



367 High Street
NAGAMBIE VIC 3608
T: 03 5794 2608
F: 03 5794 1435
M: 0417 489 577
E: principal@sjnagambie.catholic.edu.au
W: www.sjnagambie.catholic.edu

GENDER EQUALITY

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Identity Statement

St Joseph's; a child safe school, is a Catholic Community in the Josephite tradition where we learn and grow in the Spirit together.

Vision Statements

St Joseph's; a child safe school, strives to be an educating community:

- Where the total development of each child is nurtured.
- Where an environment of trust, respect, hope and safety is built, with direct reference and consideration to child safe standards and policies.
- Where families and the school work in partnership sharing the responsibility to educate the child.
- Where school life is an integral part of the parish and the wider community.
- Where the students learn in a challenging, enjoyable and cooperative way.
- Where the teachings of Jesus are taught, modelled and lived.

Graduate Outcomes

St Joseph's students learn to become:

- Problem solving, inquiring, critical thinkers with high competencies in literacy and numeracy.
- Technologically competent and ethical users of technology.
- Hope filled, independent, resilient and confident young people.
- Knowledgeable and appreciative of the Catholic faith.
- Socially adept, respectful, just, environmentally conscious and appreciative of diversity.

At St Joseph's we are being our best when we are...

Being respectful, being friendly and being positive learners.



Rationale:

Every member of the school community has the right to feel safe whilst participating in any school-based activities. Our school must provide a safe and secure learning environment for everybody at all times. Our school recognises and celebrates a broad range of diversity. Gender is not a determinant of a student's capacity to learn, but often influences opportunities. It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of gender.

We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment where all students and staff can be happy, confident and resilient, regardless of their sexual or gender identity, cultural background, disability or other circumstances. We value a diverse curriculum and community that is inclusive of people who may identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI) or other. We recognise that gender inequality has the potential to limit and impact negatively on the safety, education, employment, family lives and opportunities of staff and students, particularly women and girls, in the immediate and long term.

Under the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* all organisations have a *positive duty* to take proactive steps to prevent discriminatory practices. We recognise the prevalence and impact of gender-based discrimination and harassment, and are committed to building a school culture that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality and a lack of inclusiveness.

Girls and boys & women and men are subject to gendered stereotypes and expectations about how they should behave, think and act. These gendered stereotypes and expectations contribute to gender inequality by assigning unequal value, status and power to women and men. These expectations are reinforced by structures, systems, norms and cultures that often privilege the knowledge, rights, perspectives and skills of males over females.

Gender inequality can be both a cause and a consequence of direct and indirect discrimination. This discrimination is sometimes the result of unconscious bias which is when our behaviours, choices and practices are shaped by underlying assumptions and attitudes without us realising. Gender inequality is evident throughout our society, and research suggests it is one of the key factors driving the prevalence of gender-based violence.

We recognise that schools are vital spaces in our community to promote gender equality and prevent family violence and violence against women. Every policy, practice and activity has the potential to reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes, gendered inequality and discrimination.

Aims:

- To ensure that all members of the school community feel safe and secure.
- To ensure that Safe Sex Attracted Youth are not victims of bullying or harassment.
- To provide an environment where 'Same Sex Attracted' is not seen as an unacceptable lifestyle or warrants harassment or alienation.
- To provide a comprehensive Sexual Health curriculum.

Implementation:

- Sexual Health education will be provided to all students at an age appropriate level.
- Sexual Health curriculum will include areas of diversity such as Same Sex Attracted.
- Appropriate resource material will be used in the teaching of Sexual Health.
- Only those staff trained in the delivery of sexual health education will be able to teach this curriculum.
- Students will be provided with current and relevant data to complement the curriculum.
- The school will provide appropriate support services for students eg: counselling, school nurse.
- The school will develop links with community agencies that can support and assist students who may be Same Sex Attracted.

- The school will take a zero tolerance level to bullying or harassment associated with anyone's sexual identity.
- Inservices relating to the school's curriculum on Same Sex Attracted Youth will be provided by the school for parents and members of the wider school community.

At St. Joseph's School Nagambie, all students and staff are responsible for promoting gender equality and modelling respectful relationships. All staff and students will be held accountable if they use language and/or demonstrate behaviour that:

- Promotes unequal power relations between women and men.
- Perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes.
- Condone violence against women.
- Is not respectful towards each other and does not support our school values.

Our staff model positive, inclusive, respectful relationships at all times. We will work to ensure all staff feel respected, safe and valued in the workplace, and will take proactive measures to prevent and eliminate gender discrimination and provide equal opportunities for all staff. This will include promoting gender equality in school leadership, ensuring processes and policies are free of bias, and supporting all staff to balance work and family commitments.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.