

EDMUND RICE EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

**FLEXIBLE  
SCHOOLS**

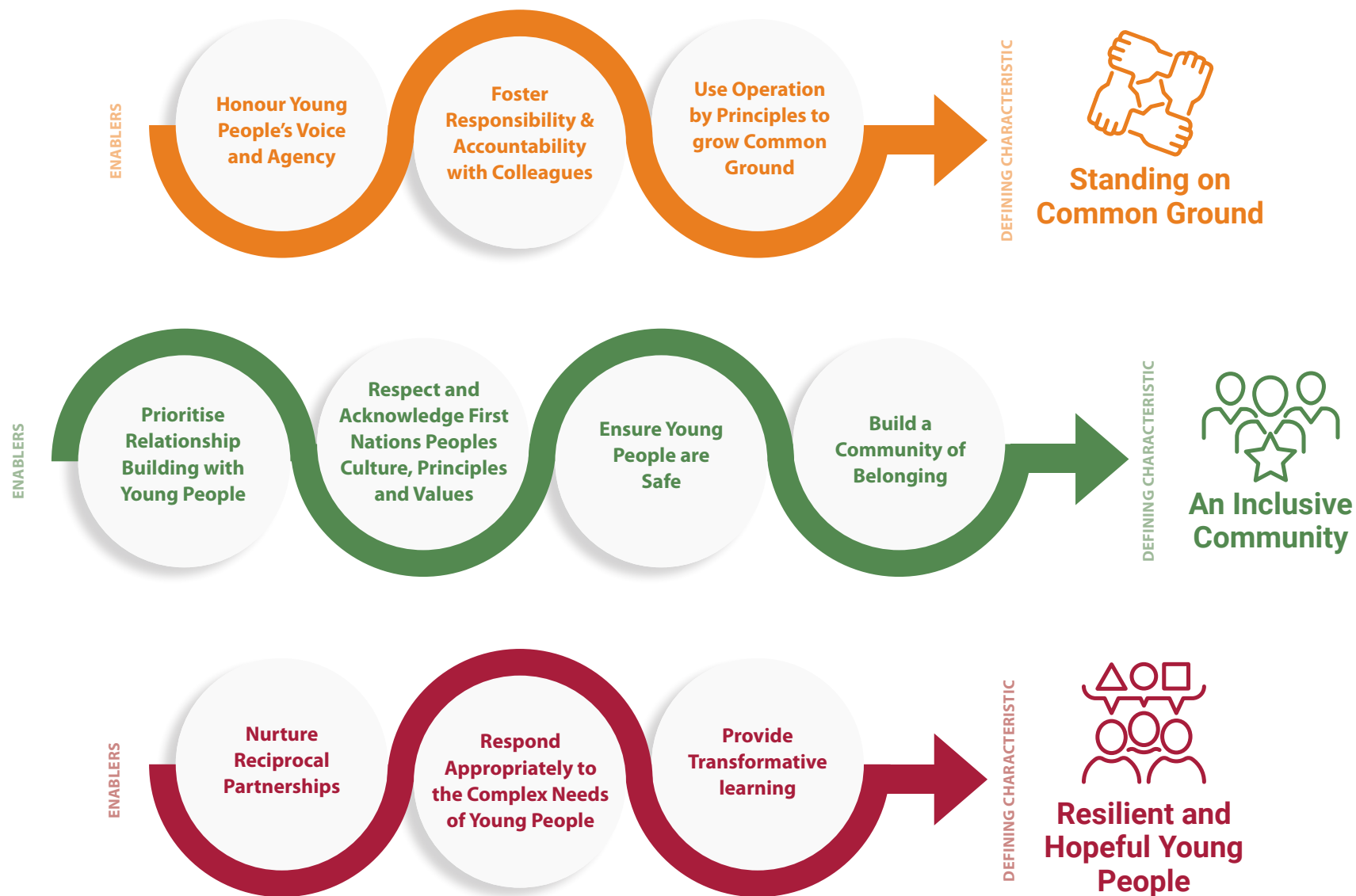
# Flexi Practice Framework

**2025**

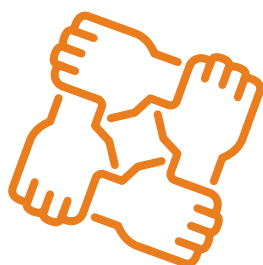


**Three “Defining Characteristics” are essential components of the Practice Framework of Flexible Schools.  
They are: Standing on Common Ground, An Inclusive Community, and Resilient and Hopeful Young People.**

Each Characteristic has “Enablers” that makes it possible for the Defining Characteristic to be a consistent practice of Flexible Schools. They are outlined below.



