



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement:

Pennant Hills Before and After School Care Service is committed to providing an inclusive, equitable and culturally safe environment where all children, families and educators feel respected, supported and able to participate fully. Inclusion is embedded across all aspects of practice, ensuring that every child—regardless of ability, background, culture, gender, family structure or support needs—has meaningful access to the program. The service actively removes barriers to participation, implements reasonable adjustments, collaborates with families and professionals, and upholds anti-bias and culturally responsive practices. Continuous reflection, professional learning and community partnerships guide the service's commitment to fostering belonging, wellbeing and positive outcomes for every child.

Definitions:

Reasonable Adjustments - Changes to a policy, practice, procedure, program or environment that enable a child with a disability or additional needs to participate safely and meaningfully. An adjustment is considered reasonable unless it causes unjustifiable hardship to the service.

Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) - A practical planning tool used to identify barriers to participation and outline strategies to create a more inclusive environment. Developed collaboratively with educators, families and inclusion professionals.

Inclusion Support Program (ISP) - A national program that provides professional advice, resources and, where appropriate, funding to assist services to include children with additional needs. This may include consultation with Inclusion Professionals or access to specialist equipment.

Cultural Safety - An environment where children, families and educators feel respected, valued and able to express their cultural identity without fear of discrimination, tokenism or prejudice. Cultural safety is achieved through ongoing reflection, community engagement and culturally responsive practice.

Anti-Bias Practice - An approach that actively challenges stereotypes, discrimination and inequity. It involves modelling inclusive behaviour, using non-stereotyped language, selecting diverse resources and responding promptly to discriminatory behaviour or language.

Inclusion - Ensuring every child, regardless of ability, background or identity, can access, participate meaningfully and achieve positive outcomes.

Equity - The practice of ensuring all children and families have access to the specific resources, opportunities and support they need to thrive.

Diversity - The active recognition, respect and celebration of the unique differences in every child, family and staff member.

Considerations:

- My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care
- Education and Care Services National Law (2010)
 - Section 3(2)(a) – Rights and best interests of the child
 - Section 3(3)(a-d) – Equity, inclusion and diversity as foundational principles
 - Section 165 – Offence to inadequately supervise children
 - Section 166 – Offence to use inappropriate discipline
 - Section 167 – Protection of children from harm and hazards
 - Section 174 – Notification of serious incidents and complaints
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
 - Regulation 73 – Educational program
 - Regulation 74 – Documenting and evaluating children’s learning
 - Regulation 155 – Interactions with children
 - Regulation 156 – Relationships in groups
 - Regulations 168-172 – Policies, procedures, review and information for families
 - Regulation 177 – Prescribed records and confidentiality requirements
- National Quality Standard
 - 1.1.1 – Approved learning framework: Program reflects principles of equity, diversity and inclusion
 - 2.2.3 – Child protection: Ensuring safe, respectful and culturally responsive environments
 - 3.2.1 – Inclusive environment: Spaces that support accessibility, autonomy and belonging
 - 4.2.2 – Professional standards: Ethical, culturally competent and anti-bias practice
 - 6.1.2 – Parent views respected: Families’ cultural knowledge and perspectives inform practice
 - 6.2.3 – Community engagement: Partnerships that strengthen cultural safety and inclusion
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Child Safe Standards (NSW & National Principles)

Policy:

Equity, Access & Participation:

Enrolment & Access:

The service is committed to ensuring equitable access for all children and families. Enrolment processes are guided by the service’s Enrolment & Orientation Policy, including the Priority of Access guidelines outlined within that policy. The service recognises that some children may require additional support to participate fully and will work with families to identify and address any barriers to access.

