

Tip Sheet: Sample Letter From a Principal to School Community

The following is a sample based on examples of how some principals have communicated with their school community. The names and examples used in this sample are fictitious. He/him pronouns are used for ease of reading only.

This sample can be used by parents or carers to help their school to build their confidence and provide an example of best practice. The sample should be adapted to suit the circumstances of the student and the school as appropriate.

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write to advise you that one of our students, Jennifer Smith has asked her family and the school to recognise him as a boy and to be now called Mark. Please carefully read and consider the remainder of this letter which has the support of Jennifer's parents Samantha and Ian Smith. You will have known Mark as having the name Jennifer and as she/her. In this letter, and from now on we will be calling Jennifer, Mark and using the pronouns of he/him.

Mark has always self-identified as a boy and this has been something that the family and close friends have known for many years, so whilst this information might be new for you, this is something that the family and Mark have deliberated over for sometime. Many people in our community who know Mark and his family will not be surprised. Mark is a fantastic individual; smart, kind, cheeky sense of humour, caring and loving and Mark is still this person, it is just that now he wants everyone to know this part of him too, that he is a boy.

I have been in conversation with Samantha and Ian about Mark for some time now as we have planned for how we will support Mark at the school. Samantha and Ian have sought medical advice and support and are working through their concerns and fears but above all they show courage and unabated love and support for Mark. Like any family, they want what is best for Mark.

Mark and his family need your support on this journey, which is why we are sending this letter to you. As a school community I believe that we are perfectly positioned to be able to provide this support. Our school values of _____ attest to our aspirations as a school for our students. Our staff are committed to support each and every student to be their best, this means supporting the whole student. We are proud of the positive role that the school community has in influencing our students and in helping them to be people who are accepting of diversity and who care for one another.

The most powerful influence over children is that of their parents or significant carer. So it is with this in mind that I ask, and expect our school community in the form of parents and carers, to restrain from gossip, malicious and/or transphobic conversations, particularly in the vicinity of your children and those of others concerning our student and friend Mark. You can find more information and resources on the Transcend Australia website.

I believe that that is where we the school community can really shine and rightly claim to be a great school when we accept Mark as who he is with a minimum of fuss. We simply carry on as usual; only we now have a student we call Mark and not Jennifer, he not her.

I understand that there are those who may not always agree with the support we are providing Mark, however as the Principal I will continue to make decisions and take actions that support all children in our school. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please make an appointment to see me.

I urge you to not make this a topic of conversation amongst yourselves and if you do have any concerns that you speak with me directly. Samantha and Ian have said that they are also comfortable to talk about their journey and that of Mark's with any of you.