



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Ballarat Associated Schools Inc. (hereinafter referred to as ‘BAS’) is committed to organising and strengthening interschool activities to provide opportunities for Member Schools. This includes maintaining an inclusive, diverse and welcoming culture through all activities, communications and practices which encourages all students to participate.

Sport is an important part of life for many people and has significant social and health wellbeing benefits. One of the key principles of BAS is to provide opportunities for students to participate in sport who would otherwise not play at all. BAS will work with schools and other school sport stakeholders to ensure that opportunities are provided for all students to play sport competitively and with dignity. In partnership with schools, BAS will support all concerned to build the confidence and capacity to support participation for all students regardless of race, gender, culture or disability in sport.

The purpose of this policy is to outline BAS’ commitment to provide an inclusive culture which embraces, promotes and supports diversity, inclusion and equality.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all BAS employees, participants, contractors, volunteers and those involved in activities organised or scheduled by BAS.

DEFINITIONS

<i>Diversity</i>	means the visible and invisible differences that exist between people, such as gender, culture, race, ethnic origin, physical and mental disability, sexual orientation, age, economic class, language, religion, nationality, education/qualifications, and family/marital status. It also refers to diverse ways of thinking and ways of working.
<i>Inclusion</i>	means the active embrace of everything that marks us different and the upholding of this value in a collaborative environment.
<i>Equality</i>	means fairness for all. Treating people equitably does not mean treating all people the same.
<i>The Committee</i>	means the Committee of Ballarat Associated Schools Inc. Committee which has been appointed in accordance with the Rules.
<i>Host School</i>	means <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For internal venues, the Member School who is under control of the venue. - For external venues, the Member School who is the first named team in the fixture.
<i>Sports Co-ordinator</i>	means the employee of the Member School who oversees and/or manages sport for the Member School.

DETAIL

Part 1- Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure this policy is enacted and implemented for all activities organised or scheduled by BAS.

2. It is the responsibility of the Head of each Member School to ensure all staff are able and willing to implement this policy.
3. It is the responsibility of the Head of the Member School to ensure their school has their own Diversity and Inclusion Policy in place which is actively implemented within the school community.
4. It is the responsibility of the host school to facilitate all necessary communication required to enact this policy.

Part 2- Member Schools

1. All Member Schools are required to ensure their Heads of School, Sports Co-ordinators and staff involved or attending BAS events promote an inclusive and supportive environment in which diversity is understood, promoted and respected generally and in the context of sporting activities. This must include but is not limited to the following:
 - 1.1 Providing equal opportunity and access for participants regardless of the participant's sex, gender identity, race, culture, religion, age or disability.
 - 1.2 Ensuring facilities are inclusive including parking, bathrooms and change rooms.
 - 1.3 Supporting participants to dress in a manner which aligns with their identity, beliefs and needs, and is also safe for the activity they are completing.
 - 1.4 Keeping an open mind and being mindful with communication.
2. All Member Schools are required to have provided staff with professional development in diversity and inclusion and retain a training log of completion. Upon request, this must be provided to BAS.
3. When organising and/or scheduling an activity, the host school and all Member Schools involved must consider whether the opportunities and environment offer promote and support diversity and inclusion.
4. Consideration of diversity and inclusion must be demonstrated in all BAS and Member School practices including but not limited to planning, communication, risk assessments, decision making and meeting agendas.
5. To increase opportunities for participants with diverse needs, the Member School should take a proactive approach in communicating with BAS regarding any opportunities or supports that can be put in place.
6. Where an individual associated with a Member School's community acts in a manner that does not support diversity or inclusion in any way, the Member School must address the matter immediately. Where necessary, the Member School must investigate the behaviour in line with their internal policies and procedures and provide a summary of the incident and outcome at the following Committee meeting. Should the Committee or BAS believe the incident requires further investigation, BAS may provide the Member School with additional steps that they must take.

