



HOW TO DISCUSS DIVERSITY AND

# Multiculturalism



1

**Examine** your own behaviour

2

**Consider** your messaging

3

**Build** their sense of self and identity

4

**Teach** the value of multiculturalism

5

**Use** appropriate language

6

**Encourage** curiosity

7

**Model** acceptance

8

**Discuss** negative stereotypes

9

**Embrace** other cultures

Young people will absorb their new surroundings with curiosity, self-assurance, and kindness when diversity and inclusion are practised. It teaches them to identify with people who are different from themselves.

Boarding schools are often a melting pot of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity. Students from around Australia and the world come together to learn and co-habit in surroundings that are sometimes unfamiliar and daunting. This often results in a period of adjustment and transition. Assimilating to boarding school can be a difficult time, especially for students whose home environments may be vastly different to their new surroundings. While most boarding schools have traditionally created and celebrated their own special culture, there is increasing recognition that they also have to reflect the values of the families who send their children to live and study there. When students meet other students of different cultures and places, they understand new values. They learn how to engage in spaces with other students from diverse backgrounds and how to understand the social and emotional reactions and experiences of their peers.



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## Examine your own behaviour

Recognition and respect starts at home. Your child will notice if you are uneasy or uncomfortable around people from other origins and will imitate this in their interactions. Think about how you describe or talk about others. Do you refer to their race before any other details about them?

## Consider your messaging

It is common for people to assume that their everyday words or actions are acceptable to others, but they may be conveying something else. Young people will mimic their caregivers so consider if there is room for improvement.

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## Build their sense of self and identity

Every child has their own unique characteristics, strengths and challenges. As young people assimilate into their new surroundings adapting to new routines, some may experience a loss of identity and feel like an outsider. Ensure your child feels supported at school and encourage them to express their individuality through personal interests or hobbies.





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## Teach the value of multiculturalism

Engage your child in regular conversations about the value of racial and cultural diversity. Provide opportunities for them to be around people who are different from them. Young people need to grasp the lesson that being 'different from', does not mean being 'less than'.

## Use appropriate language

Emphasise to your son or daughter the importance of being respectful of how individual students or their families refer to themselves and encourage them to use the appropriate language. This helps provide a nurturing and positive environment whilst also being respectful of diverse belief systems..

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## Encourage curiosity

It is normal and natural for children to notice differences and to want more information about what those differences mean. Answering questions about different cultures, customs and races teaches your child that it is OK to notice these differences. Providing open and honest answers helps your young person expand their knowledge of the world.





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## Model acceptance

Kids are watching what you say and do and will likely follow your lead. Teach your child to value others and treat everyone with kindness and compassion. Encourage them to have an open mind and not to judge anyone before getting to know them.

## Discuss negative stereotypes

Be aware of the type of stereotypes your young person may be exposed to through the media via movies or television. Some are less desirable than others. Discussing the negative outcomes of racism and hatred can help young people understand the consequences of such actions.

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## Embrace other cultures

Sometimes the best way to teach your kids about race and cultural diversity is to experience it first-hand. Sample food, dance to music, listen to story-telling, view artwork, or visit places to discover what is indicative about a specific culture that makes it so unique.

