TRANSCEND

A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

Information on supporting Trans, Gender Diverse or Non-binary Students to affirm their gender

Acknowledgement of country

Transcend Australia Ltd acknowledges the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the land - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We honour and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that sovereignty was never voluntarily ceded.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

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Transcend would like to acknowledge that the information in this document has been adapted and developed over a number of years by many people working in the LGBTIQ youth and education sectors in Victoria.

INTRODUCTION

If this is the first time you have had a trans, gender diverse, or non binary (TGDNB) student at your school, don't be alarmed. This document is here to help. It covers the basics and provides guidance on how you can best support this student and their family.

The first thing you need to know is that schools right across the country have been supporting students to 'affirm their gender' (more on this below) for many years now. Most education departments in Australia have policies that support you to do the same at your school. You can go to appendix 1 for a list of state and territory education department policies and supports.

Secondly, the fact that this student has told you about themselves is both a great privilege for you and an incredibly courageous move by them. No trans, gender diverse or non binary person invites you into their life, or asks for your support without a lot of deliberative thought.

Even at supportive schools TGDNB students can still have traumatic experiences. It is important to understand that things you might not consider significant can cause a TGDNB student a great deal of distress but, if done properly can be lifesaving.

LANGUAGE AND DEFINITIONS

Language in this area is evolving and changing all the time, so this is by no means a definitive list, nor are these definitions set in stone, but they are a good starting point, along with, of course, asking the student directly how they would like to be referred to.

Gender

Gender identity is broadly defined in the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* (the Act) 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."

Under this definition, the Act recognises that a person's gender does not need to align with the person's sex designated at birth. Gender identity refers to the way in which a person understands, identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Terms used to describe a person's gender identity include but are not limited to transgender (or trans), gender diverse, male and female.

Trans and gender diverse (TGD)

Trans is an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender does not align to the gender assigned to them at birth. *Assigned at birth* is an important part of this definition, because many trans people feel that they have been made to live in a gender that does not fit with the gender they know themselves to be. Their view is that their gender was *assigned* to them without anyone stopping to ask who they thought themselves to be.

Gender Diverse is used to cover the many ways and words that people use

Worried about what language to use or about making a mistake? It's okay. Just ask questions like:

- How would they like to be referred to?
- What pronoun would they like you to use?
- What name would they like you to use?
- Is it safe for me to use those?

to describe their gender identity. Other terms include but are not limited to 'gender fluid', 'gender queer', 'non-binary'.

Many trans people will not identify as gender diverse but rather in gender binary ways, for instance, *trans male* or *trans female* (or simply as *male* or *female*).

Non-binary gender identities (NB)

Some students may identify as *non-binary* - that is, as neither male nor female.

People with non-binary identities may use a variety of terms, labels and pronouns to describe their gender and so it is important to ask the student how they would like to be referred to. They may ask that you use the pronouns 'they' or 'them', or 'ze' or 'zir'. Or they may just ask you to use their name and no pronoun at all. It can take some getting used to, but you will.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual

This is when a person is attracted to someone of the same gender, or to both genders. But this subheading is here only so that it can be made clear that being gay, lesbian or bisexual has nothing to do with being TGDNB. Whilst a TGDNB person may indeed be gay or lesbian or bisexual (or heterosexual), there simply are not any dependencies between gender identity and sexuality.

Pansexual

This is a word you may have heard but aren't sure what it means. A person who is pansexual is attracted to people of all genders, including non binary, gender diverse, trans and cisgender people. You might say, they love who they love, regardless of gender.

Asexual

This is when a person doesn't experience a sexual or romantic attraction to anyone. This person may still be in loving relationships with people, however their way of loving another person does not include the expression of sexual desires and actions typically portrayed in society's narratives about deep commitment and love between people. It doesn't mean there is something wrong with them. They just aren't attracted to people in that way.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality describes "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and transphobia) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups."[1]

TGD and NB students will also have other identities, experiences and be part of other cultural groups.

Firstly, these identities do not preclude a person from also being TGD or NB. A person with disability, with a religious belief, or from any culture can also be TGD or NB.

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1 merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality (Accessed 04/06/20)

Secondly, when a student is part of more than one group or identity, they can face multiple forms of bullying and layers of discrimination and this is important to keep in mind and discuss with the student.

Sometimes assumptions are made when people have religious or cultural backgrounds that aren't Anglo-Celtic, that they will be more conservative and less accepting of TGDNB people. This is not always the case, and in fact trans identities have existed historically and are celebrated in many cultures.

Misgendering and deadnaming

Misgendering is simply using the wrong pronoun for the person. Sometimes we do this because we make assumptions about a person based on how they look. Other times we do this because we have known the person for a while as their birth assigned gender and it is just habit.

Many, but not all TGDNB people will choose a new name that matches their gender. *Deadname* is a term coined by the TGDNB community to refer to the name given to them at birth. When you use that name instead of the name chosen by the person, this is called 'deadnaming'.

BUT WHAT IF I GET IT WRONG?

The question is not "what if", it is "when". When you do get it wrong, simply apologise, say that you didn't mean it and that you are trying to get it right, then continue with your conversation. But do keep in mind that this may be the tenth time that this person has been misgendered or been called the wrong name during the course of the day or week, and so if they are upset, it is also good to empathise as best you can with their response.