Individual Support & Reasonable Adjustments:

Reasonable adjustments will always be made to support children's safe and meaningful participation in the service. Reasonable adjustments are changes to a policy, practice, procedure, program, or environment that enable a person with a disability to access and participate in the service equally. An adjustment is considered reasonable unless it would cause *unjustifiable hardship* to the service.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing ramp access or modifying physical spaces
- Offering quiet spaces for children to relax or regulate
- Using sensory resources or toys to support engagement
- Considering environmental elements such as lighting and temperature
- Minimising wait times or offering movement breaks when needed
- Using specialised communication supports such as routine storyboards

Support Planning Procedure:

Where a child requires additional support, the service will work collaboratively with families to develop an appropriate support plan. This process may include:

- Meetings with families to discuss the child's strengths, needs and required adjustments
- Collaboration with schools, allied health professionals or inclusion support agencies where appropriate
- Clear expectations that families will provide relevant information and notify the service of any changes to the child's needs or circumstances
- Ensuring all personal information is managed in accordance with privacy and confidentiality requirements

Strategic Inclusion Planning (SIP) and Inclusion Support Program (ISP):

The service uses a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) as a practical tool to identify barriers to participation and outline strategies to create a more inclusive environment. The SIP is developed collaboratively with educators, families and, where appropriate, industry professionals.

Where additional support is required, the service may access the Inclusion Support Program (ISP). The ISP provides professional advice, resources and, in some cases, funding to assist services to include children with additional needs. This may involve consultation with inclusion professionals or accessing specialist equipment or support.

Family & Community Collaboration:

The service values strong, respectful partnerships with families and recognises that families hold expert knowledge about their children. Collaboration may include:

- Sharing information to support individual planning and adjustments
- Working together to understand and respond to behaviour, including trauma-related or culturally influenced behaviours

- Ensuring that while provisions and supports are made in partnership with families, all decisions regarding behaviour guidance will be made in accordance with the service's Behaviour Management Policy
- Seeking feedback from families and community members, where appropriate, to strengthen equitable access and participation

Cultural Safety, Gender Equity & Respect for Diversity:

Cultural Inclusion & Representation:

The service values the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of all children, families and educators. Cultural identity is recognised as central to a child's wellbeing, and the program is designed to reflect and celebrate the diversity of the community. Educators seek information from families about cultural practices, expectations and preferences, and use this knowledge to create an environment where every child feels safe, respected and understood. Cultural perspectives, celebrations and experiences are woven throughout the program, and educators remain mindful of avoiding tokenism by embedding cultural awareness across routines, relationships and the learning environment. All activities and interactions are expected to be free from racial prejudice, harassment or discriminatory messaging.

Equity and Anti-Bias Practice:

The service is committed to equitable treatment of all children, families and educators, regardless of race, cultural background, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation or family structure. Educators model inclusive behaviour, use non-stereotyped language, and avoid assumptions about children's interests or abilities. Children are encouraged to explore a wide range of activities without gendered expectations, and resources are selected to reflect diverse cultures, genders and family types. Educators respond promptly to any discriminatory behaviour or language and ensure that behaviour guidance is culturally informed and consistent with the Behaviour Management Policy. Activities and experiences are regularly reviewed to ensure they do not reinforce stereotypes or negative representations.

Community & Cultural Partnerships:

Strong relationships with families and community organisations enhance cultural safety and enrich the program. Educators engage with families to understand cultural expectations, celebrations and practices that are meaningful to them, and invite contributions where families feel comfortable. Community-led ideas and feedback inform program planning, celebrations and curriculum decisions, and families are encouraged to raise any concerns or suggestions related to cultural relevance or discrimination.

Inclusive Recruitment & Capability Building:

The service aims to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community and upholds inclusive values. Recruitment practices promote diversity, cultural competence and equitable opportunity, and gender equity in recruitment is guided by the service's Staffing Policy. Educators of all gender identities are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities, modelling non-stereotyped roles and behaviours. Ongoing professional development supports educators to strengthen their cultural competence, challenge bias, embed cultural perspectives in practice and

reflect on how their own attitudes and assumptions influence children's sense of identity and belonging.

