



Safe schools do better.

Supporting sexual diversity, intersex
and gender diversity in schools.



Safe Schools Coalition Australia is proud to create change in schools.

Together we can create safer and more inclusive educational environments for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, staff and families. Join us!

safeschoolscoalition.org.au

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Safe Schools Do Better was originally created by Safe Schools Coalition Victoria in 2013.

Safe Schools Coalition Australia is nationally convened by the Foundation for Young Australians and is federally funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

In Victoria it is also funded by the Victorian Government.

Nationally convened by







“ I realised that students who are same sex attracted often don't have support at home and school and that even a small effort on our part can make a HUGE difference. ”

Nick, Secondary teacher



Safe schools do better.

Safe Schools Coalition Australia is a national coalition of schools dedicated to creating safe and inclusive learning environments for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, school staff and families.

Membership is free – and being part of the coalition is a statement, a commitment. By joining us, you are committing to building a school that is free from homophobic and transphobic bullying, and that is safe and inclusive for all students and staff. In exchange, we'll provide expert training, resources and advice to schools to help build the kind of schools we all want to see - schools where everyone can be themselves and achieve their very best.

Safe Schools Coalition Australia builds on the successful Safe Schools Coalition Victoria model founded by FYA and Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria at La Trobe University and funded by the Victorian Government. Since 2010, the program has been building the confidence and capacity of principals, teachers and students to support gender diversity and sexual diversity in schools.

Now the coalition is nationally convened by the Foundation for Young Australians and federally funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.



The national coalition was established to deliver on the vision of the Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework which aims to build safe school communities where diversity is valued, the risk from all types of harm is minimised and all members of the community feel respected, included and supported. Building on the original 2003 Framework, the revised Framework was endorsed by all ministers for education in December 2010.

The Australian Government collaborates with state and territory governments to support the Framework as part of a national approach to make sure our school communities are safe and supportive.

Why we create safe schools.

1

Research shows that schools are likely to have LGBTI students, even though they are not always visible.^{5 6}

10%

Of students are same sex attracted.¹

4%

Of students are gender diverse or trans.²

1.7%

Of students are intersex.³

2

School is the place where most homophobic and transphobic bullying takes place.⁴



experience abuse or discrimination.



of the abuse happens at school.



don't feel supported by their school.

3

Bullying and discrimination can impact students through:⁴



Poor mental health.



Poor academic achievement.



lower rates of attendance.



Higher rates of suicide.

4

Students at safe and supportive schools:⁵



Have better educational outcomes.



Are less likely to have poor mental health.

Join hundreds of other schools right across Australia. Commit to making a positive change in your school and get in touch with your Safe School Coalition state or territory provider today!

Safe Schools Coalition
AUS

safeschoolscoalition.org.au

1. Mitchell, A. et al (2014). 5th national survey of Australian secondary students and sexual health 2013. Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, La Trobe Uni.

2. Clark, T. C., et al (2013) Youth'12 Overview: The health and wellbeing of New Zealand secondary school students in 2012. Auckland, New Zealand: The University of Auckland.

3. Blackless, M. et al. (2000) How sexually dimorphic are we? Review and synthesis, in American Journal of Human Biology 04/2000; 12(2):151-166.

4. Hillier, L., et al. (2010). Writing themselves in 3: The 3rd national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of SSAGQ young people. Melbourne: ARCSHS.

5. Jones, T. (2015). Policy and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Students. Cham, Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht and London: Springer.

6. Jones, T., & Hillier, L. (2013). Comparing Trans-Spectrum and Same-sex Attracted Youth: Increased risks, increased activism. LGBT Youth, 10(4), 287-307.



The research.

While the data shows that young people are experiencing high levels of homophobic and transphobic bullying and abuse, research also shows that supportive and inclusive schools can make significant and positive differences.⁵ There are simple ways to proactively support gender diversity, intersex and sexual diversity, and in doing so we can start to turn those stats around. The hundreds of schools that have joined Safe Schools Coalition Australia are already creating real change and having a positive impact on learning environments across the country.

Safe schools really do 'do better!'

What we're doing works.

We have trained thousands of teachers and distributed tens of thousands of resources across hundreds of schools to give young people and staff the skills and confidence they need to achieve positive change in their schools for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, their teachers and families.

Tens of thousands of students have been engaged through their schools' membership to the coalition. Whole school policies and practices that challenge prejudice and discrimination and actively support sexual and gender diversity have been implemented.

How do we create change in schools?

Once your school has become a member of Safe Schools Coalition Australia we have a range of resources and supports to choose from to suit the unique needs, concerns and capacity of your school community. These include:

Staff and student audits.

Our self-audits of staff and student perceptions, knowledge and experience are a great tool to help you get a clearer picture of what is really happening in your school. These short online self-audit surveys can be accessed at the click of a button and will provide your school with the data it needs for developing a targeted and evidence-based approach to supporting sexual and gender diversity across the whole school community. We can provide you with personalised audits and compile your results.

1

Professional learning.

From whole staff presentations to specialised training modules, our workshops draw on current national and international research and best practice knowledge to give teachers insight, ideas and confidence. Get in touch to organise a professional learning package that works for your school.

2

Resources.

We have a range of high quality electronic and print-based best practice resources for both teachers and students that provide comprehensive guidance to recognising and challenging discrimination based on homophobia and transphobia and supporting and celebrating diversity. All of our resources are free!

3

Consultation.