When people do this intentionally it is very hurtful and can be damaging for a student. This is known as a form of transphobia, bullying and discrimination. If it is happening, you need to take action to stop it. More on this later.

Gender affirmation or gender transitioning

This is when a person is going through the process of affirming the gender that they have always or have come to understand themselves to be. Some people say that they are 'transitioning' from one gender to another. Others use the idea of 'affirming' their gender because they are literally affirming who they are.

It is always good to ask the student what language they are using.

Medical and Social affirmation

This is when a person makes changes to match their internal sense of self and gender identity.

Social transition and medical transition are unique and personal journeys for each person. There is no one 'right' way to affirm your gender, and where a person is on this journey does not define "how trans" they are. In other words, a person may not yet have made any changes or transitions, but still be trans, gender diverse or non-binary.

Social transition can include things like:
• Changing pronouns
• Choosing a new name
• Clothing / uniform
• Using the facilities that align with their affirmed gender
• Amending documents to match their gender identity, e.g., school records
• Participating in activities in alignment with their gender identity, e.g., sport
• Coming out to peers

These are some of the things that a school will be able to support their student with.

Other elements of social transition can include:
• Haircut
• Hair removal / growth
• Make up / other accessories

Medical transition is not something school is involved with directly. However, it is good to understand a little bit about it for a few reasons. Firstly, a student may be needing time off to attend appointments. Secondly, there can be long waiting times to see specialists and this can be anxiety provoking for young people and may result in a decline in their mental health. Finally, for some young people, the medical transition can involve hormone management which can impact upon a young person's mood.

Elements which can be involved in medical transition include:
• Visits to GPs, Psychiatrist and Psychologists
• Puberty 'blockers'. These may be used with some young people to manage the effects of an early and/or unwanted puberty.
• Cross gender hormones (oestrogen or testosterone). The age at which these are started varies for every person but is usually around 15 or 16 years.
• Sex reassignment surgery. Generally, this cannot occur until after a person is 18 years old.

Reminder:
This is a private medical process for people and should be treated in the same confidential way as you would any other medical matter for a student.

A GUIDE TO SUPPORTING GENDER AFFIRMATION

The following information will guide you through the *Student Support Plan* template at the end of this document. You should make sure you have read this before sitting down with the student and their parents/carers. It will help you to support the student to affirm their gender at your school. You may not cover everything in this document in the first meeting, and it is a good idea for everyone to have a copy of the template so they can make notes, and also take it away to have a think about some of the elements in the plan.

First and foremost, it is crucial that the student is involved in the planning and decision making at every possible step in this process. Allowing them to have agency and control over their lives is integral to their health and wellbeing, and inevitably their ongoing engagement in their education at your school.

Affirming pronouns

A student may choose to change their pronouns to align with their gender identity. Common pronouns include she/her, he/him or they/them. The student may also have a pronoun that is different from those mentioned here or, they may not want a pronoun at all and want you to just use their name. This pronoun may also change over time.

Pronouns are used regularly in school documents, in the yard and in the classroom. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the right pronoun is used to address the student.

Chosen name

School records should be updated to reflect the student's new name and pronoun (if these have been changed). You should retain appropriate written documentation to record the change so that a student's historical records can be traced. You may do this by keeping a copy of their birth certificate in a hard copy student file, alongside a written note to document the changes to their school records.

It is good practice to communicate this to student so they understand the purpose of this administrative process.

If a student changes their name, it is so important that this is communicated to relevant staff and that all documentation is changed. Seeing or hearing their 'deadname' can be very distressing and can trigger anxiety in a student. Also, if a student has enrolled at your school in their affirmed name, but they don't have a birth certificate that matches this, you will need to make sure that internal school records are not inadvertently changed back to the name of their birth certificate.

Once you have changed these details in the central records systems you should ensure that these changes translate to other documentation such as class lists, graduation certificates and letters that are sent home.

Parent/carer/family and sibling information

In this section, you can record parent/carer name/s and their preferred method of contact.

Record if the student has any siblings at school as this may influence further planning when discussing the safety and support for the student. Find out if

their siblings are supportive and discuss if there is anything you need to do in school to support the sibling.

There may be circumstances in which students undertake the affirmation process without the consent of their parents/carers. In these instances, it will be necessary to consider whether the student is a mature minor. If a student is considered a mature minor, they are sufficiently mature to make decisions for themselves without parental consent and should have their gender affirmed at school.

You may need to refer here to your school or education department policy on mature minors. In Australia, 'Gillick competence' or 'mature minor status' recognises that a person under 18 years of age is capable of giving informed consent when they 'achieve a sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable him or her to fully understand what is fully proposed' (Marion 1992).[2]

Siblings and other family members

It is important to find out if this student has siblings or other family members at the school and whether they are supportive of them, and if they need any support as well. They may also be experiencing bullying or may need support in sharing this information with their own friends. You may then also need to set up a time to meet with the sibling.

School staff support team

A team of key staff members should be formed to support the student when required. Decisions about who is part of this team must be made with the student as part of the conversation. This team could comprise a member from the wellbeing team, the classroom teacher or home group teacher, and a member of the leadership team such as Principal or Assistant Principal. Make note of the main contact person supporting the student.

Noting the members of the support team in this document will also make clear which staff are aware of the student's gender affirmation. This will be useful when maintaining the student's privacy and confidentiality around other school staff.

