

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS' SPORTS FEDERATION
of HONG KONG (ISSFHK)**

TRANSGENDER GUIDELINES

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INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS' SPORTS FEDERATION of HONG KONG (ISSFHK)

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ARTICLE A – OVERVIEW

The ISSFHK was established in an effort to provide more competitive sporting opportunities for students attending international schools in Hong Kong. The organization is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches/teachers and administrators. In this regard, we seek to establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and other stakeholders. We appreciate that diversity and inclusion will improve the learning environment for all student-athletes, although it is imperative for the organization that the health and safety of participants is of primary importance.

This policy outlines ISSFHK's rules regarding the participation of gender diverse and intersex students.

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ARTICLE B – DEFINING TRANSGENDER

Prior to outlining the policy relating to participation, it is important to understand the term "Transgender". This word describes an individual whose gender identity (one's internal psychological identification as a boy/man or girl/woman) does not match the person's sex at birth. For example, a male-to-female (MTF) transgender person is someone who was born with a male body, but who identifies as a girl or a woman. A female-to-male (FTM) transgender person is someone who was born with a female body, but who identifies as a boy or a man.

It is important that all people recognize and respect the transgender person's identification as a man or a woman. In order to feel comfortable and to express their gender identity, transgender people may take a variety of steps: changing their names and self-referencing pronouns to better match their gender identity; choosing clothes, hairstyles, or other aspects of self-presentation that reflect their gender identity; and generally living, and presenting themselves to others, consistently with their gender identity. Some, but not all, transgender people take hormones or undergo surgical procedures to change their bodies to better reflect their gender identity.

Some people are confused by the difference between transgender people and people who have intersex conditions. The key feature of being transgender is having a psychological identification as a man or a woman that differs from the person's sex at birth. Apart from having a gender identity that is different than their bodies, transgender people are not born with physical characteristics that distinguish them from others. In contrast, people with intersex conditions (which may also be called a "Disorders of Sex Development"), are born with physically mixed or atypical bodies with respect to sexual characteristics such as chromosomes, internal reproductive organs and genitalia, and external genitalia.

An increasing number of young people are identifying as transgender (or trans), meaning that their internal sense of their gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned at birth. These students challenge educators to rethink an understanding of gender as universally fixed at birth. Educators must be open to this challenge to create educational institutions that value and meet the needs of all students. Once we recognize that transgender young people are part of school communities across the world, educational leaders have a responsibility to ensure that these students have access to equal opportunities in all academic and extracurricular activities in a safe and respectful school environment. For a more complete list of definitions and terms related to transgender people, refer to Appendix.

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ARTICLE C – TRANSGENDER STUDENT-ATHLETE PARTICIPATION

SECTION ONE - POLICY

The ISSFHK Policy on Transgender Student-Athlete Participation The following policies clarify participation of transgender student-athletes undergoing hormonal treatment for gender transition:

1. A transgender male (FTM) student-athlete who has received medical treatment with testosterone for diagnosed Gender Identity Disorder or gender dysphoria and/or Transsexualism may compete on a men's team. As soon as medication starts the student-athlete concerned will no longer be eligible to compete on a women's team.
 - If a FTM transitioned back to their gender at birth, they would be required to wait a minimum of six months after their testosterone treatment has ended, to compete as a female.
2. A transgender female (MTF) student-athlete being treated with testosterone suppression medication for Gender Identity Disorder or gender dysphoria and/or Transsexualism is permitted to compete on a female's team. As soon as medication starts the student-athlete concerned will no longer be eligible to compete on a male's team.

Formal professional medical proof of testosterone treatment is required. Furthermore, the Executive Committee withhold the right to stipulate that a student-athlete is required to undertake a minimum of six months of testosterone treatment prior to being granted permission to compete.

Any transgender student-athlete who is not taking hormone treatment related to gender transition may participate in sex-separated sporting activities in accordance with his or her gender at birth.

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SECTION ONE - ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The student's responsibilities

1. In order to avoid challenges to a transgender student's participation during a sport season, a student athlete who has completed, plans to initiate, or is in the process of taking hormones as part of a gender transition should submit the request to participate on a sports team in writing to the director of athletics upon matriculation or when the decision to undergo hormonal treatment is made.
2. The request should include a letter from the student's physician documenting the student-athlete's intention to transition or the student's transition status if the process has already been initiated. This letter should identify the prescribed hormonal treatment for the student's gender transition and documentation of the student's testosterone levels, if relevant.

The school's responsibilities

1. The Director of Athletics should meet with the student to review eligibility requirements and procedure for approval of transgender participation.
2. If hormone treatment is involved in the student-athlete's transition, the Director of Athletics should notify the ISSFHK Executive Committee of the student's request to participate. This needs to take place prior to the commencement of the commencement of the Season, at the latest before the convenors' meeting. Ideally as much notice as possible should be provided.
3. To assist in educating and in development of institutional policy and practice, a Transgender Participation Committee should be established. Members of the committee should represent a cross section of the institutional staff with student well-being interests.
4. All discussions among involved parties and required written supporting documentation should be kept confidential, unless the student-athlete makes a specific request otherwise. All information about an individual student's transgender identity and medical information, including physician's information provided pursuant to this policy, shall be maintained confidentially.

