

Introduction to Committing to Meaningful First Nations Projects in Education Settings



Educator Guide

Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design

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Scope

This non-exhaustive guide offers good practices for schools and school employees to embed stronger and more positive engagement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists and storytellers in education settings. It has been designed to support self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Key



Orange: First Nations Elders, artists and community members working in schools



Green: Teachers, educators and executives working with First Nations artists



Introduction

This guide is for educators (including teachers and all school staff) working in early childhood, primary (K-6) and secondary (7-12) settings across all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations/language groups, and western states and territories.

It will be relevant to the Australian Curriculum and state and territory visual arts curricula.

The guide will provide easy-to-follow, relevant and culturally appropriate advice for educators on the **processes, protocols** and **good practices** for engaging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists when working with students in practical visual art-making activities and programs at schools and in education settings.

It will highlight good practices from the **Code of Practice for the Visual Arts, Craft and Design** (the Code) and other relevant external resources.

The content included in the guide will also be relevant for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists and is transferable across diverse engagements (i.e. longer-term residencies, one-off workshops, murals, artist talks and ongoing relationships) and art forms.

It may also apply to educators working in care settings or community-led programs, Interstate Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs), and contexts outside of a school environment.



Before you begin

Before doing any outreach or approaching an artist/community/ies, we encourage you to look inward and ask yourself and your institution the following questions:

- Why is this important to us?
- Why are we choosing to do this project now?
- What support do we need?
- What is the timeline for the project? Is their flexibility within the timeline?
- What is your role as the educator/teacher?
- What is the role of the artist?
- What is the budget for the project?
- What previous experience does your institution have in working with First Nations artists/communities?
- Are you and your institution currently working within a culturally responsive framework?
- Do you have existing relationships with the communities who are connected to the Country on which your institution sits?

Understanding your motivations for undertaking this work will help you to identify any potential challenges and minimise the risk of cultural harm.



Culturally Safer Spaces

First Nations peoples often experience ongoing harm from institutional decision-making in both the visual arts sector and education systems/sectors. In acknowledging the power that institutions like schools and cultural institutions have, it is necessary that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are treated with the utmost respect and nuanced care.

Using the term 'culturally safer' instead of 'culturally safe' acknowledges the ongoing work required to ensure the cultural safety of all children, families, communities and staff. This includes commitments to learning, listening, critical reflection and development.

Cultural safety is defined as "an environment which is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need."¹

Cultural safety is always determined by the receiver, not by the institution, school, or engagement facilitator. It is the responsibility of the school and teachers to provide spaces where First Nations artists, community members, and students can be their full selves in every engagement.



Prior Learning/s for Educators

This guide assumes that as educators, you will be across the culturally responsive pedagogies and understand the:

- Structural differences across jurisdictions between education systems and the visual arts sector.
- Cultural differences between Indigenous ways of knowing and

learning and non-Indigenous learning frameworks informed by colonial perspectives.

- History of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander experiences in, or with, institutions/schools on this continent and for global First Nations peoples.

See Resources at the end of this Guide for more information.



1. Tips for outreach and communication



Always Start Local

What is the school's existing relationship with local mob?

Acknowledge that there are often nuances and complex relationships. For example, there may be multiple language or clan groups connected to the place. Is the school engagement through an independent Elder, family or through an Indigenous Education Consultative Group, Local Aboriginal Land Council or Cultural Authority?

If you or your school has particular artists in mind, make sure you consult and get approval from the local community before reaching out to the artist/collective.



Transparency

Respect and practicing transparency is critical at all stages of engaging First Nations artists.

Communicate with the artist(s) about the school and staff's progress in cultural responsiveness, professional learning, and existing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities e.g. NSW schools should reference partnerships with local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECG).

Additionally, schools should include guidance on student receptiveness to engagement with external specialists.

The **NAVA Code of Practice** includes a:

- **First Nations: Summary of Good Practice Recommendation**
- **Community Engagement: Summary of Good Practice Recommendations**



2. Relationship building – Sharing where you are coming from, your cultural identity and context



With your students

First Nations students should feel seen and heard, but never be expected or forced into a situation based on their cultural identity.

Before the artist engages with the class, provide information and context to your class. Share with them why you are inviting an artist to come in, introduce the artist's practice, and explain how it is connected to your class.



With the faculty, school, and executives

It is important that the broader team you work with is aware of the artist visiting. Making a visiting artist feel welcome and supported is all part of cultural responsiveness.

For example, greeting the artist/s at reception by name, offering a cup of tea, and showing them where they might need to go, are all small gestures that go a long way.



With the local community

Having an artist join a classroom is a wonderful way to further engage your local community and build a stronger and safer environment for the artists and the students.

Consider how you can involve Elders and community members beyond consultation and a Welcome to Country with this project.

