatred towards or revulsion or severe ridicule of a person or group of people on the basis of their race, religion, sexual orientation or other personal attributes.

**Victimisation:** subjecting a person or threatening to subject them to detrimental treatment because they (or their associate) have made an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected attribute (or asserted their rights under relevant policies or law).

**Inclusion and diversity**

River Nile School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment which values the human rights of all students, staff and our school community. We are a Specialist Reengagement Senior Secondary School for young women who are Humanitarian Refugees and new arrivals to Australia. As such they are extremely vulnerable and generally have experienced significant trauma in their lives.

River Nile School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our young women. Our school community recognises the importance of, and our responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

River Nile School is committed to creating a school community where all members of our school community are welcomed, accepted and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes such as race, language, religious beliefs, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.


River Nile School acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others. At River Nile School, we value the human rights of every student and we take our obligations under anti-discrimination laws and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities seriously.


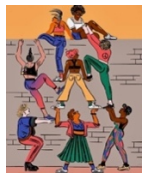

River Nile School will:

- Actively nurture and promote a diverse and inclusive culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity
- Ensure that students and staff are not discriminated against (directly or indirectly) and where necessary, students are reasonably accommodated to participate in their education and school activities e.g. schools sports, concerts etc., on the same basis as their peers
- Acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students and staff
- Encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- Challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
- In our culturally diverse school, we will provide opportunities for students and staff to learn about the nuance of interculture and norms around personal attributes and professional obligations and responsibilities to mitigate misunderstanding and embarrassment.
- Contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students
- Respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimised, but take these as learning opportunities.

RNS is governed by a Board with a diverse mix of capabilities, experiences and networks including leaders from the education, business and multicultural communities with a shared vision and passion for the difference we can make.

Our River Nile School values guide and inform our decision making and actions. Promoting River Nile School values especially that relationships are respectful and tolerant and creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive is fundamental. Our River Nile School values and what they mean to our students and staff:

 <b>Empowering Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>We believe education is a human right and can positively transform lives.</b></li><li>• We will support you to <b>develop and achieve personalised goals and skills for life.</b></li><li>• We will <b>model and demonstrate.</b> We won't just tell you how, we will show you how.</li><li>• Empowering education is student-centred, interactive and <b>promotes independence.</b> It gives students the opportunity to influence the themes, issues and knowledge they investigate.</li></ul>
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 <p><b>Respect</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We promise to treat you with respect and unconditional positive regard.</b> We accept and support our students and community members for who they are.</li> <li>• We <b>care</b> about and are <b>kind</b> to each other.</li> <li>• We <b>recognise</b> and <b>celebrate</b> achievements.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Belonging</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Every student should feel safe, included and a sense of belonging at our school.</b></li> <li>• We <b>value people's differences</b> and unique qualities.</li> <li>• Everyone has a right to <b>have their voice heard</b>.</li> <li>• We acknowledge the importance of each person's <b>heritage, traditions, identity, needs and aspirations</b>.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Courage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We speak up for what is right and will advocate for our students.</b></li> <li>• Our students are willing to <b>have a go</b>, face fears and try again after set-backs.</li> <li>• We will support our students to think about their sense of right and wrong, so that they can pursue <b>social justice, equity and fairness</b> in life.</li> <li>• Every student at our school has a story of <b>resilience, courage and hope</b>. They have shown immense bravery and faced many fears in fleeing harm in their birth country and coming to Australia. These <b>strengths</b> will help them build a safer and brighter future.</li> </ul>

Bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals or groups because of their personal attributes will not be tolerated at River Nile School. We will take appropriate measures, consistent with our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying Prevention* policies to respond to students and staff who demonstrate these behaviours at our school.

Students and staff who may have experienced or witnessed this type of behaviour are encouraged to speak up and to let their teachers, parents/carers or an appropriate member of the River Nile School leadership team know about those behaviours to ensure that inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

Students that are involved in bullying or harassing others on the basis of their personal attributes will be supported to understand the impact of their behaviour.

### Reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities

River Nile School also understands that it has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist students with disabilities to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities in consultation with the student, their parents/carers, teachers and, if appropriate, their treating practitioners. Our school may consult through Student Support or Care Team processes and in other less formal ways. For more information about support available for students with disabilities, and communicating with us in relation to a student's disability, please refer to our school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy or contact

**Susan Kent, Assistant Principal - Student Support and School Operations,  
who is our NCCD (Disability) & Learning (Intervention) Support program delivery coordinator**

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings – at least once annually
- Discussed at student forums – at least once annually
- Included in student handbook
- Discussed at school community information sessions – at least once annually
- Reminders in our school e-newsletter – at least once annually

- Hard copy available from school administration office upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- *Wellbeing and Engagement*
- *Statement of Values*
- *Bullying Prevention*
- **Being Queer & Refugee** – a brochure for queer refugee women and their supporters, available via The Queer Sisterhood at this link <http://tinadixson.com.au/queer-sisterhood-project/>  
Also their 5 minute video is quite powerful <https://youtu.be/6-cL7mh4EiU>

For staff, please see the Department's [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying Policy](#) which apply to all staff working at our school.

Other relevant Department policies and resources on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library are:

- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [Koorie Education](#)
- [Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Supports and Services](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

### The River Nile School Inc.

ABN 20 382 591 724

Reg. Inc. Assoc. No. A0048482L

Endorsed Charity & Deductible Gift Recipient

Reg. School Number 2111

VCAA Provider 15457

DHS (Centrelink) Reg. School No. 32111

Level 1 - 117 Capel Street

North Melbourne VIC 3051

(03) 9329 8425

[admin@rivernileschool.vic.edu.au](mailto:admin@rivernileschool.vic.edu.au)

[www.rivernileschool.vic.edu.au](http://www.rivernileschool.vic.edu.au)