



SCHOOLS SPORTS & CARNIVALS FACTSHEET

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Sports and Physical Education have a range of benefits for all individuals and have been shown to improve mental health, social and emotional wellbeing alongside physical health and skills development.

Transgender, nonbinary, gender diverse and intersex students should be supported to access the same benefits from these activities as their peers.

Research shows that most transgender, nonbinary and gender diverse people want to participate in sport but only a few do so, due to perceived barriers, lack of acceptance, harassment, and bullying.

Elite, competitive sports pose the strictest regulations which may exclude transgender, nonbinary, gender diverse and intersex students.

Many sporting bodies and competition organisers have their own internal regulations, guidance documents and policies that govern participation for transgender, nonbinary, gender diverse and intersex students.

WHAT GUIDANCE ALREADY EXISTS?

Physical Education in the school context does not generally require sex/gender segregated approaches as the primary focus is on the development of physical skills, movement, and participation.

Where activities are gender segregated, students should be able to opt into the group/activity that reflects their gender identity and/or preferences.

The Australian Curriculum states clearly that students' gender and sexuality should be affirmed in physical education 2. Sporting activities also follows this guidance when students are aged 12 and under.

Over the age of 12, organised, inter-school sporting competitions and representative sport may need to follow gendered rules established by external organisations.

HOW TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?

Students should be supported to participate in the way that best aligns with their affirmed gender identity wherever possible. This support should be extended to uniform options and access to facilities such as changerooms. Sports uniforms and safety equipment should also be gender-neutral, flexible, and comfortable wherever possible.

Visit our fact sheet on uniforms for more guidance. Similarly, school carnivals such as swimming carnivals, athletics carnivals or cross-country events also do not require sex or gender segregation. Races and events can be run in mixed groups with each student getting their own individual qualifying times.

One way to organise races is by year level or class such as "Year 5 races", "Ms Smith's English class" etc. rather than boys' and girls' races. This can also help to streamline the event and may cut down on administrative time.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Physical education classes offer a range of activities to all students including mixed team sports.
- Students are supported to participate in sports, physical education, and carnivals as their affirmed gender.
- School carnivals consider the organisation and division of events and races. Where single-sex/gender events exist, a 'mixed' or "all in" category is made available.
- Limitations and expectations of representative, competitive, or elite sports are made known to students and their participation is supported where possible.

References: ACT Government, Sport and Recreation Services (2014) 'The Sport Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex People in the Australian Capital Territory', sport.act.gov.au • ACARA, Australian Curriculum, Health and Physical Education (2023) 'Same-sex attracted and gender-diverse students' Australiancurriculum.edu.au