

This **LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures (Policy)** outlines how Balcombe Grammar School ensures that we provide safe environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, queer/querying, intersex, asexual and other gender identities and sexualities (**LGBTQIA+**) students in which their diversity and uniqueness is welcomed, respected and valued. It has been developed in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359, *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, made under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*.

This Policy is publicly available on our website, along with other child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures. This includes our **Child Safety Dictionary**, which outlines the key definitions used in these policies and procedures.

If you would like a paper copy of this Policy, or are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Policy, please contact Natalie Kurelja – Head of Faith & Wellbeing.

Objectives

Balcombe Grammar School understands the importance of every LGBTQIA+ student feeling that their sense of self and their identity is respected and valued by the people and environments that surround them as being fundamental to their overall wellbeing and sense of safety.

This Policy provides the framework for how Balcombe Grammar School ensures that:

- the safety and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ students is promoted, including providing support and paying particular attention to the needs of vulnerable students
- equity is upheld and the diverse needs of LGBTQIA+ students are respected and valued in policy and practice
- LGBTQIA+ students have access to the relationships, skills, knowledge and resources they need to be as safe as their peers.

Scope

This Policy applies to all:

- Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- School environments, including physical, virtual and online places on-site and off-site, including locations provided by Balcombe Grammar School through a third party provider for a student to use (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas).

For additional information about the meaning of the gender identities and sexualities terms that make up the **LGBTQIA+** acronym, see our **Child Safety Dictionary**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for child safety are set out in our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy** Additionally, under this Policy, the following people have particular responsibilities:

Role	Responsibilities
Principal	The Principal is responsible for implementing this Policy.
Deputy Principal – Primary & Deputy Principal – Secondary	The Deputy Principals are responsible for managing the involvement of LGBTQIA+ students in School decisions and reviews.
Head of Faith & Wellbeing	The Head of Faith & Wellbeing is responsible for managing the involvement of families and LGBTQIA+ communities in School decisions and reviews.
Staff, Volunteers and Contractors	<p>Staff, Volunteers and Contractors are responsible for undergoing child safety induction and training, including about this Policy, and for complying with this Policy.</p> <p>For more information, refer to our Child Safety Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures and the 'Breach' section below.</p>

Policy

- Balcombe Grammar School recognises the fundamental right of every student to feel safe at school. We understand that a supportive, and inclusive School environment where equity and diversity are valued is essential for providing quality learning opportunities for all students, including LGBTQIA+ students.

Diversity is about what makes each of us unique and includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and all the things that make us who we are and shapes our view of the world, perspective and approach. Equity is a state of fairness where students can participate freely and equally in areas of their life regardless of their background, characteristics or beliefs. This means their safety is not dependent on their personal, social, economic or family background or circumstances.

Whilst we recognise and respect diversity, we understand that some students, such as LGBTQIA+ students, may be more vulnerable to the risk of child abuse and other harm than their peers due to their diverse circumstances. Negative experiences like exclusion and discrimination can increase these risks and make it less likely for students to speak up if they have a concern, requiring particular attention to be paid to their needs.

Balcombe Grammar School recognises that discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students can be a form of child abuse and harm. We adopt measures to ensure that discrimination based on gender identity, intersex status or sexual orientation is identified, confronted and never tolerated. We take any concerns and complaints seriously and ensure that any instances of discrimination are addressed with appropriate consequences.

- The School:

- Welcomes LGBTQIA+ students and families and provides inclusive School environments that are safe and free from stigma, harassment and discrimination
- ensures that all students have the opportunity to express themselves and live authentically and accepts those students who identify as LGBTQIA+ without fear, retribution or questioning
- develops and implements initiatives within the School with a focus on helping LGBTQIA+ students feel safe and included
- makes sure Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors understand LGBTQIA+ students' diverse circumstances and how to provide support, pay particular attention to, and respond to their needs
- recognises that LGBTQIA+ students may have a higher risk of harm and implements bullying prevention strategies within the School on a continuous basis that focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower Staff, relevant Volunteers and Contractors, students, parents and carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- provides LGBTQIA+ students with access to information, support and complaint processes in ways that are safe, accessible and easy to understand
- reviews our support and inclusion initiatives for LGBTQIA+ students against best practice on a regular basis.

3. Balcombe Grammar School is committed to creating and maintaining a culture of equality, where openness and diversity are celebrated. This includes:
- ensuring that the unique abilities, skills, life experiences and backgrounds of all students, including LGBTQIA+ students, are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and respected so that differences do not compromise student safety and wellbeing
 - modelling exemplary behaviour, ensuring our leaders set clear expectations around achieving equity and respecting diversity, communicating the School's commitment to a safe and positive learning environment.