School documents and records

You should change a student's name and gender on school documentation and records. In these instances, all school records should be updated to reflect the student's name and affirmed gender notwithstanding that these may differ to the name and gender recorded on the student's birth certificate. You will need to keep a confidential record in your files if the student has not changed their details on their birth certificate, this will help to make sure details aren't changed by someone who find the birth certificate and who does not understand the context.

For example, you could put all previous documents with deadname etc in a sealed envelope with 'Confidential - for the principal only' written on it. This could be very reassuring for the child and their family.

Using the wrong pronouns, deadnaming, separating the class by gender, or forcing a non-binary child to use a gendered toilet can trigger distress, dysphoria, and even self-harm.

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2 psychologyboard.gov.au/News/Newsletters.aspx Issue 20-August 2017 (Accessed 04/06/20)

Ensuring all documentation reflects a students' affirmed name and gender is very important for the student.

You should record the change, including the date on which the student is affirming their gender, in the Student Support Plan.

Consider other changes that may need to be made, for example, name labels on student lockers or classroom displays such as birthday calendars. It is important to make these changes to avoid using the incorrect pronoun or name.

You will also need to consider what you are able to put in place to support the student if some systems do not allow the correct gender marker to be included. This is particularly important for students that identify as non-binary. Many systems only allow for binary gender markers (M or F) to be registered and this can result in the incorrect pronouns being used to address the student in the classroom or on school documents. You may need to consider a work around in your systems to ensure student details can be recorded correctly, for example by changing forms where possible to say 'please specify' in relation to gender.

Privacy and confidentiality

In line with your school's privacy obligations, personal information about the student should not be shared with anyone without consent. The student and their parent/s or carer/s should determine who has access to the support plan and who is informed of their gender affirmation process.

You should also think about how to maintain the student's confidentiality – consider who has access to the hard copy student file with their previous name recorded on their birth certificate. It is also good practice to keep a note in the student's file explaining why the birth certificate does not match the information in the student's records with their affirmed gender and name.

In some cases, you, the parent or the student may feel the need to communicate the student's gender affirmation with the whole school. You should give careful consideration to this decision, which includes making sure that there are adequate processes in place to answer or manage any questions that may come from other parents/carers or students.

You must balance the student's right to privacy with managing concerns from the school community, if any arise.

If a student is moving schools, the correct transfer of student records with their affirmed name and pronoun will reduce the risk of the student being referred to by the incorrect name or pronoun.

The following checklist may assist when considering if other school staff need to know about the student's gender affirmation.

Will this information enable the school or staff member to:
- provide for and support the student's education
- support the student's social and emotional wellbeing and health
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff and visitors (duty of care)
- make a reasonable adjustment for that student.

Timeframe for gender affirmation

Consult and confirm with the student and their parents/carers as to when the student's affirmation will take place.

Not all actions on the support plan need to happen at once. A clear schedule of when each action will occur is important, and who will be responsible for that action. Also keep in mind that these timeframes may change as actions take place.

Uniform

If your school has a uniform, the student may wish to choose new uniform options that align with your school's dress code. Students should be supported to wear the uniform that they feel most comfortable in and reflects their gender identity. You may need to review your school uniform policy to ensure it is inclusive of all students. Keep in mind that a less binary uniform policy will benefit all students.

Toilets and change rooms

Ask the student which toilet and change room they would like to use, or that they feel safe and comfortable using. The wishes of the student, their comfort and safety need to be taken into account when deciding on the best option.

Options may include the gendered facilities that aligns with their identity, non-gendered facilities (if available), or changing the signage of accessible toilets/change rooms so they become gender-neutral facilities. You may also need to provide an individual space to change or ensure that there is an option for a private space within the change room.

Making students use the accessible toilets when they do not have a disability can unnecessarily draw attention to them and is not best practice. The student's comfort and safety is paramount in making this decision.

Students may feel embarrassed to talk about the use of toilets, so you may need to check in with the student from time to time about this.

There are many instances where a student will need to change their clothes, for example, participating in school sports, physical education, camps and school productions.

The school should never force a child to get changed in a space that does not align with their gender and where they do not feel safe.

Sport and physical education

All students benefit socially, emotionally and physically by participating in sport, however, research shows transgender and gender diverse young people have low participation rates in sport. Schools should consider how to support trans, gender diverse and non binary students to have equal access to these opportunities.

As discussed previously, arrangements for uniform and change rooms need to be considered. For example allowing the student to come to school and remain in their PE uniform on days that PE and/or sport are part of the schedule, or you may need to provide an alternative, private space for the student to change. You may also need to consider arrangements for different settings and external sports providers.

Consider whether sporting activities need to be divided by gender. For example, there may be opportunities to include more mixed teams/events in your sports/PE program. If activities are divided by gender, students should be able to participate in the gender they identify as or feel most comfortable in.

There is no obligation to exclude a student on the basis of 'strength, stamina or physique'. Schools should take a participatory approach in including all students.

The Human Rights Commission has published guidelines on transgender and gender diverse inclusion in sport.

Camps, events and extra-curricular

Time should be made prior to the camp to discuss with the student, and their parents/carers where appropriate, any extra arrangements that need to be made. Some measures will be site and activity-dependent; different camps and venues have different set ups, so you should contact the camp facilitators or visit the site to find out what options are available. This will help prevent any potential problems arising when you arrive at camp. You may also need to have several meetings with the student and family to prepare for camp.

