Gender and Sexual Diversity Policy

CATEGORY

Governance

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Department for Education and Child Development policy supporting same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, Penrhos College recognises its responsibility in supporting all children and young people’s equal opportunities to optimum learning and wellbeing outcomes, regardless of sexual orientation, intersex status, gender identity or gender expression.

The Gender and Sexual Diversity Policy aims to ensure that:

- all children and young people receive a quality education in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment regardless of intersex status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression;
- employees understand and meet their obligations to protect the above entitlement; and
- Penrhos College is compliant under the following legislation:
  - Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)
  - Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
  - School Education Act 1999 (WA)
  - Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA)

POLICY

The Uniting Church in Australia celebrates diversity and seeks to be an inclusive church that lives out the Gospel of love, justice and reconciliation for all. The Uniting Church recognises the unique worth of every human being, and advocates for the welfare and flourishing of every person and the whole creation.

The Uniting Church welcomes and embraces LGBTIQ people in all areas of its life and ministry, and as full members of the church community. The Uniting Church rejects all forms of vilification, bullying and harassment, and is committed to ending discrimination against anyone (children, young people and adults) on the grounds of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Penrhos College, as a Uniting Church school, acknowledges and endorses these resolutions.

Penrhos College seeks to provide a safe and effective learning environment that caters for the diverse needs of all students, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ). Recognising LGBTIQ students and staff as an everyday part of the social mix of the College community is important in responding appropriately to their needs.
At Penrhos College a safe and effective learning environment includes:

- providing a quality education for all children and young people in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment regardless of sexual orientation, intersex status, gender identity or gender expression;
- ensuring that employees have a considered understanding of sexual diversity, intersex and gender diversity, and the issues that may face these population groups;
- ensuring that employees understand and comply with their legal obligations not to discriminate based on sexual orientation, intersex status, gender identity or gender expression;
- incorporate and address sexual, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying as part of the College’s anti-bullying and harassment policy;
- ensure that sexual diversity, intersex and gender diversity are addressed in the implementation of the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum, the National Safe Schools Framework and the Australian Curriculum;
- supporting students, staff and families to access information and resources on sexual diversity, intersex and gender diversity, and addressing discrimination and harassment;
- ensuring that all employees have access to professional learning opportunities, resources and appropriate support programs;
- understanding Information Privacy Principles (IPPS) Instruction relating to the right of a students and staff to keep their sexual orientation, intersex status, gender identity or gender expression private.

Penrhos College aims to make a significant and positive difference to the lives of their students and, in turn, the broader community by being inclusive of gender and sexual diversity.

It is our policy that we:

- ensure that all students have the opportunity to express themselves and live authentically;
- develop and implement whole school initiatives within the College with a focus on helping LGBTIQ students feel safe and included;
- implement bullying prevention strategies within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately; and
- review our support and inclusion initiatives for LGBTIQ students on an annual basis against best practice.

The following initiatives form part of our overall LGBTIQ inclusion strategy.
Inclusion Practices

The members of our leadership team are committed to adopting and implementing the following initiatives to increase LGBTIQ inclusion awareness at the College.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promoting Inclusivity</th>
<th>Penrhos College is committed to fostering a culture of openness and celebration of diversity. This includes modelling exemplary behaviour, communicating the College’s commitment to a safe learning environment and using LGBTIQ-inclusive language.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Visibly Inclusive</td>
<td>The College will display materials that are positive and inclusive of LGBTIQ students, such as, posters and pamphlets.</td>
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<td>Staff Induction Training</td>
<td>The College will ensure that as part of their induction, all new staff receive training on this policy and related policies.</td>
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<td>Ongoing Training</td>
<td>The College will conduct training for all staff to increase their understanding of the issues facing LGBTIQ students, and strategies for addressing discrimination, harassment and bullying. It is an objective of our training that College staff to whom students disclose their sexual orientation, intersex status, gender identity or gender expression respond in a positive, non-judgemental and constructive manner.</td>
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<td>Student Wellbeing Staff</td>
<td>The College will ensure that nurses, psychologists and counsellors at the College have an in-depth understanding of issues related to same-sex attraction, gender diversity and intersex status, as well as strategies for supporting LGBTIQ students.</td>
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<td>Inclusive Curriculum</td>
<td>The College will provide opportunities for teaching and learning about LGBTIQ issues across the College curriculum.</td>
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<td>Diverse Sexuality Education</td>
<td>The College will ensure that material is incorporated into the teaching of sexual health within the Personal Development/Health/Physical Education curriculum which is inclusive of same-sex attraction, intersex difference and gender diversity.</td>
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<td>Transgender Management Plans</td>
<td>The College will develop confidential support/transition plans for transgender and intersex students which involve the student and their parents/families on a case by case basis.</td>
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<td>LGBTIQ Community Partnerships</td>
<td>The College will develop connections with local healthcare and service providers which offer support to LGBTIQ people (e.g. invite to host training or provide materials), and know when to refer students for more information or support.</td>
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<td>Embracing LGBTIQ Staff and Parents</td>
<td>The College will accept and welcome parents/carers and colleagues who may be LGBTIQ, and encourage them to be part of College activities.</td>
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<td>Support Student Action</td>
<td>If the College already has a gender or sexual diversity group (e.g. Queer-Straight Alliance) it will actively support the group’s efforts. Otherwise the College will support planning for days of action like for International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBT) or Wear It Purple Day.</td>
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Inclusive College Functions

