F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2025

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
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.

F.I.R.E. carrier Covenant est. 2025

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, St Patrick's Tongala 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.

5.1 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

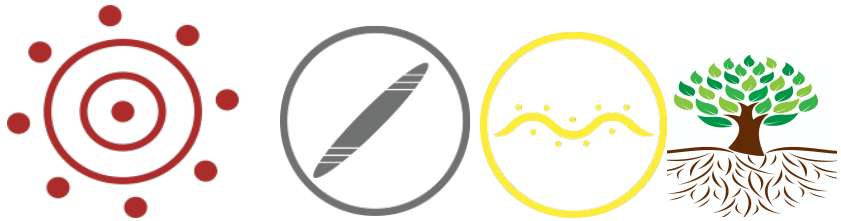
Actions

1. In endorsing and documenting the following activities contained within this FIRE Carrier covenant, our school, St Patrick's Tongala, 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 school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier coordinator.

F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2025

Our Short Term and Long Term Targets

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. Use Aboriginal prayers and songs for morning prayer. Explore the significance of spirituality in Aboriginal art. Create an Australian identity during time of Advent. Listen to Aboriginal Stories			➢ Continue to incorporate Aboriginal prayers and symbols in liturgy by using the message stick during reading of the Word and at school masses. ➢ Learn and use the Aboriginal prayers in classroom and celebrations. ➢ Perform 'Turning of the Coolamon Ceremony' using the Coolamon Liturgy in a staff liturgy for Advent. ➢ Investigate possible resources to purchase for use in the school's Religious Education Program, to break open the Indigenous perspectives. ➢ Reading Dream Time stories appropriate to our Source of Life Units and Inquiry Units ➢ Investigate local Indigenous sites as possible excursion locations for all students.

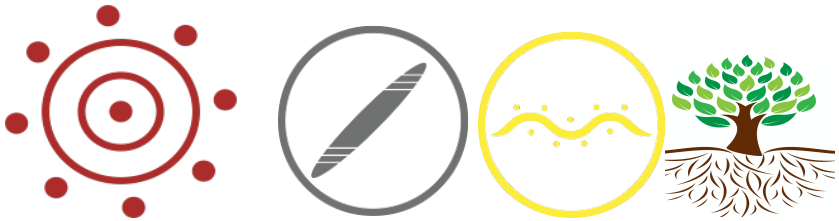


F.I.R.E. carrier Covenant est. 2025

Cultural Recognition & Awareness **Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness**			
Action	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**	**Suggested Activities / Resources**
Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within school ceremonies. Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people. Seek advice from ACM on cultural wisdom and seek knowledge from the Sandhurst Aboriginal team of the local Aboriginal community. Engage in professional development and cross cultural opportunities to better cater for the needs of Aboriginal students in our schools.			➢ Continue to Acknowledge Country at school assemblies, gatherings and Masses. ➢ Make connections with local elders where possible. ➢ Explore Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum through lines. ➢ Continue to Acknowledge Country on School website and school's printed material. ➢ Continue to include the Acknowledgement of Country in the school newsletter. ➢ Annually elect FIRE Carriers and be involved with the Sandhurst Diocese ceremonies. ➢ Exhibit Fire Carrier Flame in prominent position- entry to the 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 Aboriginal posters in classrooms or corridors. ➢ Engage with local Aboriginal groups and organisations. ➢ Celebrate National Sorry Day and NAIDOC week ➢ Commemoration of National Government Apology.

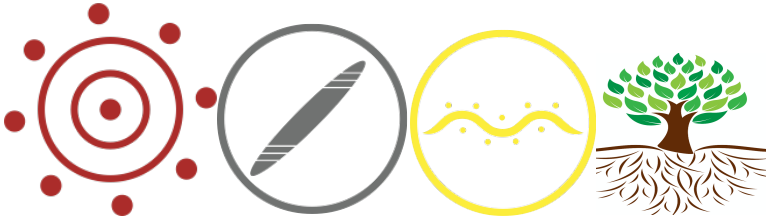
F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2025

Practical Reconciliation & Justice **Focus Area: Walk the Journey together, Put Learnings into Practice**			
Action	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**	**Suggested Measureable Target**
Take Practical Measures toward Reconciliation and Justice. Acknowledge and teach the 'true' history of Australia. Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school.			➢ Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. ➢ Teach and learn Aboriginal history both from local and national perspectives. ➢ Display and maintain Aboriginal artefacts in the front office. Add to this display over time. ➢ Attend significant gatherings such as Reconciliation Masses ➢ Make links to Victorian Curriculum. ➢ Provide learning opportunity for FIRE Carrier teachers & students to grow their knowledge and understanding ➢ Provide opportunities for FIRE Carrier leaders to pass on their knowledge and learning



F.I.R.E. carrier Covenant est. 2025

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**
Take Practical Measures toward teaching and learning of how Indigenous people cared for and lived off the land Develop knowledge and skills of our Sustainability leaders and FIRE Carriers Engage in Sandhurst switches off. Celebrate Earth Hour. Have a nude food policy at school and home. Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school Share the story of Totems how they are attached to the environment and what that means for us today regarding Ecological Stewardship.			➢ Through teaching and learning, embed as much cultural understanding. ➢ Adhere to Cross Curriculum priorities in Victorian Curriculum. ➢ 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. ➢ Create safe, reflective space for students outside. Create an Indigenous space as a learning space to tell this story. ➢ Provide learning opportunity for our FIRE Carrier students to grow their knowledge and understanding.



F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2025

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 Measureable 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.