Toilet and changing facilities may need to be discussed. The student's preference of where they wish to sleep should inform this decision. If the dorm rooms are separated by gender, the student should be permitted to be accommodated in the dorm room which aligns with their gender identity. You should consider, with the student and their family, if they have friends they wish to share a dorm with which may help maintain the student's privacy, comfort and safety at camp.

If the student participates in an after school program or other clubs/activities, you should discuss with the student whether any changes agreed to in this plan need to be communicated with the people who support or run these activities and consider whether any adjustments are necessary. You might also need to check in with the camp/program/activity about the arrangements you have made to ensure that they will be able to be implemented at the camp.

Sometimes there are activities where students are required to wear wet suits or harnesses for things like high ropes or abseiling. This can be anxiety inducing because of the way this equipment can emphasise body contours. You might need to get imaginative about how you work some of these things out. For example, if the excursion involves a wetsuit, the teacher could ask for a larger wetsuit and a rash vest/large t-shirt to wear. A quiet word with the instructor beforehand by the teacher such as: "I know wetsuits are meant to be tight fitting, but can this student have one size up?"

Other spaces

It is good to check in if there are times or places in the school when the student does not feel safe. There may be some classes where a teacher is not responding to transphobic remarks, or where the teacher is consistently misgendering (intentionally or not), where you may need to provide some extra support or follow up. There may also be particular times of the day when bullying is worse or it may be happening online.

Communication to staff

Not all staff may need to be informed about an individual student's gender identity, but it is helpful for all staff to engage with opportunities to build their understanding to support TGDNB students more broadly. You may also need to spend some time working through responses to possible questions that may arise from staff, students and the broader school community. The 'Frequently Asked Questions' in Appendix 2, along with your education department's policy on supporting TGDNB students will help you to start formulating your school's responses to questions. See appendix 1 for a list of all state and territory education department policy on supporting TGDNB students.

Professional development sessions for school staff are one way to build understanding on how to increase inclusion of transgender and gender diverse students in the school context. The student and/or their parents/carers may elect for the student to be identified in this type of training or may wish for their privacy to be maintained. See appendix 3 for a list of organisations that may be able to provide training to your staff or that may have advice or support around your approach to this.

Consult the student on which teachers they feel comfortable knowing about their gender identity. This may change over time and is important to regularly review.

Communication to students

As well as assisting the student to think about which other students they would like to share their affirmed gender with and supporting them in doing this, schools might want to deliver student workshops which help build understanding of gender diversity. Student confidentiality must be given the highest priority as you decide how this communication will occur.

Classroom teachers are best placed to deliver these sessions, as they know their students best and are available to support students and answer questions on an ongoing basis.

Students involved in these sessions will vary based on the school context and the needs of the young person. For example, if you are a small school you might decide that all classes undertake a session, whereas in a large metropolitan school, the session may only be appropriate for the student's home group or classroom. The student may or may not choose to be identified in the session and may or may not choose to be present during the session.

School community response considerations

Refer to information in 'Privacy and Confidentiality' and 'Communication to Staff' and the Frequently Asked Questions document which will help you in framing responses to your school community.

It is good to talk with the student about their ideas for some of the responses you might have, but this is also an area where it is important that the school shows leadership and develops a clear and consistent narrative, one that does not problematize the student, but rather highlights the school's commitment to the health and wellbeing of all their students.

Bullying and discrimination

This is something that you will need to check regularly with the student about and be prepared to implement robust and effective responses for. Often students are supported well by schools to affirm their gender, but it becomes derailed because the school does not adequately respond to the bullying, and/or other discriminatory barriers arise.

Remember:

1. Bullying can have lifelong impacts on people, and in the short term it will impact on this student's ability to remain engaged in their education.
2. Bullying is bullying no matter the "reason" for it. You should implement your school's bullying policy and procedures and follow through on all actions.

External Agencies

There are many local services and mental health providers that can provide support for transgender and gender diverse young people. Sometimes the student will be receiving support from an external agency and they may wish for this person to be involved in the planning for school. It is a good idea to become familiar with the support services available in your area. You can find a list of services on the [Transcend Australia website](). If there is not a suitable service listed please contact Transcend and we will see if we can help as new supports and services may be available.

Other considerations

It is good to check in to find out what is going well, to see if you might be able to enhance some of these strengths or positives.

There may be times that the student requires additional support. What form this takes will depend on the student and it may mean referring the student to external support agencies. Trusted adults within the school should be identified for the student to speak to if they are feeling unsafe or if issues arise. It may mean creating, developing, or reiterating a set of actions already established if a student is feeling unsafe. It might also name supportive peers and should consider safety in all different settings within the school.

Review

The plan is a work in progress and should be reviewed each term. The student, their parents/carers (if appropriate) and relevant teachers and support staff should all be included in the review process in some form.

A good time to review may be at the end of the school year in preparation for the following year when teachers and other arrangements change. You should revisit the plan regularly throughout the year, and at the end or beginning of each term. You should agree on a formal process for checking in with the student and for reviewing the plan if the student, parent/carer or school wishes to do so.

In addition to the planned review time, you should check in with the student regularly to make sure things are going as intended. You should ask about things like bullying, incidents of the incorrect pronoun or name used, and whether there is anything extra that the student needs or would like to be addressed. The young person's identity and needs might change over time, and the plan needs to reflect this.

