Transcend

Transcend Australia
Thrive & Flourish

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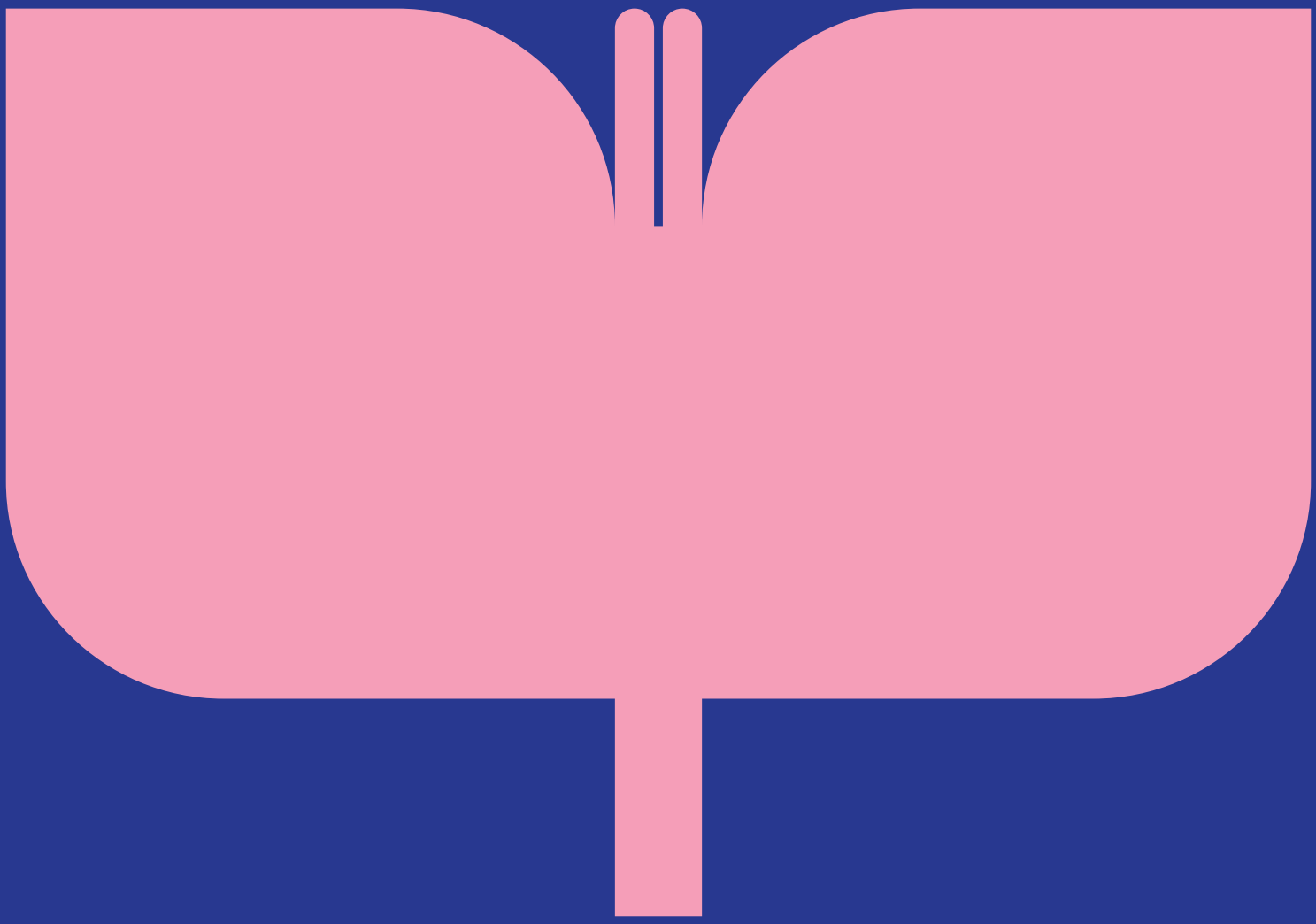
A Guide for Parents & Carers



Transcend

A Guide for Parents & Carers

Supporting Your Trans, Gender Diverse or Non-binary Child at School

Transcend

Acknowledgement of Country

Transcend Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the land, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We honour and pay our respects to their elders past and present. We recognise that sovereignty was never voluntarily ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal Land.

