

Fact sheet for students

Supporting trans and gender diverse students to take part in School Sport Victoria (SSV) sporting activities

Why was this guidance written?

SSV along with all Victorian schools commit to providing a positive and safe environment for students. SSV values inclusion and participation and wants to provide all students with access to school sport opportunities.

The guidance encourages all students to take part in SSV activities in the way they feel most safe and comfortable. It also provides schools with support in making team selection decisions.

The Department of Education must follow laws which help make Victoria a better place for all. This includes government schools and SSV. The department does this by taking steps to prevent discrimination on attributes such as sex, sex characteristics and gender identity. The department also works to make accommodations for students wherever possible.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is unfavourable treatment of a person or group of people on the basis of a personal characteristic protected by the law (for example, sex, sex characteristics or gender identity). Discrimination prevents people from doing things other people can do freely. It can happen in many ways and in many areas of life. It can happen at work, in public, and at school.

Find out about the [differences between sex, sex characteristics and gender identity](#).

Who does the guidance apply to?

The guidance applies to all students taking part in SSV sporting activities. It also applies to schools making team selection decisions. This includes government, Catholic and independent schools.

Which SSV programs or activities does this guidance apply to?

The guidance applies to all SSV programs and activities. This includes our competitive (Interschool Sport and Team Vic) and non-competitive programs (Play).

Your school organises and runs PE classes, intra school and extracurricular sport opportunities. These activities are not covered by this guidance. You can ask your teacher about your school's inclusion policy and practices.

What do schools need to do?

Schools selecting teams for interschool sport need to apply this guidance. Schools will provide confidential support to students who identify as trans or gender diverse.

Your teacher or principal can help you take part in SSV sporting activities the way you would like. This might include:

- what sports you like to play,
- which team or event category you feel most comfortable taking part in,
- having a conversation about what pronouns you would like to use,
- what uniform you are comfortable wearing,
- toilet/change room facilities you would be most comfortable using, and
- who you can go to for support.

Schools can look into other ways you can take part in a sporting activity. Schools can also provide support to you where the outcome may not be what you wanted or expected.

What does this mean for students participating in SSV activities?

All students should be able to take part and compete in the gendered team or event they feel most safe and comfortable.

SSV currently offers gendered event categories for all students to select. SSV acknowledges this is not ideal for students who are non-binary as they may not feel there is suitable category for them. SSV continues to encourage participation and explore ways it can make its programs and activities more inclusive.

SSV requests students remain in the team they select for the duration of that specific event.

If you would like to provide feedback to SSV on how we can continue to improve school sport experiences for all students, please email us at school.sport.victoria@education.vic.gov.au.

When might you not be able to take part in the event you choose?

There are few circumstances where you would not be able to take part in the event category of your choice. There are two circumstances where this may happen:

- the strength, stamina or physique of the student is relevant to the sporting activity, and/or
- involves high contact sporting activities which raise serious safety concerns.

These rules apply when:

- the event is a competitive sporting activity, and
- the student is 12 years and over.

SSV defines competitive sporting activity as activities run through the Team Vic and Interschool Sport programs.

A decision to include must consider a range of information. This information can relate to the individual student, the sport and/or event category chosen. The safety of all participants is also considered.

As a student participating in SSV activities, what can I do to ensure SSV events are safe and enjoyable for all?

Be accepting of all students regardless of their sex, sex characteristics and gender identity. If you do have questions, speak to a trusted adult (at school or at home) who can help find the answers to your questions.

You can tell your school or SSV about your experiences with SSV sporting activities.

What can I do if a team selection decision does not seem to follow the guidance?

Students should speak to a trusted adult in the first instance. You can then contact your school to discuss further. If you are not satisfied with your school's response, you can discuss your concerns with SSV directly. Your teacher or principal can tell you about SSV's complaints process.

Who can help if I have more questions about the guidance?

Speak to a trusted adult at your school. This could be a parent/carer, teacher, nurse, counsellor or wellbeing officer.