Seeking feedback from the support staff team is also an important part of this review process. It will give staff an opportunity to let you know if they require more support or are wanting further training.

It is important to be mindful that even if other students/peers/friends and the school are fully supportive, and everything has been put in place, the complexities around being TGDNB don't end and it is often still very significant and a cause for ongoing anxiety for the student.

Other things to consider

SCHOOL POLICY

You will have existing school policies that will be relevant to some of the areas discussed above. Schools policies may need updating to be more inclusive of trans, gender diverse and non binary students, these may include the uniform, anti-bullying, camps and student engagement policy.

You could also use this as an opportunity to develop your own school policy on supporting sexual and gender diversity so that all of your policy and procedures are in place for when you need to support a student in the future.

Questions to consider:

Does the school need an explicit policy which supports trans, gender diverse and non binary students?

Should the school develop a procedure for how it will support gender affirmation?

Do policies need to be updated for content or language? Could you involve students in this?

CURRICULUM

This is a good opportunity to review the curriculum to ensure that it is inclusive of TGDNB students. Most TGDNB students will report that curriculum is rarely representative of their lives or experiences.

Teachers must be sure that they are able to have safe and respectful classroom discussions about these topics. Discussion must never, ever turn into a classroom debate about TGDNB or any identities that a student may represent. A person's identity must never be open to debate or opinion.

STAFF TRAINING

Professional learning can help staff to understand more about gender affirmation, gender and sexuality and equip them to have these conversations with other students. Schools should also consider how they ensure that new staff are supported to have an understanding of how to support LGBTI students. How can you include this topic of training as part of your regular training calendar to ensure all new staff are informed and your staff are kept up to date with new learnings and initiatives?

SUPPORT FOR FRIENDS

If the student has told their friends, with their permission it is also worth checking in with those friends to see if they are needing any extra support either personally, or they want some ideas on how they can also be a support for their friends.

APPENDIX 1
State and Territory education department support for trans, gender diverse and non binary students

Knowing about policy and legislation which supports your child will be very helpful for when you approach your school. It is a good idea to print out the relevant documents, read and highlight the sections that you think are most applicable. Take these with you to the school so that you can use them if the school is not responding as they should be. There are also links here to the human rights and/or equal opportunity commissions in your state or territory, they will be a helpful source of advice and information and may also be able to provide you with advocacy assistance.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

The Student Wellbeing Hub
Funded by the Federal government, it is a resource hub for parents, teachers and students to build safe, inclusive and connected school communities that promote wellbeing and learning.

A guide for schools about supporting a student to affirm their gender at school:
studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/resources/supporting-a-student-to-affirm-or-transition-gender-identity-at-school

The *Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*, is based on evidence that demonstrates the strong association between safety, wellbeing and learning. The language in this booklet will be helpful if you are needing to advocate to the school about inclusion, using a wellbeing framework.
studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/media/9310/aswf_booklet.pdf

All of Us is a Health and Physical Education resource for years 7 and 8 on the topic of gender and sexual diversity. Includes some great short videos of people talking about their experiences of being LGBTI.
studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/resources/all-of-us-unit-guide

Justice Connect
Has a LGBTIQ resource hub with a series of fact sheets, including some with advice about your legal rights at school in each state and territory. Follow this link and scroll to the LGBTIQ section.
justiceconnect.org.au/resources

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Safe and Inclusive School Initiative
Funded by the ACT Education Directorate, it provides a range of supports to schools to develop their practice in areas such as supporting individual student needs, welcoming and celebrating community and family diversity. The Initiative supports schools to build respectful school cultures where prejudice, discrimination, harassment and violence on the basis of gender presentation/identity, intersex status or sexual orientation is unacceptable.
saisact.info

The Initiative provides schools with:
• Professional Learning Programs and other targeted training and information sessions
• Guidance for the identification and use of relevant high-quality teaching and learning resources and materials
• Provision of expert advice and support for schools
• Supporting leadership opportunities for students, staff and parents/carers

ACT Education Directorate
Has created the *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy* that provides guidance for Canberra public schools on promoting a safe, respectful and supportive school community. They are currently in the process of developing additional resources to provide good advice to schools to support young people who wish to affirm their gender at school.
education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/wellbeing/safety/safe-and-supportive-schools-policy

NEW SOUTH WALES

Education Department

Advice to schools on supporting trans students:
education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/legal-issues-bulletins/bulletin-55-transgender-students-in-schools

Regional department of education contacts should you need extra support in your school:
education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/finding-a-public-school

NSW Government Resources

Bias-based bullying fact sheet:
policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/related-documents/bias-based-bullying-factsheet.pdf

Information for parents if child is being bullied:
antibullying.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/My-child-is-being-bullied

NORTHERN TERRITORY

No information about school support in the NT was able to be found at the time of writing. Below are links to services who may be able to help:

Prism

Darwin based support group for adolescents.
Phone: (08) 8931 5999
Email: headspacedarwin@anglicare-nt.org.au

NT AIDS and Hepatitis Council (NTAHC)

ntahc.org.au/contact

NT Health

Fact sheet for TGD young people
health.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/574255/TG-Brochure-YOUTH.pdf

Child & Adolescent Transgender Health Service Pathway diagram
health.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/574257/TG-Service-Pathways-CHILD-ADOLESCENT.pdf