Procedures

The strategies and initiatives that Balcombe Grammar School implements to ensure, promote and embed the safety and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ students include:

- **Promoting inclusivity by using LGBTQIA+ language.**

Using LGBTQIA+ inclusive language means avoiding making assumptions about people's roles, bodies, genders and relationships. This includes using contemporary and inclusive examples when discussing families and relationships. For example, instead of asking students to bring their "mothers and fathers" to a School function, asking them to bring their parents and carers, or, when talking about equity and the diversity of our School community, mentioning the diversity of genders and sexualities as well as other student and family attributes.

Using LGBTQIA+ inclusive language signals to LGBTQIA+ students that they are part of the School community and that they can feel safe to talk about who they are.

- **Being visibly inclusive.**

Balcombe Grammar Schools displays materials in our learning environments that are positive and inclusive of LGBTQIA+ students, such as posters and pamphlets. We also use materials such as age-appropriate speech and drama scripts and books and resources that explore themes around diversity, including LGBTQIA+ characteristics to reflect our School community.

- **Checking in.**

We take action to support and respond to LGBTQIA+ children who may be experiencing vulnerability, including making inquiries and responding where there are signs of increased vulnerability.

We do this by engaging genuinely with our LGBTQIA+ students, paying particular attention to their experiences, and letting them know they can raise concerns or report incidents that occur at or outside our School. We find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety and what they need to be safe and feel safe. We validate their feelings and understand that students may not feel they have been listened to or believed in the past.

We offer buddying or mentoring for LGBTQIA+ students where appropriate.

We check in with LGBTQIA+ students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. This can occur at pick-up or drop-off, at parent teacher interviews or through informal discussions.

- **Providing training about LGBTQIA+ issues and communities.**

As part of our induction and ongoing refresher training, we provide information and training to Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors on this Policy and other child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, including our **Transgender Students Policy** and **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy**.

Training helps to increase understanding of the issues facing LGBTQIA+ students and strategies to address discrimination, harassment and bullying. It also aims to enable those to whom students may disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to respond in a positive, non-judgmental and constructive manner.

- **Appointing understanding student wellbeing Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors.**

We ensure that nurses, psychologists and counsellors at Balcombe Grammar School have an in-depth understanding of issues related to same-sex attraction, gender diversity and intersex status, as well as strategies for supporting LGBTQIA+ students.

- **Providing an inclusive curriculum.**

The School provides opportunities for teaching and learning about LGBTQIA+ issues across the School curriculum, including during Faith & Wellbeing classes.

- **Providing diverse sexual health education.**

We ensure that our sexual health curriculum is inclusive of same-sex attraction, intersex difference and gender diversity.

- **Developing and implementing transgender management plans.**

The School develops confidential support/transition plans for transgender and intersex students which involve the student and their parents or carers and families. For more information, see our **Transgender Students Policy**.

- **Developing partnerships with LGBTQIA+ community organisations.**

Balcombe Grammar School is connected to local healthcare and service providers that offer support to LGBTQIA+ people, invites them to host training or provide materials, and knows when to refer students for more information or support.

- **Welcoming LGBTQIA+ families, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.**

Balcombe Grammar School accepts and welcomes families and colleagues who may be LGBTQIA+ and encourages them to be a part of our School activities.

- **Supporting student action.**

Balcombe Grammar School is supportive of student gender and sexual diversity groups and action days such as International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBT) or Wear It Purple Day.

- **Providing LGBTQIA+ inclusive functions.**

When hosting formals and other School functions we ensure that gender-inclusive language is used in our 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 about LGBTQIA+ communities.**

We ensure that supportive, accurate and age-appropriate information is available to students who may be working through issues relating to sexuality and gender. This may include:

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

Breach

Compliance with this Policy is monitored and enforced by Balcombe Grammar School. Any instances of non-compliance are investigated and reviewed. This may result in a range of measures being taken, including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education

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- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Review

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to the continuous improvement of our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

We review this Policy at least every two years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation or after any significant child safety incident. This includes seeking input from students, parents and carers and the Balcombe Grammar School community.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Safety Dictionary
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Complaints Management Policy and Procedures
- Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures

Policy Administration

Status	Approved by the Board on 8 February, 2023
Person Responsible	The Principal
Approver(s)	CSV Board is responsible for approval of the Policy and ensuring it is reviewed and updated as needed.
Approval Date	8 February, 2023
Version Number	1.0
Version History	Created 2022
Review Frequency	At least every 2 years or earlier if required.
Next Review Date	January 2023
Risk Rating	High
Location	CompliSpace