Honour Young People's Voice and Agency	Foster Responsibility and Accountability with Colleagues	Use Operation by Principles to grow Common Ground
<p>Uphold the rights of young people in everything that we do (as defined by the <a href="#">UN Rights of the Child</a>)<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>This supports young people to be “agents of change” throughout their learning journey and in their communities.</p> <p><i>“Open your mind. Open your heart. Open your eyes and open your ears. Learn to close your mouth. Be patient and be comfortable with silence!”</i></p>	<p>We are committed to subsidiarity at all levels. Where possible, the colleagues of a Flexible School (including paid consultants and volunteers), have a shared responsibility and accountability for any decisions that impact upon them.</p>	<p>Everyone – young people, staff and others - create Common Ground (<i>what they want to experience and how they want to be together</i>) by using the core Principles of Respect, Honesty, Participation, and Safe &amp; Legal.</p>
<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognise and support young people's potential and agency during their non-linear learning journey.</li> <li>2. Listen deeply, so that young people feel you have heard and understood them.</li> <li>3. Expect young people to have a voice as a member of the Flexible School.</li> <li>4. Create the space/environment that supports young people to use their voice and advocate for their rights.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritise productive collaboration and respectful relationships.</li> <li>2. Value the multidisciplinary staff with their different experiences and qualifications.</li> <li>3. Utilise staff support processes to enhance shared responsibility and accountability.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer “Unconditional Positive Regard” for young people and colleagues, respecting their differences.</li> <li>2. Use The Principles to create the conversations and spaces for people's differing perceptions and feelings to be resolved. Learn to work through and/or live with difference.</li> <li>3. Cultivate personal and communal responsibility and accountability to sustain Common Ground.</li> <li>4. Value process and outcome equally in all learning experiences.</li> </ol>



## Standing on Common Ground

<sup>1</sup>Link to UN Rights of the Child <https://www.unicef.org/media/56661/file>

Prioritise Relationship Building with Young People	Respect and Acknowledge First Nations Peoples Culture, Principles and Values	Ensure Young People are Safe	Build a Community of Belonging
Relationships are the starting point for re-engaging young people in their educational journey at the Flexible School.	Through collaborative and meaningful engagement, we are dedicated to integrating First Nations Ways of Being, Doing and Knowing, and maintaining a commitment to Truth Telling and Reconciliation.	We aim to maintain a culture of safeguarding, where we know our role in the prevention, detection and reporting of abuse, neglect and exploitation of the young people we work with. We empower those young people by ensuring they know their rights; what they should expect of us and who to go to if something concerning is happening.	We go beyond inclusion to co-create and foster learning communities where all can belong and thrive.
<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the needs of young people to help you build relationships with them.</li> <li>2. Use ONLY strength-based approaches</li> <li>3. Consistently reflect on your personal style and its influence to build these relationships.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage in a personal, cultural learning journey that embraces vulnerability and meaningful change.</li> <li>2. Proactively seek First Nations wisdom and guidance by building relationships and walking in solidarity with First Nations Peoples.</li> <li>3. Co-contribute to culturally safe and celebratory environments at a Flexible School.</li> <li>4. Incorporate First Nations approaches to teaching and learning.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership - We are committed to keeping children and young people safe.</li> <li>2. People - Our people are great at working safely with children and young people.</li> <li>3. Environments - Our school environments are safe and welcoming for children and young people.</li> <li>4. Responses - If something goes wrong, we all know what to do about it.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intentionally welcome young people and create caring relationships with them and their families.</li> <li>2. Practice Radical Inclusion<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>3. Create friendly and inclusive spaces.</li> <li>4. Give back to Flexible School, local community and other Flexible Communities.</li> </ol>



## An Inclusive Community

Nurture Reciprocal Partnerships	Respond Appropriately to the Complex Needs of Young People	Provide Transformative learning
We work in reciprocal partnerships with community, government and industry to extend the possibilities of our learning spaces and enhance outcomes for young people.	We support young people to experiment and grow their identity during the adolescent stage of their life where they explore “Who am I?”. All facets of their identity - physical, cognitive and psycho-social are changing and developing as they transition from childhood to adulthood. <sup>3</sup> We recognise that trauma can significantly disrupt this identity formation process, creating additional challenges for young people as they attempt to integrate traumatic experiences into their developing sense of self while navigating these already complex developmental changes.	Success in learning is drawn from evidence of the whole of a young person’s life. We provide skills based and personalised learning so that all young people develop the confidence and capabilities to create their own aspirational pathways.
<b>Strategies:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritise reciprocal partnerships with First Nations peoples, sharing their knowledge, perspectives and practices in the local Flexible community.</li> <li>2. Build and maintain strong connections with local organisations, industry providers and networks that provide opportunities beneficial for our young people.</li> <li>3. Partner with like-minded key agencies and community groups committed to working with young people.</li> <li>4. Support individual young people and their families to gain access to services in other agencies.</li> </ol>	<b>Strategies:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be knowledgeable about the different stages of adolescence and how trauma can impact on the normal developmental progression during these phases.</li> <li>2. Support young people’s awareness of the rapid physical changes and growth happening in their body during this time, recognising how trauma can affect physical development and stress responses.</li> <li>3. Support young people to practise their skills as they grow their cognitive (brain) development at this stage in their life, understanding that trauma can disrupt executive functioning and learning processes.</li> <li>4. Support young people to develop their many psycho-social attributes and skills required for adulthood, acknowledging that trauma can impact identity formation, emotional regulation, and social relationships. Their peer groups are important spaces for this development, though trauma may affect peer engagement and trust.</li> </ol>	<b>Strategies:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer learning experiences to positively (re)engage young people in learning.</li> <li>2. Begin curriculum with the needs/interests of young people first, guiding the curriculum design and delivery that meets all State/Territory and Federal requirements.</li> <li>3. Co-create a meaningful personalised learning journey with each individual young person, and their stakeholders.</li> <li>4. Prepare young people for meaningful participation in the post Flexible School landscape.</li> </ol>



## Resilient and Hopeful Young People