- Can they be involved in a workshop?
- Can their stories be platformed?
- Can they collaborate on the development with the artist?





3. Respectful artist partnerships and collaboration

Collaborating with a First Nations artist in a school context requires a prioritising and commitment to *building strong relationships, respecting cultural protocol, and prioritising the artist's perspective and processes*. You should:

- Ensure there is sufficient lead-in time for artists to consider a request to work together and obtain free prior and informed consent from artists.
- Prepare a well-thought-out budget, including fees to cover the artist's time, that also considers **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)**, and time for the artist to attend meetings.
- Be open to negotiating **artist fees** and answering questions on payment type and structure.
- Give the artist/relevant communities the opportunity to embed their ICIP into the contract. Important considerations that should be included in the contract are:
 - Photography and any documentation on the day.
 - The use/continuity of the use of the work – has the agreement shifted and do you need a licensing agreement?



Acknowledging cultural responsibility

Consider the cultural responsibilities of First Nations peoples in every stage of the development of a program. Flexibility around the timing and scheduling of programs recognises:

- Ongoing and regular cultural commitments and events, such as NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, World Indigenous Peoples Day etc. If you are engaging an artist during these times ensure you have allowed extra time as the artist is likely working on multiple projects over this period.
- The need to allow time for consultation with Elders and community members. Here are the NAVA freelance rates for **community liaison and cultural advisors**. If your institution has a set payment cycle, consider fast-tracking the processing of payments.



4. Formalising the partnership or project – responsibilities of the institution



Contract

Provide a contract to the artist in clear plain English. The contract should include artist fees and payment timelines, superannuation, ICIP clauses, lifespan of the work, documentation, dispute resolution, and scheduling agreements. **Arts Law** has [contract templates available](#).



Budget

Budgets should be provided to the artist and include travel, meeting times, research and development, access needs and any community consultation, student engagement or relevant stakeholder engagement with the project, that may be outside of the scope of the artist's immediate fee.



Materials

What are the materials provided by the school? If the materials cannot be acquired by the school are they paying for the labour involved in collecting and preparing the materials?



Cultural safety

To help establish and sustain respectful relationships with artists/communities:

- Ask for an access rider.
- Communicate regularly with the artist and community members, especially if there are any changes to the scope of the project or the timeline.
- Find out about the artist/s preferred method/s of communication (phone, email, text etc).

Teachers are responsible for the duty of care of the students.



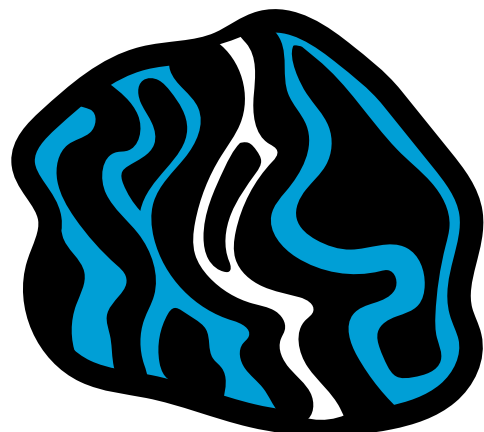
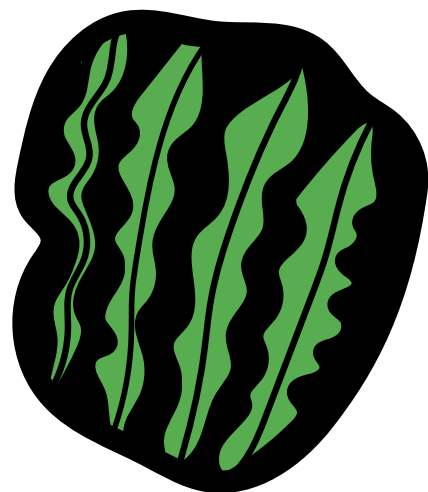
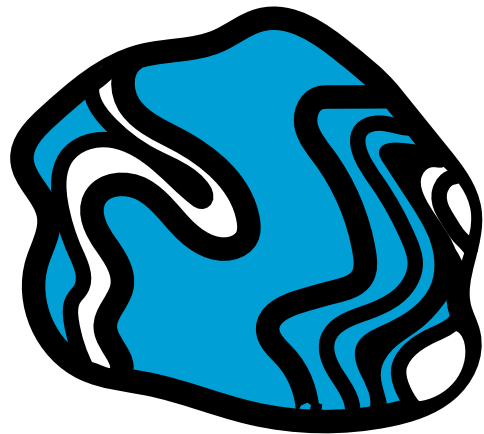
Flexibility with payment processes

- Provide clear instructions to the artist about the payment processes in the school/department.
- Do you pay [superannuation](#)?
- If needed, can you provide an [invoice template](#) for the artist?
- Can you pay the fee in more than one instalment? E.g. 50% upon signing agreement and 50% at completion of the workshop/program.



