(31) GENDER INCLUSIVE POLICY

Policy

The Beehive Montessori School is committed to inclusive and responsive practices towards transgender and intersex members of our community. This policy particularly applies to students, but extends to include staff and other members of the school community.

Background

The Beehive Montessori School recognises that young people who are transgender or intersex should be supported. Many transgender people report first recognizing their gender differences in early childhood, and the lack of a supportive school environment can contribute to adverse outcomes.

The Beehive Code of Conduct “expects staff, parents/caregivers and students to behave in a manner that is consistent with our commitment to Montessori values of respect and tolerance within a peaceful and loving environment for our children.” The Equal Opportunity Act 1984 requires schools to provide work and learning environments free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Further, the Western Australian Government Policy Framework for Substantive Equality recognises that equal treatment is not about treating people the same; rather it is about treating people differently in order to cater for different needs.

Terminology

Transgender is a general term applying to individuals whose gender identity and experience does not match dominant cultural expectations about what it means to be male or female. This includes - but is not limited to - a person whose gender identity does not ‘match’ their physical/biological sex ‘assigned’ at birth and who may wish to transition or affirm their gender.

Intersex refers to a characteristic of a person who is born with reproductive organs, genitalia and/or sex chromosomes that are not exclusively male or female. There are many different intersex states which may or may not be visible or diagnosed.
Gender identity is broadly defined in the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013 as meaning ‘the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person (whether by way of medical intervention or not), with or without regard to the person’s designated sex at birth’.

Implementation

1. Parents, teachers or students should bring concerns around these matters to the classroom teacher and Principal, and student privacy will be a priority.
2. The School will work with the student and their parent/carer to develop an individualised plan on how best to support the student.
3. The School will refer to the resources listed below to inform the plan, and may also obtain advice from a psychologist, doctor or other specialist if the student has chosen to consult them.
4. Reports from other specialists may be obtained, with student/carer consent, to support the school to respond sensitively, but the school shall not require any such documents to verify the student’s identity as transgender or intersex.
5. The spirit of this Policy will also be applied to staff or other members of the school community who identify as transgender or intersex.

Related Documents and Resources

- Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- Beehive Montessori School Code of Conduct
- WA Dept Education and Training Guidelines “Supporting Transgender and Intersex Students”
- Safe Schools Hub includes information and resources to create safe and supportive schools for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students and a range of issues relating to inclusion and student wellbeing. In particular this guide
- Freedom Centre Glossary – a comprehensive glossary of terms around gender, sex, sexuality from the website of The Freedom Centre, a WA-based organisation supporting LGBTIQ young people.