Inclusive Programming & Environment:

Inclusive Program Design:

The service designs its program to ensure all children can participate meaningfully, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds or support needs. Inclusive practices are embedded throughout planning, routines and experiences so that children see themselves reflected in the environment and feel a sense of belonging. Educators consider children's strengths, interests and cultural identities when planning experiences and adapt activities to ensure every child can engage successfully. The program incorporates diverse perspectives, avoids stereotypes, and provides opportunities for children to learn about and appreciate differences within their community. Guidance from inclusion support agencies may be used to strengthen program design and ensure strategies align with best practice.

Environment & Resource Adaptation:

The physical environment is arranged to promote accessibility, safety and independence. Educators make adjustments to spaces, equipment and routines to support children with additional needs, including those with disabilities, trauma-related behaviours or sensory sensitivities. This may involve modifying lighting or noise levels, providing quiet or low-stimulus areas, adjusting furniture or pathways, or offering sensory tools to support regulation. Resources are selected to reflect diverse cultures, abilities and family structures, and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain inclusive and non-discriminatory. Environmental decisions are informed by the Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) and, where relevant, advice from inclusion professionals.

Positive Relationships & Belonging:

The service fosters a welcoming and supportive atmosphere where all children feel valued and included. Educators build warm, respectful relationships with children and support them to develop positive connections with peers. Social inclusion is promoted through intentional grouping, cooperative activities and modelling of inclusive behaviour. Educators use trauma-aware and culturally responsive approaches when supporting children's social and emotional development, recognising that behaviour may be influenced by past experiences, cultural norms or individual needs. The environment is structured to encourage participation, confidence and a strong sense of belonging for every child.

Continuous Program Evaluation:

The service continually reflects on and evaluates its program to ensure it remains inclusive, culturally responsive and aligned with the needs of the community. Feedback from children, families, educators and community partners informs ongoing improvements. Observations, incident data, and reflective discussions are used to identify barriers to participation and guide adjustments. The Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) is reviewed regularly to monitor progress and update strategies as needed. Confidentiality is maintained when discussing individual children, and any information shared is handled sensitively and in accordance with privacy requirements. Program evaluation processes link directly to the service's Quality Improvement Plan to ensure inclusion remains a central focus of continuous improvement.

Roles, Responsibilities & Ongoing Learning:

Leadership & Governance Responsibilities:

The leadership team is responsible for ensuring that inclusive practice is embedded across all aspects of the service. This includes maintaining compliance with relevant legislation, overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP), and ensuring that policies, procedures and daily practices reflect the service's commitment to equity, cultural safety and diversity. Leaders support educators by providing clear guidance, allocating resources appropriately, and ensuring that any adjustments or supports required for children are implemented effectively. They also ensure that confidentiality is upheld when discussing individual children and that information is shared only when necessary and in accordance with privacy requirements. Continuous improvement processes, including the Quality Improvement Plan, are used to monitor progress and identify areas for further development.

Educator Responsibilities:

Educators play a central role in creating an inclusive environment where all children feel safe, respected and able to participate fully. This includes modelling inclusive behaviour, using respectful and non-stereotyped language, and implementing reasonable adjustments and support strategies identified through the SIP or in collaboration with families and professionals. Educators are expected to build warm, responsive relationships with children and to use culturally informed, trauma-aware and developmentally appropriate approaches to behaviour guidance. They maintain confidentiality when handling personal information and ensure that decisions regarding behaviour support align with the service's Behaviour Management Policy. Educators actively contribute to planning, reflection and evaluation processes to strengthen inclusive practice.

Reflective Practice & Continuous Improvement:

Reflective practice is embedded in the service's approach to inclusion. Educators and leaders regularly reflect on their own attitudes, assumptions and interactions, recognising how these influence children's sense of identity and belonging. Team discussions, professional learning sessions and feedback from families and community partners inform ongoing improvements. The SIP is reviewed regularly to monitor progress and ensure strategies remain relevant and effective. Insights from inclusion professionals, allied health practitioners and community organisations are used to strengthen practice and guide decision-making. Continuous improvement processes ensure that inclusion remains a central focus of the service's culture and operations.

Version	Action	Date
V.1	Original endorsement Information pulled from numerous policies and built upon.	27 th January 2026
V.1	Approval by PMC	18 th February 2026