QUEENSLAND

Qld Human Rights Commission

A guide for trans and gender diverse students. It was developed in partnership between the LGBTI Legal Service, Legal Aid Queensland and the Queensland Human Rights Commission, in consultation with the Queensland Children's Gender Service, young people, parents and educators.
qhrc.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/24629/QHRC_TransAtSchool_forstudents.pdf

Qld Government Resources

General information about health and wellbeing in Queensland schools:
qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/support

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Department for Education

Has a policy on supporting trans students in South Australian schools. The document also refers to the *Gender diverse and intersex child and young people support procedure* – which can only be accessed via Intranet. You would need a SA Education Department person or teacher to be able to access it. But good to know it is there.
education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/supporting-gender-diverse-intersex-sexually-diverse-children-young-people-policy.pdf?v=1547522570

TASMANIA

Department of Education

Guideline to support sexual and gender diversity in schools:
publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/Guidelines-for-Supporting-Sexual-and-Gender-Diversity-in-Schools-and-Colleges.pdf

VICTORIA

Department of Education & Training - Safe Schools

School staff, parents and students can contact *Safe Schools* for:
- assistance in creating a safe and inclusive school environment
- advice on how to support LGBTI students
- advice on how to support you or your child, including where to go for other support services

education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/safeschools.aspx

To access policy guidance to support gender affirmation for students in Victorian schools follow this link:

https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA Equal Opportunity Commission

Provides a useful guide for schools regarding the legal rights and responsibilities around transgender students in schools called *Guidelines for Supporting Sexual and Gender Diversity in Schools*

eoc.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/community-projects/gender-diversity-guidelines-in-schools-20140829.pdf

This is a report about discrimination in schools in WA. This may be useful to the data in this report to advocate for your child, especially if the school says that there is no bullying or discrimination.

eoc.wa.gov.au/community-projects/past-projects/safe-schools-wa/about-safe-schools

This is a fact sheet produced by the Equal Opportunity Commission for parents to support them to respond to bullying

eoc.wa.gov.au/publications/fact-sheets/sexuality-and-gender-based-bullying-in-schools---an-equal-opportunity-fact-sheet-for-parents-care-givers

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSIONS

These are a great source of information and advice, and some may even be able to offer training to the school.

Australian Human Rights Commission
humanrights.gov.au/our-work/lgbti

ACT Human Rights Commission
hrc.act.gov.au/discrimination

NSW Anti-discrimination Commission
antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au

NT Anti-discrimination Commission
adc.nt.gov.au

Qld Human Rights Commission
qhrc.qld.gov.au

SA Equal Opportunity Commission
eoc.sa.gov.au

TAS Equal Opportunity
equalopportunity.tas.gov.au

Vic Human Rights & EO Commission
humanrights.vic.gov.au

WA Equal Opportunity Commission
eoc.wa.gov.au

APPENDIX 2
Frequently asked questions and developing your narrative

Acknowledgement: this document has been adapted and developed over a number of years by many people working in the LGBTIQ sector in Victoria.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY ABOUT TRANS, GENDER DIVERSE AND NON BINARY STUDENTS

The school leadership team should be prepared to respond to questions or concerns from parents, families, or members of the broader school community. If there is consent from the student and their parents, the response may be as simple as stating the basic facts of the situation or that you are abiding by Department policy. It is essential that staff members maintain confidentiality in relation to personal information about an individual student and their family at all times.

   This document offers guidance on responding to questions that may be asked. You should amend the suggested responses based on your local school context and the circumstances of the matter.

Question	Suggested response
What is this all about/what is happening to this student? A student focused statement focusing on their wellbeing and inclusion underpinned by Department policy and school values will address this question and similar questions.	*This is about us as a school community supporting a student to be well, happy and safe at school. All staff are committed to ensuring every student at this school has positive wellbeing and is safe. The Department has clear policies that state that it is a requirement for schools to support students who wish to affirm their gender identity at school. Our school values diversity, and is committed to all students demonstrating respectful behaviour. We are confident that our whole school community will show respect, accept and celebrate this student for who they are.*
What does the change actually mean? **Will it mean surgery?** It is important to make clear this is not an appropriate question for the student or their family and that their privacy is maintained.	*This affirmation process at school is about the student's identity, including their name and pronouns, being respected. Any medical, physical or psychological support is a matter for the student and their family and their choices are private.*
Won't doing this mean that this student is teased, harassed or bullied? Reference to your school's anti-bullying policy, or any other relevant policy, ensures a deliberate culture around respect for difference is strengthened. If bullying does occur, a special approach is not required, your school's process for managing behaviour often remains appropriate.	*This school does not tolerate teasing, harassment or bullying for any reason, as stated in our anti-bullying policy. We understand that other students may be interested in what is happening and want to ask questions. Any questions or comments that are inappropriate will be dealt with by staff in the usual way. We want all children at our school to learn how to accept everyone for who they are and celebrate their differences.*
What toilet will the student use? Research suggests that many transgender and gender diverse students avoid using the toilets at school and this can lead to serious physical health problems. Providing students access to the toilets that align with their gender identity is crucial to ensure their safety and comfort at school.	*The student will use a toilet that they feel most comfortable using and that aligns with their gender identity.*

