



Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and procedures

A resource for school boards, leaders, teachers, guidance counsellors, and school communities

This document has been shortened for Sport New Zealand audiences.
Please see the full version here.

Inside OUT

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Please quote item number 56095.

Sample policy: Names, pronouns, and gender

Enrolment

If a student is enrolling in the Aotearoa New Zealand education system for the first time, parents or caregivers are legally required to provide an official identification document (such as a birth certificate or passport) to verify that the student is entitled to enrol for free education.

When a student enrolls, the school will identify what their affirmed name, pronouns, and gender are and ensure that these are correctly recorded in the student management system (SMS) and ENROL. Students can request to have their name and/or gender updated if this information changes or is incorrect.

Supporting students to change their name, pronoun, and/or gender as part of a social transition

If a student is changing the name, pronoun, or gender they use in day-to-day school life, a designated staff member will:

- with the student's permission, notify relevant members of the school community of the student's name, pronoun, and/or gender or support the student to do this themselves
- use the student's new name and/or pronouns when addressing the student in the school environment and in documents where the student wants their name and pronouns to be used (such as certificates).

Changing a student's name and gender marker as part of a systems transition

Students can request a change to their name, pronouns, and/or gender marker on student records and management systems. The school will give the student options, such as the option to enter a new name on the student management system without changing their name in ENROL or other student records. If parents/whānau have access to the SMS, an application that integrates with the SMS, or it is used for reporting, emails home, or notifications about absences, you should advise the student that their parents/whānau will be able to see the changes made to their pronouns and gender in the SMS.

Students (or their parents and whānau, if involved) are not required to legally change their name or gender on identity documents or provide the school with evidence such as a mental health assessment or diagnosis of gender dysphoria before requesting these changes.

To change a student's details on the student management system, the school will take the following steps:

1. Discuss the implications of this decision with the student, including outlining ways that the system is used to communicate with home. If necessary, the school will provide support to the student to discuss this change with their parents/whānau.
2. Update the student's name and/or gender on the student management system.
3. If the student requests to change their name and/or gender on ENROL, the school will do so where they are able.
4. In the case of a locked student record, the school will work with the Ministry of Education to amend a student's name.
5. The school will then ensure that a student's self-determined name and gender are consistently entered into all the appropriate education records, including in student management systems (SMS).

Communicating with whānau about names and pronouns

Some students choose to use a name and/or pronouns at school that is different from those they use at home. In these instances, the school will ensure the student's privacy is maintained in all communications, including those with parents and whānau.

The process of communicating with parents/whānau about names and pronouns will differ depending on a student's situation. When engaging with students on this matter, it is important to consider the emotional wellbeing of the student, and their relationships with their parents/whānau.

The school will:

- ask students which name and/or pronouns they would like staff to use when contacting parents/whānau
- ask students which name and/or pronoun teachers should use at parent-teacher interviews and in school-home communications
- ensure all relevant staff members are aware of the correct names and pronouns to be used on school reports and other correspondence, and use these accordingly.

If a student wishes to receive support from the school in engaging with their parents/whānau, staff will work closely with the student and their parents/whānau to facilitate a conversation and reach a resolution. The school will also identify any additional support that could help the student and/or their parents and whānau to work through this issue.

Related sections in this resource

- Privacy and disclosure, see page 16.

Sample policy: Safe access to facilities

Access to gendered facilities

All students have the right to be respected and affirmed as their gender. The school will support trans, gender diverse and intersex students to use the facility that aligns with their gender.

The school will take all reasonable measures to ensure the student feels safe using these facilities. If a student indicates they would like peer support when using these facilities, a trusted staff member will work alongside them to ensure they have support. For example, a student might want a friend or trusted peer of the same gender to accompany them when using their chosen facility.

Staff are expected to intervene if they witness or receive reports about remarks or behaviour that discriminate against any student using a facility of their choice.

Access to gender-neutral facilities

The school will ensure that there is at least one gender-neutral toilet and changing room option available at school for students to use if they want. Wherever possible, the school will provide gender-neutral facilities that do not require restricted access so that student's rights to privacy are maintained.

Where opportunities arise, the school will explain to all students that privacy and safety are important for all students when using facilities and that the school does not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying. Trans, gender diverse, or intersex students will never be made to use a separate facility against their wishes.

The school will outline details of gender-neutral facilities and communicate these in a document, stating the type and location of the facility and including any accessibility notes. The school will ensure that these details are readily available to every student.

Sample policy: Integrating rainbow-inclusive content into the curriculum

The school will encourage curriculum leaders and teachers to take all practical measures to integrate rainbow-inclusive content into the curriculum. This will be done in a way that aligns with the school's values and our commitment to providing inclusive and safe learning environments for all students.