We provide tailored support and guidance to schools around specific requests and concerns. Whether you want advice to support an individual student, parents, or are looking for guidance around introducing more inclusive school policies or implementing whole school practices, our expert staff can provide free consultation to any member of your school community.

We also support schools and families so that students can successfully affirm or transition gender identity in school.

4

Getting started.

What you can do today.

While it is important that you access our training and services as soon as possible, we understand that schools are busy places. There are many simple steps you can take straight away to start building a safer and more inclusive school. Here are some practical steps for being proactive in creating change from day one:

Join us.

Schools that are members of Safe Schools Coalition Australia have access to a range of resources and support to help make them safer and more inclusive of same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, their families and teachers. If your school is not already a proud member, you can download a membership form from the website and start the journey to becoming a safe school.

Professional development for school staff can be booked in right away.

1

Spread the word.

Make sure everyone knows that your school is a member of Safe Schools Coalition Australia and why you have signed up. Newsletters are a good start, but assemblies, staff meetings and other forms of communication like school websites and social media tend to have a bigger impact. We can help you with communications material, including help with letters home to families introducing the program.

2

Be visible.

Do you have clear signs of support for sexual and gender diversity around the school? If not, we have great free posters, postcards and stickers. Order some today and put them up where they are visible and protected. You can also display your membership certificate in a prominent place.

3

Check your policies.

Does your school have anti-discrimination, bullying or diversity policies that explicitly name homophobia, transphobia and support for sexual and gender diversity? If not, it is important that your school updates them. Research tells us that policy based protection in schools is one of the strongest protective factors for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people (Hillier et al 2010). We can provide advice and input for inclusive school policies.

4

Order resources.

Make sure staff and students have access to resources that provide appropriate information about gender and sexual diversity. Ensure that relevant books, videos and other resources in the library are up-to-date, appropriately labelled and easy to access. We can provide advice about appropriate books and other resources you might like to provide access to. Also make sure that all reputable online information about sexual and gender diversity is not blocked on the school server - we can provide you with a list of recommended websites to assist both school staff and students.

5

Know where your local support is.

We have strong partnerships with a range of metropolitan, rural and regional community, health and local council service providers across Australia.

Get in touch today to find out what support is in your local area.

6



Glossary of terms.

Remember, all language evolves and changes. Using respectful and inclusive language means checking with the person about how they identify and the pronouns they use for themselves.

Gender diverse

A broad term that can refer to all forms of gender identity and gender expression and includes people who may identify as for example trans, transgender, genderqueer, gender fluid or gender questioning. It refers to people whose gender expression or identity differs from the gender identity associated with the sex assigned them at birth or society's expectations. The person may identify as neither male nor female, or as both.

Gender identity

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of being masculine or feminine, or both or neither. Gender identity does not necessarily relate to the sex a person is assigned at birth. Rather, a person's gender expression is made up of the outward signs they present to the world around them. This could include their choice of name and preferred pronoun (which may include using no pronoun), their style of dress and appearance, and/or their mannerisms.

Heterosexism

Views or behaviours that assume everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and that other types of sexuality or gender identity are unnatural or not as good as being heterosexual. People with differences in their physical sex characteristics may experience heterosexism too. This may include elements of discrimination based on limited ideas about what is 'normal' and 'not normal'.

Homophobia

The fear or intolerance of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or same sex attracted, usually linked with hostility, verbal and physical abuse, or discrimination. Homophobia also includes institutional and cultural bias and structural inequality.

Intersex

People who are born with natural variations in genital, chromosomal or other physical characteristics that differ from stereotypical ideas about what it means to be female or male. Intersex refers to biology rather than sexual orientation or gender identity. Intersex people have the same range of sexual orientations and gender identities as

non-intersex people. Most identify with the gender they were raised, as either male or female.

Intersex is often associated with a medical diagnosis of disorders, or differences of sex development (DSD). Some intersex individuals may prefer to be described as a 'person with an intersex variation' or be identified by their specific variation.

Same sex attracted

People who experience feelings of sexual and/or emotional attraction to others of the same sex. This term includes people who may identify in ways such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual or heterosexual, who are questioning their sexuality, or who are not wanting to label themselves. Some people prefer to use the term 'same gender attracted'.

Sex

'Sex' refers to the biological attributes that define people as either male, female, a combination of female and male, or neither female nor male. These biological attributes include chromosomes and physical anatomy.

Sistergirls and Brotherboys

Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander communities use various terminology to describe or identify a person assigned female or male at birth and identifying or living partly or fully as another gender. Some communities may use terms such as 'Sistergirl' or 'Brotherboy,' or they may use alternative words relevant within local language. Use and spelling of the terms may vary across different groups and communities, and other cultures will use different terms to describe gender diversity.

Transgender (also trans or trans*)

An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to them at birth. An example is a child who is assigned a male sex at birth but actually feels more comfortable living as a girl and identifies as female.

Transphobia

Prejudice or discrimination based on a person being, or perceived as being, transgender or gender diverse. Transphobia can be expressed through hostility, verbal and physical bullying or discrimination. Transphobia also includes institutional and cultural bias and structural inequality.

Join us!

Join hundreds of other schools right across Australia.
Sign up, and make your school a safe school today.

safeschoolscoalition.org.au

Get in touch.

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State and territory providers

To get in touch with your local Safe Schools Coalition state or territory provider, go to our website:

safeschoolscoalition.org.au/contact-us

Sign up to receive email updates:

safeschoolscoalition.org.au