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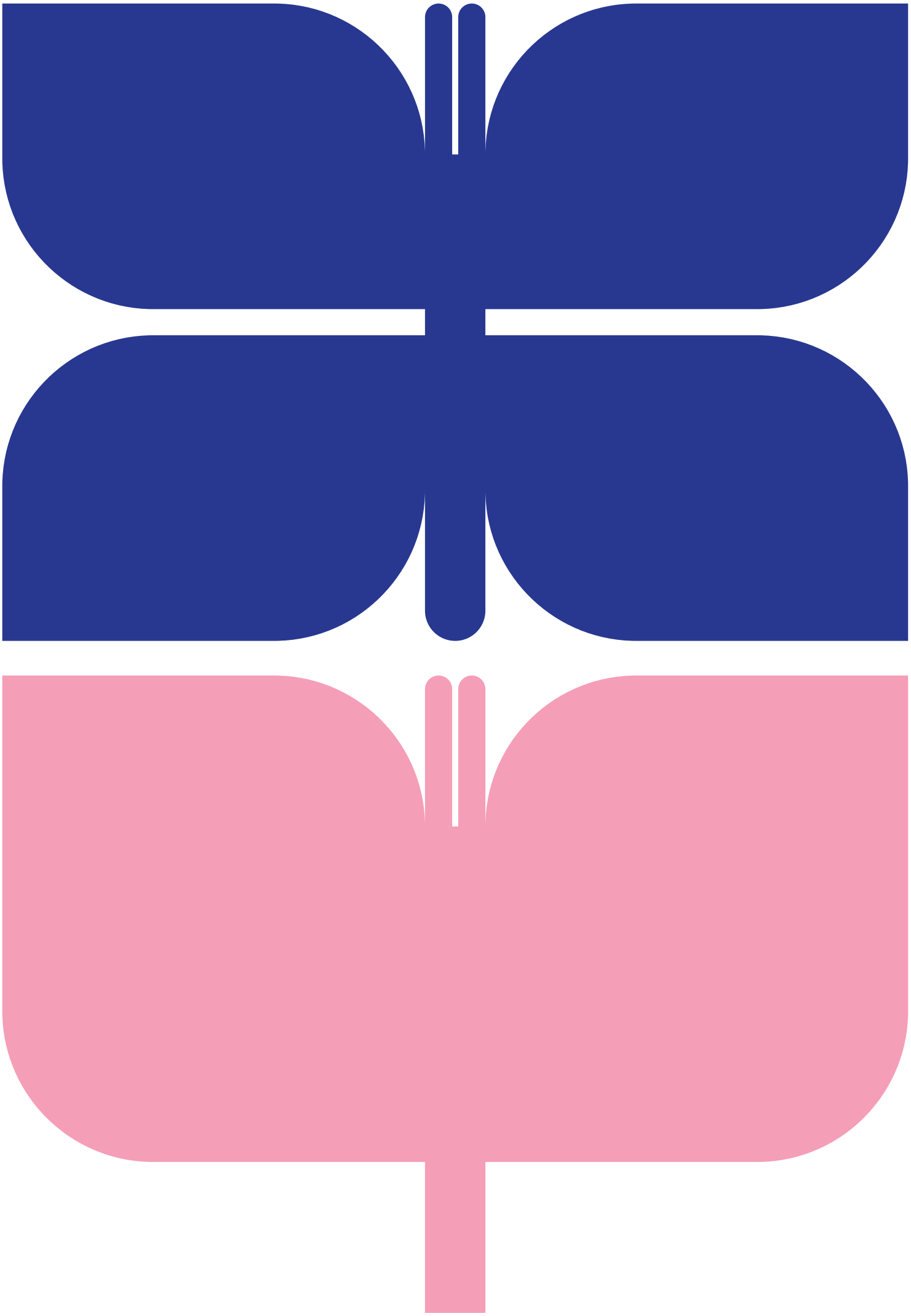

S1

Supporting your Trans, Gender Diverse or Non-binary Child at School

S1 Supporting Your Trans, Gender Diverse or Non-Binary Child At School

Children spend a large amount of their time at school. But it can be a challenging place; for you and your child or the child in your care. There may be no policy or procedure in place to support your child's gender affirmation, and you may find yourself having to help your child deal with bullying and discrimination. You may find yourself having to educate school staff and other parents.

This resource is designed to give you, the parent or carer of a trans, gender diverse or non-binary (TGDNB) child some tips on how to support and be an advocate for your child at school to ensure they can participate fully in their education and their school community.

There is also a template (appendix 5) to help guide you and the school through your child's gender affirmation. This information can also be used in conjunction with the **Guide for Schools**, which has been written for schools. It contains information which will also be useful for you and is a document you can share with your school. You can find the guide here on the Transcend Australia website.

1.1

Child & Young Person Centred Approach

It is important that your child is at the centre of the decision-making process. Agency and self-determination are important both as a learning experience for your child as it can teach them skills in self-advocacy, and as a contributor to positive health and wellbeing as it can give them a sense of control over their life. This obviously doesn't mean you leave them to deal with this all on their own but do try to allow them to be involved every step of the way.

Also make sure you check in with them regularly about how things are going at the school, because it is vital to make sure your child knows that you are willing to go back to the school and make changes, and continue to advocate if it is needed.

1.2

Everyone is on a Journey

Sure, it is a cliché, but it is true.

