

# Aboriginal Education Committee

## A guide to establishing an effective Aboriginal Education Committee

### Overview

The guide to establishing an effective Aboriginal Education Committee has been designed to assist schools in setting up or reviewing an already existing Aboriginal Education Committee (AEC).

An active Aboriginal Education Committee can build whole school capacity in Aboriginal education. The benefits of establishing a committee includes the ability to strengthen connections to community and establish governance and processes for decision making, ensuring that there is a shared responsibility for Aboriginal Education across the school.

A committee working collegially to implement the Aboriginal Education Policy and the Partnership Agreement between the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW AECG) and the Department can potentially increase Aboriginal student engagement, guide the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in the school, support improved learning outcomes, reinforce educational aspirations and contribute to the development of a cultural safe and responsive school environment.

When a committee is formed in genuine partnership with school executive, Aboriginal staff, non-Aboriginal staff, Aboriginal families, students, community and the Local AECG there is a collective vision and set of actions that support school planning and enables accountability.

*\*This guide can be used in conjunction with the Aboriginal Education Committee – Self-assessment*

## Setting up an Aboriginal Education Committee

*Step 1:* Request involvement from the Local or Regional AECG, community and families to be involved from the establishment phase of an Aboriginal Education Committee. Empower Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to actively participate in the education of their children and provide insight into community perspectives and local protocols.

*Step 2:* There should be an invitation to join the committee conveyed particularly to Aboriginal staff, Aboriginal students, Aboriginal families, Local AECG/relevant community organisations and/or Elders/community members.

All other staff members should feel welcome to join and actively contribute. Aboriginal Education Committees are inclusive of all people.

*Step 3:* Identify the vision statement for the committee. What does it hope to achieve strategically and how can it contribute to the School Improvement Plan (SIP) with consideration for the School Excellence Framework?

*Step 4:* Develop formalised processes and procedures, governance structure; designate roles and responsibilities within the committee (lead, secretary, family/community liaison, student leadership support, communication officer etc.) and sustainability plan for the longevity of the committee.

*Step 5:* Determine a regular meeting and reporting schedule and ensure that this is included on the school calendar.

## Duties of the Aboriginal Education Committee

- Participate in school planning process.
- Facilitate professional learning – Aboriginal Education
- Support staff to embed Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives in whole school practices.
- Personalised Learning Pathway organisation and management
- Developing and monitoring an Aboriginal Student leadership group and/or Junior AECG (led by Local AECG)
- Be a representative at Local AECG and/or other community organisations.

- Organise NAIDOC Day celebrations & other relevant days of celebration.
- Facilitate Connecting to Country opportunities.
- Ensure that there is Elder and Community engagement and consultation.
- Coordinate Aboriginal Student mentoring.
- Provide a support network for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Assist in the school planning and situational analysis process.
- Contribute to relevant data analysis.
- Actively promote the role and function of the Committee both inside and outside of the school
- Promote participation opportunities to students, families, staff and community.

*\*These are suggestions of potential strategies and initiatives that the Aboriginal Education Committee could lead and participate in, however these can be contextualised based on the individual school.*

## Aboriginal Education Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Table 1 – Aboriginal Education Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Principal	The Principal has the responsibility to ensure that there is an active Aboriginal Education Committee functioning within the school with adequate representation from relevant groups. They are responsible for the sustainability of the committee and allocation of requested resources.
Executive Staff	There should be representation from executive staff on the committee who are responsible for the roles of the Principal in their absence.

Roles	Responsibilities
Lead – Aboriginal Education Committee	<p>The lead is responsible for ensuring the duties of the Aboriginal Education Committee are performed. They will allocate and oversee the various duties performed by the committee, lead regular meetings and ensure that there is a collegial working environment.</p> <p>They should promote role and function of the committee and ensure various groups are welcomed to participate.</p> <p>This person should be a staff member, be a representative on the executive team and lead whole school initiatives such as the Personalised Learning Pathways process.</p>
Aboriginal Staff	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff should feel empowered to actively participate in the decision making relevant to the Aboriginal Education Committee and support the duties to be performed.
Aboriginal Families Representation	Aboriginal families of the schools should feel that they can voice their opinions, advice and concerns, be active members in the decision-making process and support the duties to be performed if they desire.
Aboriginal Student Representation	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students should feel that they can voice their opinions, advice and concerns, be active members in the decision-making process and support the duties to be performed if they desire.
Local AECG and/or other community organisations	They should be active in the authentic collaboration process and support where contextually appropriate. The Department will work with in partnership with the AECG to ensure effective consultation occurs with Communities at the local level.
Other staff/allies in Aboriginal Education	Support the functioning of the Aboriginal Education Committee, actively contributing to the various duties or activities.

Roles	Responsibilities
	In secondary schools there should be representatives from each faculty. In primary schools there should be representatives from each stage.

*\*These are suggestions of potential roles and responsibilities of the Aboriginal Education Committee, however, these can be contextualised based on the individual school.*

## Support Resources

*Universal resources:*

[Strong strides together: Meeting the educational goals for Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander students.](#)

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Classroom](#)

[Getting to know local Aboriginal histories and Cultures – Community Consultation and Protocols.](#)

[How can you engage with your local Aboriginal Community?](#)

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