



Supporting Students Diverse in Gender

Overview

Mount Alvernia aims to provide an inclusive educational environment that has its foundations in the values of the Catholic Church. This educational environment is also set within the legislative and regulatory framework that exists within Queensland and Australia more broadly.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that guides decision making and supports all members of the college community when a student identifies as having gender identity issues.

The College aims to support and respect the student's preferred gender identity and encourages all members of the College community to provide the same level of respect and support.

Definitions

The *Sex Discrimination Act (Cth) 1984* broadly defines gender identity as "*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.)

The College prohibits unlawful discrimination and bullying, including on the grounds of gender identity.

For a list of terms frequently used in relation to gender diversity, please refer to the [Definitions](#) page.

Policy

As in all aspects of providing students with a holistic education, Mount Alvernia views the consideration of supporting students with gender identity issues as a partnership with the student and their parents/caregivers.

Supporting Students Diverse in Gender will be enacted if a student has identified as having a gender identity different from the sex they were designated at birth and the student and their parents/carers have requested support from the College.

In general, the following steps will be followed once the students and parents/carers have requested support.

1. Parents/caregivers are to provide the College with a letter from a gender identity specialist or psychologist that outlines the issues and recommendations. This written communication is required so that the College can plan appropriately and develop an individual plan to support the student.
2. Relevant stakeholders, including the student, their parents, specialists, and college staff will meet to formulate strategies and develop an individual support plan for the student whilst they are at school.
3. The support plan will be trialed for an appropriate amount of time, reviewed, and adjusted where necessary.
4. At all times, the College will aim to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the gender identity of its students so far as is reasonably practicable.
5. It is important for everyone to understand that a student who will be choosing to change their gender identity is an ongoing capacity; they will not be entitled

to choose different genders each day.

Individual Support Plan

In conjunction with the student and their parents/caregivers, the **Principal**, **College Leadership Team**, and the **gender identity specialist/psychologist** will be involved in creating a school support plan that aims to ensure that the College appropriately responds to the student's needs and addresses any potential facilities and privacy issues. These plans will generally be developed over a number of meetings to allow time for trialing and opportunity for review and adjustments to occur.

It is important that the student understands they are a partner in the plan and actively follows the agreed decisions.

The process and considerations involved in developing individual support plans will be different depending on each student's particular preferences and needs. However, as a guide, the support plan may:

- outline the student's gender identity;
- identify current external supports that are in place;
- identify potential school-based wellbeing support;
- identify the student's or the parents'/carers' desired assistance from the College;
- consider the best timing to undertake any change of gender identity, such as after term break;
- consider the implementation of a student support group to support, guide, and monitor the student's progress;
- outline agreed arrangements in relation to toilet facilities, uniform, and sport;
- consider the wellbeing of other students in the event the student's gender identity change becomes known and causes distress. This may include a student support referral process;

- determine which 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 the main points of contact for both the student and the college community;
- delegate responsibilities and roles under the plan;
- consider an appropriate communications strategy;
- identify processes to:
 - o review the plan;
 - o inform others should it be decided necessary;
 - o amend college documentation and records;
 - o address potential college community concerns; and
 - o manage unforeseen circumstances.

In the instance that the student is new to the College, the best way to protect the student's privacy and confidentiality is generally to minimise the number of staff required to know the student's gender identity status. In some cases, this may be limited to the Principal. No one can assume that a staff member, extended family, or the student's social network is aware of the student's gender identity.

Name Changes

If a student's parents/caregivers have applied to change the student's name on their birth certificate and wish for the College to update their records accordingly, the College will require the student's parents/caregivers to provide a letter to the College requesting name and pronoun changes. Once received, the college database will be updated and a new student ID card made. The College will also require a copy of the student's new birth certificate, reflecting their name change once it becomes available.

Respecting a young person's request to change name and pronouns is an essential part of validating and supporting their identity. Students may refer to themselves by a name of their choosing. College staff will be encouraged to use the name, personal pronouns and preferred gender if requested by the student.

Facilities

The College will aim to give careful consideration to the appropriate use of facilities such as toilets, showers, and change rooms, in consultation with the student, their parents/guardians, and their gender identity specialist/psychologist.

Whilst the College will endeavour to accommodate the student's preferences with respect to facilities use, this may not always be possible but will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the individual student.

Uniforms

In circumstances where a student is undertaking a gender identity change, the College will endeavour to accommodate the student's preferences with respect to uniforms (ie both college and sports uniforms). The same uniform standards and guidelines apply to all students and it is an expectation that they will adhere to all uniform dress codes.

Curriculum

All curriculum should be facilitated in a manner that promotes inclusivity. When developing and delivering curriculum around gender, relationships and sexuality, teachers should avoid making generalisations and assumptions about sexuality or gender identity. Teachers should be kept up to date with the most current resources and promote inclusivity, acceptance and care for all.

Outdoor Education Program

When determining school camp arrangements, the **Deputy Principal – Student Development and Wellbeing** will talk with the student and the camp providers about their choices for sleeping arrangements, toilets and change areas.

When participating in physical activities at camps and other outdoor education experiences, the student will negotiate with the staff about what degree of participation is appropriate. Activities which may cause a great degree of discomfort will be discussed and alternative arrangements will be made where appropriate.

Risk assessments should be carried out prior to Outdoor Education Activities so that any reasonable adjustments may be made if necessary for the individual student.

Physical Education and Sport

All students have the right to participate in sporting activities. Physical Education teachers are used to differentiating their lessons and taking into account the range of size, build and ability in the class to keep all students safe and so the same principles can be applied. These considerations should be discussed with individual students themselves.

The type of sport, level of ability and physical contact rules will be considered when deciding what is appropriate. If a student is taking medication to suppress pubertal development that impacts on differences in strength and stamina this should be taken into consideration when considering if a restriction is required.

Swimming can be problematic for young people identifying as gender different from the physical development of their body. Flexibility may be required in either the swimming costume or participation in swimming.

Community Adjustment

Where the student changing gender identity is a current student, community members who knew the student before may need:

- support;

- further information on gender identity; and/or
- to discuss issues in general with a senior staff member.

The College will endeavour to ensure that an appropriate contact person is designated to handle any community concerns.

Adjustments to a student's change in gender identity will typically:

- occur as a matter of practice over time; and
- include use of:
 - the student's new name
 - address appropriate to the student's preferred gender identity (i.e. pronoun use).

Parental Consent

The policy will be drafted on the assumption that a student and their parents/guardians are in written agreement regarding the student's gender identity. However, the College acknowledges that circumstances may arise in which a student wishes to change their gender identity without the consent of their parents/guardians. Such a situation will need to be considered carefully and each situation will be dealt with individually based on the facts at the time.

Documentation and Risk Management

When working with individual students, communications with parents, staff and external agencies will be documented and put with the confidential student notes. A risk management plan can also be completed to ensure that before, during and after transitioning, students will be supported in the best way possible.

Awareness of the Policy

Staff, students and parents will be made aware of the policy through a number of avenues, including in-service training and shared on the College's website.

Legislation

Sex Discrimination Act (Cth) 1984 Anti-Discrimination Act (Qld) 1991