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ARTICLE D – ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR TRANSGENDER STUDENT-ATHLETE INCLUSION

The following additional guidelines will assist colleges, athletics departments, teachers, coaches, teams and student-athletes in creating an environment in which all student-athletes are safe and fairly treated.

SECTION ONE - FACILITIES ACCESS

1. Changing Areas, Toilets, Showers — Transgender student-athletes should be able to use the locker room, shower, and toilet facilities in accordance with the student's gender identity. Every locker room should have some private, enclosed changing areas, showers, and toilets for use by any athlete who desires them. When requested by a transgender student-athlete, schools should provide private, separate changing, showering, and toilet facilities for the student's use, but transgender students should not be required to use separate facilities.
2. Competition at Another School — If a transgender student-athlete requires a particular accommodation to ensure access to appropriate changing, showering, or bathroom facilities, school leaders, athletic directors, and coaches, in consultation with the transgender student-athlete, should notify their counterparts at other schools prior to competitions to ensure that the student has access to facilities that are comfortable and safe. This notification should maintain the student's confidentiality. Under no circumstances should a student-athlete's identity as a transgender person be disclosed without the student's express permission.

SECTION TWO - LANGUAGE

1. Preferred Names — In all cases, teammates, coaches and all others in the school should refer to transgender student-athletes by a student's preferred name.
2. Pronouns — Similarly, in all cases, pronoun references to transgender student-athletes should reflect the student's gender and pronoun preferences.

SECTION THREE - DRESS CODES AND TEAM UNIFORMS

1. Dress Codes — Transgender student-athletes should be permitted to dress consistently with their gender identities. That is, a female-to-male transgender athlete should be permitted to dress as a male. A male-to-female should be permitted to dress as a female.
2. Uniforms — All team members should have access to uniforms that are appropriate for their sport and that they feel comfortable wearing. No student should be required to wear a gendered uniform that conflicts with the student's gender identity.

SECTION FOUR - IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

1. Opposing Teams — Without violating a transgender student's confidentiality or privacy, school leaders, athletic directors, and coaches should communicate with their counterparts at other schools prior to competitions in which a transgender athlete is participating about expectations for treatment of transgender student-athletes on and off the field. This does not require "outing" or otherwise identifying a particular student-athlete as transgender, but rather establishing general expectations for the treatment of all student-athletes, including those who may be transgender.

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SECTION FIVE - CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Confidentiality — Protecting the privacy of transgender student-athletes must be a top priority for all athletics department and affiliated school personnel. All medical information shall be kept confidential.

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APPENDIX

Language has immense power to shape our perceptions of other people. Using accurate language can help to overcome many of the misperceptions associated with gender and transgender people. Although the vocabulary related to transgender people continues to evolve, here are some working definitions and examples of frequently used (and misused) terms:

- **Biological/Anatomical Sex** — The physical characteristics typically used to assign a person's gender at birth, such as chromosomes, hormones, internal and external genitalia and reproductive organs. Given the potential variation in all of these, biological sex must be seen as a spectrum or range of possibilities rather than a binary set of two options.
- **Gender** — The complex relationship between physical traits and one's internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither as well as one's outward presentations and behaviors related to that perception. Biological sex and gender are different; gender is not inherently connected to one's physical anatomy
- **Gender Identity** — One's inner concept of self as male or female or both or neither. One's gender identity can be the same or different than the gender assigned at birth. Most people become conscious of their gender identity between the ages 18 months and 3 years. Most people have a gender identity that matches their assigned gender at birth. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their assigned gender. Some of these individuals choose to live socially as the other gender and may also hormonally and/or surgically change their bodies to more fully express their gender identity. All people have gender identity, not just transgender people.
- **Gender Expression** — Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. Gender expression also works the other way as people assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms, and other gendered characteristics. Many transgender people seek to make their external appearance—their gender expression—congruent with their internal gender identity through clothing, pronouns, names, and, in some cases, hormones and surgical procedures. All people have gender expression, not just transgender people.
- **Transgender** — Sometimes used as an 'umbrella term' to describe anyone whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. More narrowly defined, it refers to an individual whose gender identity does not match their assigned birth gender. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation (attraction to people of a specific gender.) Therefore, transgender people may additionally identify as straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Sexual
- **Orientation** — Term that refers to being romantically or sexually attracted to people of a specific gender. Our sexual orientation and our gender identity are separate, distinct parts of our overall identity. Although a child may not yet be aware of their sexual orientation, they usually have a strong sense of their gender identity.

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- **Genderqueer** — This term represents a blurring of the lines around gender identity and sexual orientation. Genderqueer individuals typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and sexual orientation. This term is typically assigned an adult identifier and not used in reference to preadolescent children.
- **Gender Nonconforming/Gender Variant** — Refers to individuals whose behaviors and/or interests fall outside what is considered typical for their assigned gender at birth. Someone who identifies as “gender nonconforming” is not necessarily transgender. To the contrary, many people who are not transgender do not conform to gender stereotypes in their appearance, clothing, physical characteristics, interests, or activities.
- **Gender Fluidity** — Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may even change from day to day. Gender fluid individuals do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of girls or boys.