Question	Suggested response
What if other students feel uncomfortable in the toilet? Schools have a duty of care to keep all students safe from harassment and intimidation. TGDNB students need to access a toilet like any other student. Toilets will be made a safe environment for all students. Any individual student who feels uncomfortable sharing a bathroom with a TGDNB student may be provided with alternative options.	*We are doing everything we can to support the student and if other students feel discomfort; we will support them by providing an alternative toileting option.*
Isn't this a privacy issue – how will you manage instances where students are using changing rooms? Some students feel uncomfortable and self-conscious about changing in front of their peers. Schools should provide private changing spaces or other arrangements for all students, where possible (e.g. allowing students to come to school in sports uniform on sports and PE days). If students are required to change in a shared space, clear expectations around privacy should be enforced. TGDNB students may be particularly vigilant about maintaining their privacy. Schools should address privacy concerns in the development of a support plan for the student.	*Students will always be provided with an appropriate space where their privacy can be maintained. If any inappropriate behaviour were to occur from any student, it would be dealt with accordingly.*
Why is the school doing all this for just one or two students? Focus on creating a safe and inclusive school culture, which celebrates diversity, for everyone. In turn, this culture results in improved educational outcomes for all students.	*Our school values and celebrates diversity and is committed to ensuring that all students are supported to have access to their education. Unfortunately, TGDNB young people are more likely to be bullied at school than other students and this has a major impact on their educational outcomes. Our school aims to create a school environment of mutual respect and understanding, where all young people can be safe at school and so are better placed to learn and thrive.*
Responding to students	
Why is this happening?	*This student deeply feels that this is who they are. All of us know inside us who we are, and it is important that we can share who we are and how we feel with our friends and everyone in our lives. Telling people who you are can be a big deal so it is important we respect the student, their name and what pronouns they want us to use.*
Why are they using those toilets?	*This student needs privacy when going to the bathroom just like any other student. They are using a toilet that fits with their gender, like we all do. All toilets have cubicles so we can all have private space. If there are any issues or inappropriate behaviour from any students in the toilets you should tell us immediately.*
What does their body look like?	*All bodies are different. Nobody's body is the same as yours. Our bodies belong to us and are a personal thing. It is important that we all respect each other's privacy about our bodies. It's not ok to ask #### about their body.*
Why are they dressing like that?	*This uniform or these clothes are what makes them feel most comfortable and safe at school and fits with who they are.*

Question	Suggested response
Why do they get to change their name?	*Changing their name is an important part of expressing who they are. We should feel proud of them for making a decision to be themselves at school. If there are other students who have important reasons to change their name, or want the school to use a preferred name, we can also make those changes.*
If I see somebody teasing them, what should I do?	*Just like any other time you see another student teasing someone, if you feel safe enough, you should tell them to stop and help the person who is being teased to get away and go somewhere safe. You should also tell a teacher or staff member straight away. You can also offer support to the person being teased and see if they want any help.*

APPENDIX 3
Diversity and inclusion training and advice

This is by no means a definitive or extensive list. Some of these organisations may just be able to point you in the right direction to someone who can provide training. Every region is different, and if you are in a regional or rural area, it can be more difficult to find an appropriate trainer. Don't forget the list of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissions in *Appendix 1* who might also be able to help.

If you are unable to find someone there are many great youtube videos that might help. Also the education resource *All of Us*, although designed for year 7 and 8s, is actually a great resource for teachers to also learn about LGBTI diversity. This was written by the Safe Schools Coalition Australia and you can find this at the Student Wellbeing Hub.
studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/resources/all-of-us-unit-guide

You can also contact Transcend Australia as they may have more recent updates on training available in different areas, or be able to put you into contact with someone who knows.
transcendaus.org/about/

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

A Gender Agenda
Will be able to provide localised advice and connections.
genderrights.org.au/about-aga/

NEW SOUTH WALES

Gender Centre
gendercentre.org.au/services/family-support-services

NORTHERN TERRITORY

NT AIDS and Hepatitis Council (NTAHC)
ntahc.org.au/contact

QUEENSLAND

Australian Transgender Support Association Queensland
Advice on locally available training.
atsaq.org.au

True
Provides some training and education relating to schools and young people.
true.org.au/Education/Course-Catalogue/education-community-services

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Shine SA
Shine SA provides training for teachers to develop their capacity to deliver the relationships and sexual health content of the Australian Curriculum.
shinesa.org.au/support-for-schools/
shinesa.org.au/community-information/sexual-gender-diversity/gender-wellbeing/

Department for Education
The department offers schools training in diversity and inclusion of gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse children and young people. Schools are able to register for the training on the department's PLINK portal. A specialist consultant provides the training to preschools and school staff.

TASMANIA

Working It Out
Includes resources, counselling, education programs, and information sessions for students.
workingitout.org.au

VICTORIA

Safe Schools

The *Safe Schools* program is managed and delivered directly by the Department of Education and Training.

The program provides advice and training to all schools in the state including primary and secondary government schools and catholic and independent schools.

education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/safeschools.aspx

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Inclusive Education WA

Provides staff professional development and training; support for schools and families with trans or gender diverse students; as well as policy advice and guidance.

waaids.com/item/773-inclusive-education-wa.html

The Freedom Centre

Will be able to provide localised advice.

freedom.org.au

OTHER USEFUL WEBLINKS

Ygender

Victorian based peer led social support and advocacy group for trans and gender diverse young people. Their website has lots of resources including short videos about being trans/gender diverse.

ygender.org.au

Minus 18

Can provide training and have a range of resources and digital campaigns that enable others to champion inclusivity, no matter the location.

minus18.org.au

Reach Out

Not schools or student specific, Reach Out provides articles and information.

au.reachout.com/articles/lgbtqi-support-services

QLife

QLife provides anonymous, LGBTI peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about a range of issues including sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships. The website also has lots of resources called Qguides, it is not education or schools specific but still useful.