When hosting formal and other College functions, the College will ensure that gender-inclusive language is used on all event communications and that students understand that they are permitted to attend events with a same-sex date and to wear clothing of their choice.

Providing Information

The College will ensure that supportive, accurate and age-appropriate information is available to young people who may be working through issues relating to their sexuality and/or gender. This may include:

- putting up posters;
- distributing information booklets; and
- ensuring that books and resources are available to students in the library and other communal areas.

Where a student identifies as LGBTIQ, individual programs will be established by the College on a case-by-case basis.

DISCIPLINE FOR BREACH OF POLICY

Where a staff member breaches this policy Penrhos College will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

GLOSSARY

LGBTIQ: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer.

Gender diverse: A broad term that can apply to many people who do not conform to, or identify with, traditional sex and gender norms. This term includes young people who may identify as transgender, genderqueer, gender questioning or who feel that their gender identity does not align with the sex assigned to them at birth and/or society's expectations. The person may identify as neither male nor female.

Intersex: Under s 4 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) intersex means the status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:

(a) neither wholly female nor wholly male; or
(b) a combination of female and male; or
(c) neither female nor male.

Although intersex people are often confused with transgender and gender diverse people, being intersex is not about gender identity and most intersex people identify as women or men. Research tells us that around 1.7% of people are intersex.

Queer: This is seen as an umbrella term for sexual and gender diverse people. It is also regarded as a proclamation of fearless difference, a self-identifying commitment to counter culture.

Same sex attracted: People who experience feelings of sexual and emotional attraction to others of the same sex. This term includes people who may identify in diverse ways, such as, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual or heterosexual, or who are questioning their sexuality.

Transgender: Someone whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth (e.g. a baby is assigned male at birth but grows up to identify as female). Research tells us that around 5% of people are transgender.
**Transition:** The process by which a transgender or gender diverse person affirms their gender, whether through name change, clothing, changing legal documents or medical steps. Transition is a process that is different for everyone and it may or may not involve social, legal or physical changes. There is no one step or set of steps that an individual must undergo in order to have their gender identity affirmed and respected.

**Transphobia:** Fear or hatred towards people who are transgender and/or gender diverse that often leads to discriminatory behaviour or abuse.

**Homophobia:** Fear or hatred towards people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or same sex attracted. It often leads to discriminatory behaviour or abuse.

**ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Staff Inclusion Practices Policy
- Student Duty of Care Program
- Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy
- Assault (Student against Student) Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Counselling Services (Student) Privacy Program

**REFERENCES**

- Guidelines for supporting sexual and gender diversity in schools
  (Equal Opportunity Commission of Western Australia)
- Supporting people of diverse sexuality and genders in education (NSW Teachers Federation)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) National Safe Schools Framework
- Writing Themselves In 3 (WTi3): The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people
- UCA Assembly Task Group on Sexuality Final Report
- UCA Assembly Statement on Unity and Diversity
- UCA Standing Committee Report on Marriage and Same-Gender Relationships

**OWNER**

Pastoral Care Committee

**ADOPTION AND REVIEW**

A copy is made available to all staff. This policy and its accompanying procedures are evaluated and reviewed every year.
CREATION DATE:
April 2018

NEXT REVIEW DATE:
April 2019

RATIFIED BY THE COLLEGE COUNCIL

VERSION HISTORY

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<th>Version</th>
<th>Date Published</th>
<th>Changes Made</th>
<th>Author of Changes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>Policy Created</td>
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