

Gender Identity Policy

Ratification Date: Update by RNS Principal 02/2023 RNS Board 15/03/2023	Next Review: By 1 July 2024 or after an event or changes to the minimum standards as advised by the VRQA	Availability: <table><tr><td>Web</td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>Office</td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>On Request</td><td>X</td></tr></table>	Web	X	Office	X	On Request	X	Actions:
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

River Nile School (RNS) is a specialist reengagement senior-secondary school for young women who are Humanitarian refugees and new arrivals to Australia. In general, our school's students are highly vulnerable with backgrounds of complex trauma in their lives. Most RNS students live as independent young adults, and those with parents/carers commonly have parents/carers who are also new to Australia, with low levels of English oracy and literacy and which are not yet well informed about child safety expectations and obligations in Australia. Some RNS students have significant responsibilities as young parents or carers/guardians of younger siblings.

PURPOSE

To ensure River Nile School supports students', staff and school community members gender identity, including those with intersex status, in line with both the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)* and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)*.

River Nile School will provide an inclusive and safe environment for their school community, including for Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) students, families and teachers/staff. This commitment recognises that creating a safe and inclusive environment is key to tackling bullying, discrimination and harassment at schools.

At River Nile School:

- We will support and respect a student's and staff members choice to identify as their desired gender when this does not align with their designated sex at birth
- The principal will respect privacy and confidentiality in relation to gender identity and intersex status
- The young person and a family representative/carer/appropriate support person will be invited to be part of the formulation of a school management plan.
(Staff will also be invited to have a support person.)
- May request a letter from a gender identity specialist to support them in developing the plan. This letter is not a conditional requirement for our school in providing support to the student (or staff member), but it may help to ensure that we can adequately discharge our duty of care to a student by planning appropriately. (*Gender identity specialists are available through Royal Children's Hospital and Monash Medical Centre.*)

For more information, see: [Information Privacy](#)

(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/privacy.aspx>)

Gender identity and intersex status: Definitions

Gender identity has the potential for discriminatory and unfair treatment. Below are the definitions of Gender Identity and Intersex status outlined in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) (SD Act).

Gender identity:

Gender identity is broadly defined as meaning 'the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person (whether by way of medical intervention or not), with or without regard to the person's designated sex at birth'.

By this definition, the SD Act therefore affords protection from discrimination for persons who identify as men, women or also as neither male nor female. It does not matter what sex the person was assigned at birth, or whether the person has undergone any medical intervention. Some terms used to describe a

person's gender identity include trans, transgender and gender diverse. The SD Act does not use these labels; however, it is intended to cover these identities and more.

Intersex status:

Intersex Status is defined by the SD Act as meaning 'the status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:

1. neither wholly female nor wholly male; or
2. a combination of female and male; or
3. neither female or male

This attribute is directed at protecting the 'biological' aspects or characteristics of intersex persons, but not the person's gender identity. These provisions will afford an intersex person protection from discrimination based on whether that person may have the biological attributes of both sexes, or lack some of the biological attributes considered necessary to be defined as one or the other sex.

School management plans:

Principals should:

- identify current supports that are in place and not automatically assume school-based wellbeing supports are required
- respond to students or parents/guardians/carers, or staff, who identify a need, such as counselling support

It is important that the student or staff member understands they are a partner in the plan and actively follow the agreed decisions.

The principal, with the student and parents/guardians/carers, (or, if the case, the staff member) creates a school management plan that ensures the school responds to the student's needs and addresses any facilities and privacy issues.

The school management plan should:

- cater to the student's / person's gender identity
- reflect this policy
- take a common-sense approach
- be developed over staggered sessions to allow time for trialing and opportunity for adjustments to occur
- consider the best timing to undertake any change of gender identity, such as term break
- consider implementing a Student Support or Care Team to support, guide and monitor the student's progress see: [Department resources](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/genderidentity.aspx#deptresources)
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/genderidentity.aspx#deptresources>)
- agree to arrangements in relation to toilet facilities
- consider the wellbeing of other students / persons in an addendum to the plan, in the event the student's / person's transgender status becomes known and causes distress - this should include a student support referral process
- determine whether other staff members, such as a student welfare coordinator or homegroup teacher, need to be advised to support or teach the student
- list the names of staff members who know of the gender identity change
- identify processes to:
 - review the plan
 - inform others should it be decided necessary
 - address potential school community concerns
 - manage unforeseen circumstances

Important: The best way to protect a student's privacy and confidentiality is to minimise the number of staff required to know the student's transgender status.

In most cases this is limited to the principal. Do not assume a staff member or the student's social network is aware.

Toilet facilities

The arrangements for the use of toilets, showers and change rooms specific to the River Nile School should be documented in the school management plan. Careful consideration should be given to the use of facilities that are appropriate to the student's preferred or chosen gender.

Note: Regular use of disabled toilets by a student without disabilities can draw attention to the student and is not appropriate for these purposes.

School documentation:

This table describes how schools change records and documentation

Stage	Description
1	Parents/guardians or the student or staff member advise the school they intend to change the birth certificate.
2	Update school records and documentation with the new name and sex, including enrolment documentation. See: Enrolment (http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/enrolment.aspx)
3	Parents/guardians or the student or staff member provide the new birth certificate when it becomes available.

Related policies:

- [Enrolment](#)
- [Information Privacy](#)

Related legislation:

- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

Department resources:

- [Sexuality education for parents](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- For teachers: a copy of SSAFE Gender Identity Issues (2007), see: [Prevention and support](#)
- For principals: links to government and school-based support documents for principals and leaders when engaging in sexuality education, see: [For principals](#)
- For contact details for regional student wellbeing managers, see: [Regions](#)

Other resources:

For more information see:

- [GQ: Gender Questioning \(2006\)](#)
- [The legal recognition of sex in documents and government records – Concluding paper of the sex and gender diversity project \(2009\)](#)
- [Transgender Victoria](#)

LINKS AND APPENDICES *(including processes related to this policy)*

Reference: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/genderidentity.aspx>

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