Gender Inclusion Policy – February 2026

Purpose

Independent Girls Schools Sports Association (**IGSSA**) and its 10 member schools are committed to empowering girls and young women through competitive sporting activity, fair play and teamwork.

This policy sets out how IGSSA promotes inclusive, respectful and safe interschool sporting environment for all students, and particularly transgender and gender diverse students.

Scope

This policy guides staff, officials, volunteers, member schools and all other individuals involved in facilitating, organising and supervising school sport matches.

Guiding principles

Guiding this policy are the following principles:

- Inclusion – All students should be provided with equal opportunities to thrive and be involved in the IGSSA community, and encouraged and supported to participate in sport.

- Fairness and safety – Decisions regarding participation must balance inclusion with fairness and safety for all competitors.

- Legal compliance – IGSSA and member schools must comply with applicable Federal and State laws.

Relevant definitions

IGSSA recognises that the usage of correct terminology can have a significant impact on an individual's dignity, identity and wellbeing, and is committed to treating these matters with sensitivity and respect.

In this policy, the following terms have the corresponding meanings:

- Sex – means a person's physical and biological characteristics, as distinct from psychological and societal concepts of gender identity. A person might identify with a gender that correlates with their sex. Another person might identify with a gender that does not correlate with their sex, or no gender at all.
- Gender diverse – a broad term that can apply to people who do not identify as male or female, the sex assigned to them at birth, or society's expectations about gender. This includes people who

may identify as transgender, gender queer, gender fluid, agender, non-binary and gender questioning.

- Intersex – where a person's sex is neither wholly female nor male, or a combination of female and male.
- Transgender – a general term that may be used to describe someone whose gender identity does not match the gender assigned to them at birth. In some cases, this term may be used to describe someone who identifies as both genders, as neither gender or as a third gender.

Relevant laws

In South Australia, schools and other organisations must comply with equal opportunity laws under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA) and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth). These laws, subject to limited exceptions set out below, make it unlawful for schools and other institutions to discriminate against students for reasons related to sex, gender identity, or transgender status.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations also require schools and other organisations to pay particular attention to the needs of LGBTIQ+ children and young people.

Federal and State laws contain exemptions for single sex schools. While not all participating IGSSA schools are single sex, IGSSA organises interschool competitions and events for girls' sport.

Federal and State laws also allow schools to exclude a student aged 12 years and above from participating in a competitive sporting activity for girls where a student's strength, stamina or physique is relevant to that activity. This exception does not apply to other areas of sport; including non-competitive sporting activities, coaching, umpiring, and participation.

Approach to inclusivity

IGSSA and its member schools are committed to creating an inclusive, respectful and safe interschool sporting environment for all children and young people; including students who are transgender and gender diverse. This includes respecting a student's identity, privacy and pronouns.

IGSSA expects that member schools will constructively engage with transgender and gender diverse students (and their parents) about whether it is appropriate to participate in the girls' sports offered by IGSSA.

The paramount consideration of IGSSA and its schools must always be the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Reflecting this priority, there may be occasions where it is appropriate that the participation of a student aged 12 years and above in a competitive sporting activity be re-considered where the strength, stamina or physique of a student's sex or gender identity may be relevant to that specific activity, and enliven issues of duty of care and fair play. Any such decision will be assessed by IGSSA on a confidential, contextual and sensitive basis, and involve consultation between IGSSA and the relevant school, and between that school and the relevant student (and their parents).

Consistent with our commitment to an inclusive, respectful and safe interschool sporting environment, IGSSA has a zero tolerance policy towards bullying, unlawful discrimination and unlawful sexual harassment; including in relation to a student's gender identity and sex. In the event of inappropriate behaviours, IGSSA will take appropriate action in accordance with its policies and procedures. This

may include making notifications to the relevant schools and, in appropriate cases, excluding students or others from participating in future IGSSA activities and events.

Consideration of participation

Where a transgender or gender diverse student's participation in a competitive sporting activity is sought, the following process will be applied:

- The Principal of the student's school will convene a meeting with a panel consisting of:
    - Themself (the Principal of the student's school)
    - IGSSA President*
    - IGSSA Executive Officer

    **if the IGSSA President is the Principal of the student's school, the third panel member will be the Principal of the school who is next due in rotation to be the IGSSA President.*

- The Principal of the student's school will provide the detail of the student's intended participation, and any other relevant detail or context, to the panel in advance of the meeting.

- The panel will meet and form a recommendation to present to the Heads of IGSSA Schools.

- The Heads of IGSSA Schools will vote on the recommendation.

- The Principal of the student's school will manage communications with the student and their family.

Relevant guidelines

Guidelines for the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in sport, Australian Human Rights Commission, June 2019\

Review cycle

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis.