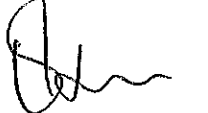





Access, Anti-Discrimination, Equity, Diversity and Empowerment Policy and Procedure

Policy number	P-26		
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Drafted by	Veronica Kioria		
Responsible person CEO	Veronica Kioria	Signature 	Date: 22/05/19
Approved by the Board:			
On behalf of the Board	David Ling President	Signature 	Date: 22/05/19
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Basic Beliefs/Purpose

Diamond Valley Learning Centre (DVLC) is committed to ensuring access and equity for all students and potential students. This policy outlines the approach DVLC will take in responding to student needs and removing barriers to access and achievement.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, volunteers, Board members and other stakeholders.

Policy Guidelines

DVLC is committed to creating a working and learning environment which is accessible equitable, inclusive, free from discrimination, and which promotes empowerment, social justice and ecological sustainability.

DVLC acknowledges its legal and ethical responsibilities to:

- act in the best interests of students;
- treat students fairly and impartially;
- facilitate access to education and training;
- provide safe, inclusive, and non-discriminatory learning spaces;
- provide duty of care; and
- provide high quality education and training.

DVLC has embedded the principles and practices of access and equity in its vision, mission, and core value statements.

Vision

To be recognised as a leader in community building through learning.

Mission

To provide community based education opportunities for lifelong learning, challenge and friendship, and to provide educational opportunities to members of the community not served by mainstream education.

Core Values

Empowerment, compassion, kindness, integrity, trustworthiness, vibrancy and fun.

DVLC aims to promote these values through:

- providing education, training and other services that are free from discrimination, and are accessible to community members regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, and sexual orientation, and physical or intellectual impairment;
- designing and developing programs that provide community members with opportunities to participate, develop confidence and a positive self-image, reach their potential and improve life choices;
- developing pre enrolment processes that provide clear information on course content, outcomes, entry requirements and pre requisites, and pre training interviews that explore the student's educational background, learning goals and learning support needs;
- actively promoting programs to disadvantaged community members;
- giving students a fair and reasonable opportunity to attend and complete their training within expected and agreed timelines;
- developing mechanisms and approaches that identify special needs and offer reasonable adjustments during learning and assessment;
- being responsive to community needs and circumstances, while using public resources efficiently;
- developing networks and partnerships with other service providers who support disadvantaged community members;
- employing staff and volunteers who largely reflect community diversity, are sensitive to community needs, and share the organisation's values and inclusive approach;
- delivering programs that are inclusive, and support the principles and practices of Australian democracy; and
- treating students and community members with dignity, courtesy and respect.

DVLC expects its staff, volunteers and stakeholders to comply with this policy, and to contribute to fostering and maintaining a learning community that is inclusive, non-discriminatory, equitable and accessible.

Students may challenge an enrolment or assessment decision at DVLC or make a complaint under the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. Details of the complaints and appeals process can be found on the DVLC website at www.dvlc.org.au.

Procedure Guidelines

1. All Board members, staff and volunteers must ensure that students and stakeholders:
 - a. are treated respectfully and equitably;
 - b. are encouraged to meet their full potential, regardless of ability;
 - c. receive effective communication, regardless of barriers due to language, and ability;
 - d. are listened to, and have input into improving the program or course;
 - e. have the opportunity to participate in relevant decision-making processes; and
 - f. receive the necessary educational, social and other support to achieve equitable outcomes.

2. All DVLC managers and program developers must ensure that:
 - a. programs are based on fairness, need and potential to strengthen lives within the community;
 - b. adequate student learning and other support is available, wherever possible, to improve accessibility and successful outcomes;
 - c. programs and services are monitored to provide feedback and assist responsiveness;
 - d. incidents are responded to in a timely manner;
 - e. student complaint mechanisms are accessible and appropriate; and
 - f. staff receive appropriate cultural awareness and diversity training, and related professional development.

Definitions

Access refers to the ability of an individual to enter education or training. Factors such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, perceived intellectual ability, past academic performance, special-education status, English-language ability, and family income or educational-attainment levels may contribute to certain students having less “access” to educational opportunities than other students. Improving access may require the provision of additional services or the removal of actual or potential barriers that might prevent some students from equitable participation.

Anti-discrimination means opposed to, or intended to prevent, discrimination.

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of their background or a personal characteristic. In Victoria it is against the law for someone to discriminate against you because of a characteristic that you have, or are assumed to have, including age, carer and parental status, disability, employment activity, gender identity, marital status, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy and breastfeeding, race, religious belief or activity, sex, or because you have a personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these personal characteristics. This is called **direct discrimination**. **Indirect discrimination** occurs when there is an unreasonable rule or policy that is the same for everyone, but has an unfair effect on people who share a particular attribute.

Diversity refers to differences between people in how they identify in relation to their:

- social identity, including age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability, gender identity, Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander background, and socio-economic background; and
- professional identity, including profession, education, work experiences, and organisational role.

Empowerment refers to the process of enabling people and giving them greater agency to control and direct their lives, or achieve positive outcomes. It is a complex process and may include having decision-making power, being able to access education, information and resources, learning new skills, learning about people’s rights, changing people’s perceptions of their competency and capacity to act, gaining confidence and a positive self-image, being included, and gaining independence.

Equity refers to the principle of fairness in education. Improving equity (or reducing inequity) may require some individuals to be treated differently because of their circumstances, background, and identity, as a way of ensuring potentially equal education outcomes.

Inclusion refers to the practice of actively including every individual within the community, based on the fundamental values of equity, equality, social justice, human rights and freedoms, and the principles of tolerance and embracing diversity.

Reasonable adjustment means any adjustment made to the learning program or environment that enables individual students to access and participate in learning on the same basis as

other students within the program. Reasonable refers to the need to balance the interests of all parties, including financial considerations, and the nature and extent of the disadvantage. Examples of reasonable adjustment include (but are not limited to):

- addressing physical barriers to ensure access to buildings, facilities and services;
- modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies;
- utilising specialised support staff or assistive technology;
- providing professional learning and training for staff; and
- providing learning and assessment materials in different formats.

Related Policies

P-8 Student Welfare and Duty of Care Policy and Procedure

P-16 Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

P-24 Critical Incident Policy and Procedure

P-31 Student Safety and Security Policy

P-35 Mandatory Reporting and Protection of Children Policy and Procedure

P-40 Child Safe Policy

P-42 Consumer Protection Policy

P-44 Student Engagement Policy

P-43 Privacy Policy

P-45 VCAL Attendance Policy and Procedure

P-51 Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

P-59 Computer, Internet and Email Usage Policy and Procedure

Related Documents

D-028 Student Handbook

D-044 Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual

Legislation

Age Discrimination Act 2004

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

Consumer and Competition Act 2010

Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986

Privacy Act 1988

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Mapping Information

VRQA Guidelines for Non-school Senior Secondary Education Providers: Minimum Standards for Registration to Provide an Accredited Senior Secondary Course, Standard 3

AQTF Standard 2.3, 3.2