Responsibilities of the artist

- Read your contract carefully and negotiate your artist fee and make an informed decision before you go ahead with the project. Reach out to your mentors, NAVA, Arts Law, etc. and ask for help if you need.
- Ask the school for the project budget.
- Make a timeline that works for you and the school. Consider any other projects you are working on and how viable it is.
- Provide an access rider if needed.
- Make sure you have a current Working with Children's Check (NSW, VIC, SA, TAS, WA), Working with Childrens Card (Blue Card) (QLD), Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card) (NT).
- If you have any concerns, it is best to raise them earlier to allow for the most amount of time to resolve. You never have to do this alone. You have a right to bring a support person with you.
- Provide a brief bio to the teacher that will inform their introduction to the students. Let the teacher know how you'd like to be introduced.
- Let them know your preferred method/s of communication (phone, email, text etc.).





Things to consider on the day



Courtesy measures

- Ideally a car space, if appropriate, will be made available to the artist.
- Provide map and wayfinding and wayfinding for the sign-in/meeting location (admin office or workshop space) and details on who will meet the artist.
- The teacher to reiterate to the artist/s that they will be present in the learning environment throughout the entire class/event/session/workshop because of their duty of care for their students.



Classroom arrival

- Give the artist time to familiarise themselves with the learning environment and to set up any materials/equipment they plan to use.
- The teacher to introduce the artist/s to the students as previously agreed upon.
- If there is time, give the students an opportunity to respond with an introduction.



Classroom protocols

- Student phones in the classroom – yes/no. Are cameras or recording equipment part of the workshop/project?
- If yes, teacher to reiterate protocols about use of cameras/recordings.
- The teacher is responsible for the management of student behaviour in the classroom and the cultural and physical safety of the artist/s. The teacher will respond to offensive, racist or antisocial behaviour.



Workshop documentation

- Who is managing permissions for recording images of students and/or their artwork and by whom? Teacher photography or artist photography?
- What happens with these photographs and do you need a licensing agreement?
- Ensure artists are consulted before and after the workshop about any public communications or promotion of the project and approval granted.



Things to consider after the visit



Evaluation

As soon as possible, teachers should internally evaluate the learning experience for any improvements or considerations for future delivery.

- How can the teacher, school admin, school or students improve their engagement/behaviours in future?
- Engage with the artists if appropriate to seek feedback on their experiences of the school and the engagement. Questions might include:
 - What was your experience of your engagement with our school and students?
 - Is there anything the school/teacher/admin/students could have done differently to improve the experience?



Payment

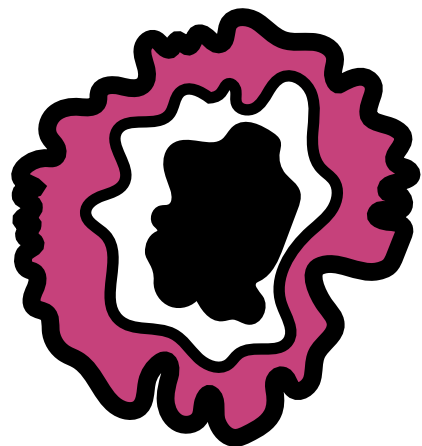
Follow up on payment to the artist/s ensuring it is accurate, prompt and seamless.

This includes responding promptly to communication from the artist/s using agreed upon methods (e.g. email or phone). Ensure that artists are not placed in the position of having to follow up for payment.



Future opportunities

Consider future opportunities and ongoing relationships with First Nations artists and local community. How can you build on this relationship? E.g. more artist workshops, longer-term projects, permanent projects?





Glossary and relevant resources

Glossary

AERO – Australian Education Research Organisation

AITSL – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

IECB – Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies – Also known as Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECG), IECB's hold long-standing relationships with the education sector, sharing their expertise and advocacy for local, state and national education and training.

Resources

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principles and Protocols – Department of Education NSW
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Building a Culturally responsive Australian Teaching Force – AITSL
- Cultural Responsiveness
 - Building a culturally responsive Australian teaching workforce
 - SA Department of Education Culturally Responsive Framework
 - WA Department of Education Culturally Responsive Schools
 - NSW Department of Education – Reimagining a Culturally Responsive Framework
- IECM Submission to the Expert Panel of the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System
- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property – Arts Law Centre of Australia
- Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Continuum – AITSL
- Mparntwe Declaration
- Working with Aboriginal Communities – National Education Standards Authority
- The Waratah Project – Improving Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, Australian Independent Schools

Reference

- 1 Williams, R. (1999). "Cultural safety – what does it mean for our work practice?" *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 23(2), 213–214.