National phone counselling service (between 3pm-12am). Phone: 1800 184 527.

qlife.org.au

National LGBTI Health Alliance

The Alliance is the national peak health organisation in Australia for organisations and individuals that provide health-related programs, services and research focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people (LGBTI) and other sexuality, gender, and bodily diverse people and communities.

lgbtihealth.org.au

Zoe Belle Gender Collective (ZBGC)

ZBGC's website includes a national referral directory, online forum, and fact sheets on topics from housing to healthcare. They can also provide training and consultation on inclusive service delivery (Victoria only).

zbgc.org.au

APPENDIX 4
Student support plan - Gender Affirmation

This will help to guide a conversation to support a student with affirming their gender at school.
For a version of this document in landscape please visit the Transcend Australia website to download/print.

Two things to keep in mind:
1. make sure you keep the school accountable about things on this template that haven't yet been implemented, and
2. keep in mind that the timeframes you have set may need to change to meet your child's needs.

Affirming name:		**Parent/Carer name:**	
Affirming pronouns:			
Previous name:		**Contact Information:**	
Year Level:			
Class Group:		**Are Parent/Carer(s) aware and supportive?**	
Date:			

Siblings at school:

Are they aware?

Are they supportive?

Will they need extra support?

Who is part of the school staff support team/group?
This should be made up of a team of staff that the student feels comfortable in talking to.

How often will the support group meet? (this may change over time)

Who is the main contact person?

Who would the student like to speak with at school if issues arise?

How do they access this person?

Time frame

Suppport Categories	Management and Support Strategies	Responsible Person (if applicable)
School documents and records What school records would the student like changed? Name, gender identity and gender marker? Think about the documents where the student's name and/or gender appears (eg class lists, academic records) Who will update the school records? Who will check and update other official school software packages?		
Privacy and Confidentiality Who is aware the student is affirming their gender? Are these people at school or community members? Who needs to be informed? What needs to be shared? (or doesn't need to be shared) How will the student's privacy be maintained?		
Timeframe for gender affirmation When will this occur? *Note*: a student may not make all the changes at the same time, they may have a more staged approach. Confirm a date for the changes to be made at school.		

Suppport Categories	Management and Support Strategies	Responsible Person (if applicable)
School uniform and policy What uniform items does the student feel comfortable to wear? Do new uniform items need to be considered? What arrangements are needed to support any uniform changes for the student? Look at uniform policy. Is it gendered? Can it just be a list of uniform items for anyone to wear? *Note*: PE uniforms can be used as an interim, this should not be an ongoing solution.		
Toilets and changing rooms What toilets would the student prefer to use? What change rooms would the student prefer to use? If events outside of school are taking place (swimming, etc.) clarify these arrangements with the student.		
School sports and physical education What support does the student need in order to feel safe/comfortable playing sport and taking part in PE?		
School camps, events & extra-curricular What accommodation would make the student feel comfortable? Are there people who need to be informed? (Keeping in mind the student's privacy) Are there any extra arrangements for activities, toileting, changes spaces, etc. that need to be considered for the student?		

Suppport Categories	Management and Support Strategies	Responsible Person (if applicable)
Other spaces Are there other places and spaces at school where you don't feel safe? Are there times at school when you don't feel safe? Are you experiencing any cyber bullying? Discuss options to respond to this. Revisit this question.		
Communication to Staff Who else on staff would the student like to be informed? (Keeping in mind the student's privacy) Will all staff need to be informed? How would the student like this to happen? Who is responsible for informing relief staff of the plan (if appropriate/necessary)?		
Communication to students Who else would the student like to inform? How would they like to do this? How would the student like this information shared? How will the students' friendship group be informed/supported?		
School Community response considerations Who will respond to any potential community concerns? What information will you provide to staff so that they are responding correctly? *Key question*: What does the student want people to know about them? (*Note*: You need to affirm facts but maintaining confidentiality is paramount.)		

Suppport Categories	Management and Support Strategies	Responsible Person (if applicable)
Bullying and discrimination Is the student experiencing bullying? Has there been any discrimination towards the student? Has it been dealt with? Is there anything else you would like the school to do?		
Siblings Is there additional support required for siblings or other family members who attend the school?		
External Agencies Does the student have access to support from any outside agencies? Does the student think it would be useful for the school to liaise with these agencies or have them involved in any support meetings? *If relevant:* What are the names and contact details of the external agencies? What is the nature and length of their support?		
Other considerations What has been working well for the student? What is the student finding hard? Are there any questions or concerns you want to raise now? Are there any other supports the student may need?		

Review	
Plan Review Who will monitor this plan? When will the plan be reviewed? Who has a copy of this plan? Include feedback from student, parents and teachers.	

Signatures		
Student		Date:
School representative (e.g Principal, Assistant Principal, Wellbeing Leader)		Date:
Parent/Carer		Date:

TRANSCEND