Part 3- BAS

1. BAS is committed to ensuring that this policy is effective in practice.
2. BAS will work with Member Schools as required to provide participants or potential participants opportunities to participate in activities regardless of diversity including but not limited to disability, gender identity and sex, as is reasonable based on the circumstances.
3. BAS may, where reasonably practical and possible make modifications to the activity and/or rules to enable the activity to be inclusive. This may be decided by the Committee and/or between the Member School sports co-ordinators and BAS representative taking into consideration all known circumstances. Where possible, BAS will do this 7 days in advance of any activity and communicate any material changes to those involved, whilst being mindful of those involved.

4. BAS is committed to creating a workplace culture which promotes respect, collaboration and diversity. This includes but is not limited to individuals who are diverse in experience, background, education, age, gender, race, nationality, physical abilities, belief's, sexual orientation, gender identity and other real and perceived differences.
5. BAS is committed to reviewing its organisational practices, policies and procedures to reduce conscious and unconscious bias on at least an annual basis.
6. BAS will take all reasonable steps to prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment. Any unlawful discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated and is incongruent to BAS values.

Part 4- Gender Based Exemptions

1. Where possible, all participation in BAS activities should be based on an individual's affirmed gender identity and not the sex they were assigned at birth.
2. BAS will have a collaborative approach and work closely with the individual's school and support plan to support the individuals participation in any event and seek guidance from relevant expert sporting entities and associations based on the particulars of any situation prior to making a decision.
3. BAS acknowledges that there may be some circumstances where students who are 12 years and older may lawfully be excluded from competing in a single sex competition on the basis of sex or gender identity where the strength, stamina, physique or other relevant factors of competitors is material. Similarly, circumstances may arise in which individuals will be eligible to participate in an activity in a division which differs from their affirmed gender identity. If it is necessary for BAS to make a decision, the Committee will carefully consider the following prior to a decision been made:
 - 3.1 The purpose of BAS .
 - 3.2 The evidence that is provided which outlines the relevance of the strength, stamina and physique.
 - 3.3 How the student's participation might lead to unfair disadvantage and/or advantage.
 - 3.4 Whether a student's individual circumstances may give them a competitive advantage and/or disadvantage.
 - 3.5 What impact excluding the student may have on the student, the school, the competition and the community.
 - 3.6 Any recommendation of medical professionals.
 - 3.7 Any recommendation or advice of an expert organisation in the sporting activity.
 - 3.8 The time it may take for a decision and any disadvantage or advantage that this may cause.
 - 3.9 Any communication with the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s).
 - 3.10 Any discussions with the students (if applicable and appropriate).
 - 3.11 Any advice, knowledge or recommendation by the Member School.
 - 3.12 The opinions of other individuals directly relevant to the situation.
 - 3.13 The opportunity provided for any review.
4. The Committee must come to a consensus in order to provide an exemption.

Part 5- Implementation

1. This policy is implemented through a combination of the following strategies:
 - 1.1 Member training, education and information.
 - 1.2 The Member School ensuring their internal Inclusion and Diversity Policy reflects the requirements of this policy and is implemented in practice.
 - 1.3 Encouraging a collaborative, communicative and proactive approach.



1.4 Promoting a positive reporting cultural.

1.5 Initiating corrective action where appropriate.

Part 6- Audit & Review

1. BAS is committed to continuous review and improvement of all of its operations, including this policy.
2. It is the responsibility of the Committee to regularly monitor and annually review the effectiveness of the policy in practice.
3. As part of the review process it is the responsibility of the Member School to ensure the Sports Co-ordinator (or equivalent) is actively involved in reviewing this policy.

Part 7- Breach

1. Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and immediately followed up by BAS.
2. Any breach of this policy may lead to action being taken, for serious breaches, this may include but is not limited to termination of membership.

<i>Diversity and Inclusion Policy</i>	<i>Person Responsible: BAS Committee</i>	<i>Approved by: BAS Committee</i>
<i>Date of Approval: TBA</i>	<i>Last Review: 29 October 2025</i>	<i>Next Review: Term 4 2026</i>