

ACTION PLANS

PROMOTING BELONGING, CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

TOPIC DESCRIPTION:

Students have a right to feel included and be themselves at school. Different doesn't equal bad. Students want to create school cultures that embrace and celebrate diversity. All students deserve respect irrespective of their culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. We need to encourage students to be their true selves so they can thrive.

WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY:

Real learning happens when everyone feels included and respected. Feeling safe, nourished, and accepted for who you are creates a sense of community. Nurturing students' individuality and celebrating students' diversity in schools improves students' engagement. Better engagement at school equals better opportunities for students.

SOLUTIONS:

What students can do:

- Be respectful, open, and curious about the diverse views, beliefs, and cultures in the school community.
- Analyse their thought processes when challenged by difference. *e.g. Is this their self-expression? Why does this challenge me? How does this affect me?*
- Normalise difference by asking questions like: *How can I learn from them? How can everyone benefit from a different perspective?*
- Form a committee which focuses on building a sense of belonging and respecting diversity.
- Host forums to discuss solutions to issues that negatively impact on belonging and inclusion in the school community.

What schools can do:

- Establish group activities that encourage students to connect with diverse group of peers.
- Employ staff who are educated, aware and curious about "today's teens" and their potential needs.
- Develop a diversity and belonging toolkit with students and involve students when training staff and students.
- Display and showcase strategies for promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity in the school community.
- Elect a counsellor of staff member who can cater for students experiencing discrimination to help them take action against these issues.

What BCE can do:

- Seek regular feedback from students about their concerns and issues so that BCE can identify emerging patterns.
- Co-design curriculum with students to explore belonging and diversity (culture, disability, gender, religion, gender, sexual orientation) and appropriate language to use. This needs to be age appropriate, relevant and engaging. It should start as early as possible in primary school.
- Make learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history a priority in BCE.
- Promote the Student Voice Initiative to help schools establish student bodies that are effective and representative of students in the school.
- Give students a platform to voice and action their ideas and suggestions.

