ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY

RATIONAL:
Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Australia. Their cultures are as diverse as the land to which they belong.

Pope John Paul II in his address to the Aboriginal people of Australia said:

*The Church of Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until …. (The Aboriginal Peoples of Australia) have made…(their) contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.*

(Catholic Education Commission of WA, Policy Statement 2 –C1)

Our Lady of the Cape Primary School supports this statement. This policy aims to develop and promote learning experiences for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians aimed at promoting an understanding of Aboriginality and the history of Aboriginal people. Thus assisting children to develop a culturally inclusive view of their place in space and empower them to be full participants in the reconciliation process. Our Lady of the Cape Primary School aims to actively contribute to the reconciliation through acceptance, understanding and education of all members of our school community.

This policy supports the very important process that recognises cultural traditions and values. It promotes the principles of inclusion, equity and justice for all members of the school community.

DEFINITION:

- The term Aboriginal refers to the original inhabitants of Australia and includes Torres Strait Islander people.
- The term Aboriginal education applies to all areas within the school including learning and teaching, reconciliation, employment, career pathways and community partnerships.
- The term Aboriginal Education Plan refers to schools developing a formalised approach through the development of a strategic action plan to address Aboriginal education in the school.
- The term ‘Aboriginal Nation’ refers to Aboriginal society as one that is diverse, complex and sophisticated. Australia is made up of many Aboriginal Nations.

PRINCIPLES:

- Aboriginal people have a rich history, culture and spirituality that can be shared with all Australians.
- Our Lady of the Cape Primary School is committed to increasing knowledge and understanding of the histories, culture and experience of Aboriginal people as the first peoples of Australia.
- Our Lady of the Cape Primary School recognises that parents are the first educators of their children.
- Our Lady of the Cape Primary School is committed to collaborative decision making and capacity building with aboriginal people, parents, caregivers, families and communities.
• Aboriginal students in Our Lady of the Cape Primary School have the right to be provided with educational experiences comparable to all Australians whilst maintaining their cultural identity.
• Our Lady of the Cape Primary School is committed to reconciliation which promotes the principles of inclusivity, equity, justice and consultation.
• Our Lady of the Cape Primary School is committed to increasing employment and promotional opportunities for aboriginal people.

5. PROCEDURES
• Our Lady of the Cape Primary School, in consultation with their school community shall develop an Aboriginal Education Plan which is consistent with guidelines provided by national and state agreements.
• Our Lady of the Cape Primary School shall integrate Aboriginal education across all areas of curriculum.
• Aboriginal language and cultural education programmes for use in schools shall be developed in collaboration with the Aboriginal community which are consistent with relevant documents developed by Catholic Education Aboriginal committee (CEAC).
• Ongoing professional learning in Aboriginal understandings shall be provided to all staff working in Our Lady of the Cape Primary School. Wherever possible, the local Aboriginal community shall be invited to be involved in the delivery of this professional learning.
• Our Lady of the Cape Primary School shall actively encourage and support Aboriginal people to be represented appropriately on school decision making committees.
• The Catholic education system shall actively encourage and support Aboriginal people to undertake training and further education.
• Catholic schools shall encourage the employment and promotion of eligible, qualified Aboriginal people to leadership roles.
• Our Lady of the Cape Primary School shall be fully involved in the reconciliation process through the recognition, acceptance and celebration of aboriginal cultural traditions and values.
• Our Lady of the Cape Primary School will provide staff with the opportunity and encouragement to develop ongoing Aboriginal cultural awareness. In particular opportunities to provide staff with local perspectives and information from the Nyoongah people will be implemented and encouraged. The school community will consult and liaise with the Catholic Education Office through a staff representative and the Aboriginal studies school community consultant.
• Where appropriate or possible, Aboriginal people from the local and wider community will be consulted and invited to have input into the delivery of Aboriginal studies at Our Lady of the Cape Primary School. The school community recognises that Aboriginal people are the most suitable deliverers of Aboriginal culture, spirituality, history and art and craft.