

## COLAC SECONDARY COLLEGE

### GENDER AFFIRMATION

#### PURPOSE

Colac Secondary College is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all its students, including its lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer or questioning (LGBTIQ) students. We support students who are taking steps to affirm a gender identity at school that is different from the sex that they were assigned at birth, through gender transition or affirmation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Colac Secondary College supports students' gender identity in line with the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth).

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to staff, and students, at Colac Secondary College including:

- education (teaching and learning, enrolment, student management, student services, curriculum development and delivery)
- the provision of goods and services (extracurricular activities, camps, excursions, parent-teacher interviews, access to facilities, school events outside school hours)
- school sport
- employment at the school (recruitment, allocation of duties, employment conditions, access to benefits such as training, promotion, and leave).

#### DEFINITIONS

**Gender identity** - Gender identity is broadly defined in legislation 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'.

**Gender transition/affirmation** - Gender transition/affirmation refers to the process whereby a transgender or gender diverse person socially and/or medically affirms their gender identity. There is no single moment of gender affirmation; it is an ongoing and individual process which may or may not involve medical support.

#### POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Colac Secondary College will:

- Support and respect a staff member or student's choice to identify as their affirmed gender when this does not align with their designated sex at birth
- Respect privacy and confidentiality in relation to gender identity.

## **FOR STUDENTS**

- Ensure the young person and a family representative/ carer will be invited to be part of the formulation of a **Student Support Plan**.
- Any identity/names changes require parental consent
- Identify current support systems.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN**

It is important that the student understands they are a partner in a plan and actively follow the agreed decisions. The school, with the student and parents/guardians will create a Student Support Plan that ensures the school responds to the student's needs and addresses any facilities and privacy issues.

### **The School Support Plan will:**

- Cater to the student's gender identity
- Reflect this policy
- Be developed over staggered sessions to allow time for trialling 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 Group (SSG) to support, guide and monitor the student's progress
- Agree to arrangements in relation to toilet facilities
- Consider the wellbeing of other students in an addendum to the plan, in the event the student's transgender status becomes known and causes distress. This should include a student support referral process
- Determine whether other staff members, 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. Do not assume a staff member or the student's social network is aware.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- Please note that adjustments typically occur as a matter of practice over time and include use of the student's new name and pronouns.
- Changes will occur to school system when student support plan is completed.
- The policy currently does not explicitly address situations in which a student and their parents are not in agreement regarding the student's gender identity. There may arise circumstances in which students wish to change their gender identity without the consent of their parents, and without consulting medical practitioners.

- If no agreement can be reached between the student and the parent regarding the student’s gender identity, or if the parent does not consent to the contents of a Student Management Plan, the school will need to consider whether the student is a mature minor enabling the student to permissibly make decisions for themselves without parental consent.
- The principal will need to be satisfied that the student has sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to make up their own mind about a particular issue (such as decision making around name change). This is a decision for the principal and a written record will be kept regarding the decision, including consideration of whether the student understands the consequences that might flow from the relevant decision.
- Should the school consider that the student is a mature minor, in these circumstances it may not be appropriate for the student’s family representative/carer to be invited to participate in formulating the School Support Plan.
- Preferred name will be added in Compass and on all student rolls it will reflect preferred name. Full name information will remain on Compass dashboard. Unable to change this due to CASES21 system unless name is legally changed.
- If parents/guardians advise the school that they intend to change the student’s birth certificate all school records will be updated with the new name and sex. A copy of the new birth certificate will be filed when available.
- When parents/guardians approach the school about gender affirmation or gender identity issues, they will be given a copy of this policy.
- Please also refer to the school’s Child Safe Policy, Duty of Care Policy, the Parental Responsibilities (Decisions about Students) Policy & the Enrolment and Information Privacy Policies.

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- Safe Schools - Supports and Services
- DET Workplace Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

**EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s review cycle and/or if there are changes in legislation, policy, or local circumstances.

Council Approval date	March 2023
Review date	When required
DET/VRQA required	No