Teachers and curriculum leaders will be encouraged to:

- incorporate rainbow-inclusive content along with content that acknowledges and values other forms of diversity (such as ethnicity, culture, learning needs, and religion)
- consider how rainbow-inclusive content reflects Māori and Pacific understandings of gender and sexuality, to ensure that these topics are taught in a culturally sensitive way
- where relevant, use existing resources that provide ideas on integrating rainbow-inclusive content and learning materials
- design activities that enable students to experience inclusion at the same time as learning about it
- discuss rainbow inclusivity as part of the regular curriculum review cycle.

Sample policy: Addressing rainbow-focused discrimination in sports settings

Coaches, managers, health teachers, and all the adults involved in sports settings are responsible for creating a safe and welcoming climate for all students.

Rainbow students will always be treated the same way as their peers. They will not face discrimination based on their sport uniform choice, sexuality, sex characteristics, or gender.

Where appropriate, coaches and teachers will be offered resources on rainbow students' experiences and issues to help them identify and appropriately respond to homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic discrimination. This includes supporting people in instances where discrimination occurs due to a lack of awareness around rainbow identities.

Any incident of rainbow-focused discrimination in sports will be treated the same way as any other form of discrimination. Staff or parents concerned will follow the bullying reporting procedures outlined in the school's Bullying Prevention and Response policy.

Sample policy: overnight trips and camps

When planning an overnight school trip, organisers will take all practicable steps to ensure that facilities are safe and available for all students at the site or accommodation. These may include changing rooms, toilets, showers, and sleeping areas.

If a rainbow student requests to sleep in a specific space, a teacher or staff member will:

- consult with the student (and, with the student's permission, their whānau) about their desired sleeping arrangements and facilities
- provide students with options (such as sleeping in an area that aligns with their gender, sharing a sleeping space with close friends, or having access to a private sleeping area and bathroom)
- where applicable, support the student and their whānau to develop a support plan ahead of the trip to make sure that the student's needs are clearly communicated to all relevant staff and adults
- where applicable, take all practicable steps to follow through with the support plan so that the student feels safe and is able to participate.

If the school receives questions or concerns from the wider school community about students sleeping in an area that affirms their gender, the staff members leading the event will explain to them the rationale of the school's policy. They will draw on research, legislation, case studies, and other resources to explain how these actions support the safety and inclusion of all students.⁵¹

The school will take all practicable steps to mitigate risks of inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour, including having adults available to address any such behaviour that arises. Staff members will inform accompanying adults of the school's policy around EOTC and overnight stays as part of the Health and Safety protocols.

⁵¹ For an updated list of helpful resources and research, see <https://insideout.org.nz/resources/>

Sample policy: Responding to community concerns

Responding to rainbow-related complaints or concerns

If a community member queries an aspect of the school's rainbow inclusiveness, the school will take all practicable steps to fully understand the query, engage in constructive communication with the community member, and if necessary provide relevant resources to the complainant that support the school's affirmative stance. The school will address each case on an individual basis. If necessary, the school will seek further guidance from rainbow organisations, such as InsideOUT.

Addressing whānau concerns

If a concern is raised by whānau about a student's personal information regarding their rainbow identity, a designated staff member will first consult with the student on how they want to proceed. Some rainbow students may not be open about their rainbow identity at home for safety reasons. This can place the school in a difficult position, where they must balance the student's needs and wishes with the whānau member's natural concern for their child.

The school will take the following steps to address concerns of this nature:

- Prior to communicating with whānau, a trusted staff member will ask the student how much information they feel comfortable sharing with their whānau.
- If a student does not want the school to talk to their parents about their rainbow identity (including using certain names and/or pronouns), the trusted staff member will clearly communicate to the student's whānau the school's obligation to maintain the privacy of the student concerned.
- If the student says that they are comfortable with a designated staff member talking to their whānau, the school will follow existing mediation or resolution procedures. The school will work to achieve positive outcomes for both the student and their whānau.

Resolution procedures may differ depending on the student's age, their relationship with their whānau, the level of involvement whānau have in their child's education, the types of support whānau may need, and the school's general approach to communicating with whānau.

Sample policy: Commitment to providing rainbow-inclusive PLD

The school will plan and resource professional learning opportunities on rainbow inclusivity as part of the school's wider PLD programme. It will consider how it prioritises different types of inclusivity training and how rainbow-inclusive practices fit in with the school's PLD priorities overall.

The school will:

- ensure staff are aware of the school's policy around rainbow inclusivity, making it part of induction for new members of staff
- ensure staff have opportunities for professional learning on rainbow inclusivity, both in standalone sessions and integrated into other learning opportunities
- invite parents, whānau, mana whenua, and other members of the school community to participate in professional learning on rainbow inclusivity
- facilitate ongoing learning by developing and regularly updating a database of resources and contact information for staff interested in learning more about rainbow inclusivity
- support students who approach staff members about providing learning opportunities to staff (for example, giving a presentation on rainbow-inclusive language at a staff meeting).

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