



## **Inclusion Policy**

### **Purpose**

In partnership with its member schools, South Eastern Independent Schools Association (SEISA) is committed to providing the same access, where reasonable, to participate in co-curricular activities for all students, regardless of gender, race, culture, or disability. The association and its members aim to foster an inclusive and welcoming culture where individual differences are understood, respected, valued and promoted.

With regards to all non-sporting SEISA activities and events, every student from our member schools will be provided the opportunity to participate based on the specific requirements of the activity only.

The SEISA Inclusion policy aims to promote:

- social and community values.
- the importance of both participation and competition.
- a respectful approach that values difference and diversity between people.
- treatment of people with respect, dignity, and courtesy.
- good behaviour at all SEISA events (in line with the SEISA Code of Conduct).
- equal opportunities and a fair go for all members.

### **General**

#### **Access to facilities**

SEISA Recognises that students participating in our co-curricular programs need access to appropriate changing and bathroom facilities and have the right to use these facilities without stress.

#### **Uniforms**

SEISA supports its member schools to encourage students to wear the uniform of their choosing as it aligns with their gender identity, as long as it complies with the wider uniform attire rules. Where reasonable, uniform options and sizes should be provided to students so that they can participate in a uniform they feel most comfortable in.

#### **Collection of personal Information**

All personal information that is collected from students regarding gender, race, culture, or disability will be collected and retained in accordance with the SEISA Privacy Policy & their member school Privacy Policy.

#### **Reporting Discrimination**

Reports of discrimination or bullying can be made directly to the SEISA Executive Officer, or SEISA Chair. SEISA staff will act in accordance with SEISA Policies and Procedures. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the grievance procedure to protect that privacy of individuals involved.

### **Gender Inclusion**

SEISA will work with member schools to provide opportunities for all students to play sport competitively, regardless of their gender identity. SEISA has an inclusive approach to transgender and gender diverse students playing their sport of choice competitively. Heads of Sport will work together to encourage participation and competition in all sport events and to build confidence and capacity for gender diversity in sport, in line with the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).

***Exceptional circumstances:***

Although SEISA determines preference towards including students to encourage their participation, *exceptional circumstances may be considered in the event that all other reasonable options have been considered and safety risks remain.*

There are exceptional circumstances in which exclusion of a student aged 12 years or over from a competitive sporting activity based on their gender identity may not constitute unlawful discrimination. The determination of exceptional circumstances for SEISA are determined in line with the *Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Guideline: Transgender people and sport* to ensure SEISA acts in a manner compliant with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

The law provides that in limited circumstances in single-sex competitions where the strength, stamina or physique of players is relevant in a competitive sporting activity, it may be lawful to exclude a student based on their gender identity. These protections and the exceptions are aimed at ensuring fairness and safety by protecting players from discrimination while also ensuring individuals do not have an unfair competitive advantage.

In deciding whether to apply this exception to discrimination, consideration should be given to:

1. Whether the student would have an unfair physical advantage over other students.
2. In sporting competitions involving player-to-player contact, where the disparity in strength or physique of a student of transgender status differs so significantly that it may give rise to unacceptable levels of risk relating to the safety of the student or other students.

Consideration of applying exceptional circumstances will be done on a case-by-case basis by the SEISA Principals with information and recommendations from the Heads of Sport. While lawfully a school may exclude a student from sport, they can lawfully include the student, provided it meets the requirements of SEISA and participating schools risk management.

*Information in the above policy has been sourced from the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission's Guideline: Transgender people and sport - Complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and School Sport Victoria's Inclusion Policy.*

**Communication**

Communication between schools is important when making decisions regarding inclusivity. All concerned must be mindful of privacy and confidentiality. The home school is responsible for meeting with the student/parents/guardians to discuss expectations and preferences of Trans or Gender Diverse students.

Where necessary, the process for communication between SEISA Schools is:

1. Heads of Sport will communicate with each other, where appropriate and where a possible advantage or the safety of students is concerned.
2. Heads of Sport will communicate with the SEISA principals of the respective schools involved to decide on whether to apply exceptional circumstances or not.
3. Heads of Sport to communicate with coaches where appropriate.

4. The schools reasoning and decision-making processes must be documented in case the decision to include or exclude a student is challenged.

At all times, the privacy of the student must be respected and only relevant information about a student's gender identity or intersex status should be shared. This information is of a sensitive nature and should not be disclosed to the wider school community, without the consent of the student.

Any commentary relating to the gender identity or sexuality of a student or staff member is inappropriate and will be addressed immediately.

### **Racism**

Racism, as defined by the Australian Human Rights Commission, is *"the process in which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race"* and can be a form of child abuse.

SEISA has a **zero-tolerance** policy for racism.

Complaints about racism are taken seriously and we will ensure that any instance of racism within our SEISA programs are addressed with appropriate consequences, in consultation with member schools. Consequences may include suspension/exclusion from participation at member school or SEISA events.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders**

SEISA acknowledges the risk of child abuse and other harm is increased for Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander students when they do not feel culturally safe. To celebrate the diverse and unique identities of Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander students, SEISA seeks to provide a culturally safe space for students to participate.

SEISA engages in key actions, activities and events that acknowledge the history, and celebrate the culture of Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islanders, including but not limited to:

- Acknowledgement of Country at key SEISA events.
- Acknowledgement of Country included on the SEISA website & SEISA emails.
- Aboriginal & Torre Strait Island Flags displayed at member schools.
- Child Safety being a standing agenda item at SEISA Principals meetings to ensure that Child Safety processes are continually reviewed and improved, particularly relating to Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islanders within our association.

### **Disability Inclusion**

SEISA is committed to providing opportunities for all students with disabilities to compete in co-curricular activities within our association. We will work with our member schools to determine and facilitate the existence of competition opportunities for students with a disability in a way that is reasonable and appropriate for the particular circumstance. These opportunities may be in settings with students with or without a disability.

SEISA member schools may make minor modifications to the rules at SEISA competitions to better include all students. This is best done between schools, using a common-sense approach to competition.

SEISA member schools should ensure that there are disability parking spaces in front of their sporting venues.

## Implementation

1. All schools will be notified of this policy & it will be placed on the SEISA website ([www.seisa.com.au](http://www.seisa.com.au))
2. All Heads of Sport will be informed of the policy via email.

## Policy status and review

The SEISA Executive is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy at least every two years.

## Approval

<b>Created date</b>	11/9/2024
<b>Endorsed by</b>	SEISA Executive
<b>Endorsed on</b>	12/09/2024
<b>Next review date</b>	12/09/2026