Remember this might be totally new for the school. Some of their responses to you and your child might not be great at first. Be prepared to have to educate the school. Be patient with the school and share with them as much information as you can. The school also needs to know that whilst this is new information for them, you and your child are coming to them because of where you are on your journey, and that you need them to be prepared to take action even if it is a little out of their comfort zone.

Please don't hesitate to contact Transcend if you need further advice, have any question or if you want to chat through your approach. We're here to help. You can contact us with this link: transcend.org.au/contact

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1.3

Take Your Time — If You Can

Speaking of journeys... not everything can or will be able to happen at once. This could be due to several factors - you're not ready, your child is not ready, the school is not ready, everyone is ready, but not for everything.

Your child might want to start by taking one step at a time, like wearing single items from the uniform that they feel most comfortable with, before moving onto the full uniform. Or they might like to first change their name and pronoun.

Timing might also play a factor; you might wait for the beginning of term, to start the term afresh. You may also need to give the classroom teacher a week or so to plan for how they are going to support your child.

Also, other things that need to happen like getting single gender-neutral cubicle toilets might not be able to happen due to budget issues for the school. But, while they're "saving up", there will always be something else they can do to ensure your child has access to a toilet where they feel comfortable and safe.

In the template provided below you'll see lots of things that might need to be addressed. Keep in mind that everything on the support plan doesn't need to happen at once. But it is good to discuss when each action will occur and for your child to be able to contribute to this planning. The school may need time to work out logistics to make sure things happen smoothly.

Having said all that- it may be a matter of urgency for your child's health and wellbeing that they are supported to affirm their gender very quickly. As it is often the case, trans, gender diverse and non-binary children and young people will likely have been thinking about this for a long time, and whilst it may be 'brand new' information for the school, and you, the child has told you and the school because they simply can't keep it in anymore.

1.4

Confidentiality[1]

The best rule of thumb with regards to confidentiality is:

1) Who needs to know and;
2) Will it benefit my child?

In an effort to control all the information about your child, you might think that it is best that everyone should know about what is happening for your child. But not every child wants to be known as the trans, gender diverse or non-binary child at the school. They might want to be known as other things — like the best kid at soccer, or the guitar, or simply as themselves.

Sometimes schools think that they need to tell everyone. And mostly, this desire to tell everyone comes from a good place. For example, they want to celebrate and support your child, they want to stop the rumour mill, or they don't want your child to be misgendered. But it can all also come from a different place. For instance, from a misunderstanding or prejudice about TGDNB people, fear or worry about what people - or other parents - will say or how they will respond.

Remember: Schools have an obligation to keep student confidentiality and they must not talk to other students or other parents about your child unless you and your child have given them permission to do so. Schools also have an obligation to support the health and wellbeing of all their students (more on this later).

1.

Tip: Ask the school about their policy and practice around confidentially and remind them that responding to the needs of your TGD or NB child is no different to any other private matter where they are responding to the individual needs of a student.

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1.5

Who to Tell & When

You might like to think about a staged process of telling people. At first you might just tell some key teachers and your child's class, then wait a couple weeks to see how things settle. It might be that this is enough; no one makes a big deal and after a short period of adjustment, everyone just moves on. (See below for other things to have in place so that your child isn't 'outed'.)

If you're part of a small school in a small community, you might figure that everyone is going to find out anyway. Even so, talking with the school about how they might support the sharing of this information is still worth doing. See appendix 1 for an example of a letter sent by a Principal to the whole school community.

It is of course fine to tell everyone – but only if your child agrees, and the school has some plans in place for how they are going to deal with any issues that might arise.

1.6

Coming Out/Inviting In

'Inviting in' is another way that you can think about the more common term of 'coming out'. It implies that you are choosing who you are going to tell, and that you are in control of this. Your child might like to think about "inviting" their class/homegroup into their life and sharing with them this new and exciting part of their life. Coming out, by comparison, can sound big and loud – and daunting.

Keep in mind though, that whether your child 'comes out' or 'invites in', it is not a once off event. It is something that they will be making decisions about for their whole lives at different times.

1.7

Telling the Class & Peers

There are lots of different ways to approach this:

- Your child might want to be the one that shares their information. Or they might not want to be there at all.
- They might want the teacher to share but be there for the questions and to help answer them.
- They could write a letter to their class that the teacher – or a friend – reads out.
- It could happen on a Friday and they take the day off, so that the students have time to ask their questions and get over their first reactions. It could happen at the start of term, or equally at the end.
- Once they have told their class or peers, school could also send home a letter with some supporting resources for families to continue the discussion.

Whatever you and your child choose to do, it will be an anxious and nerve-wracking moment. It could equally be an exciting and life affirming moment and go smoothly. If your child is in primary school, see appendix 2 for an example of how one primary school supported a trans student to tell their class. There are also a number of books that could help to have a safe classroom discussion.

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1.8

Telling Friends[2]

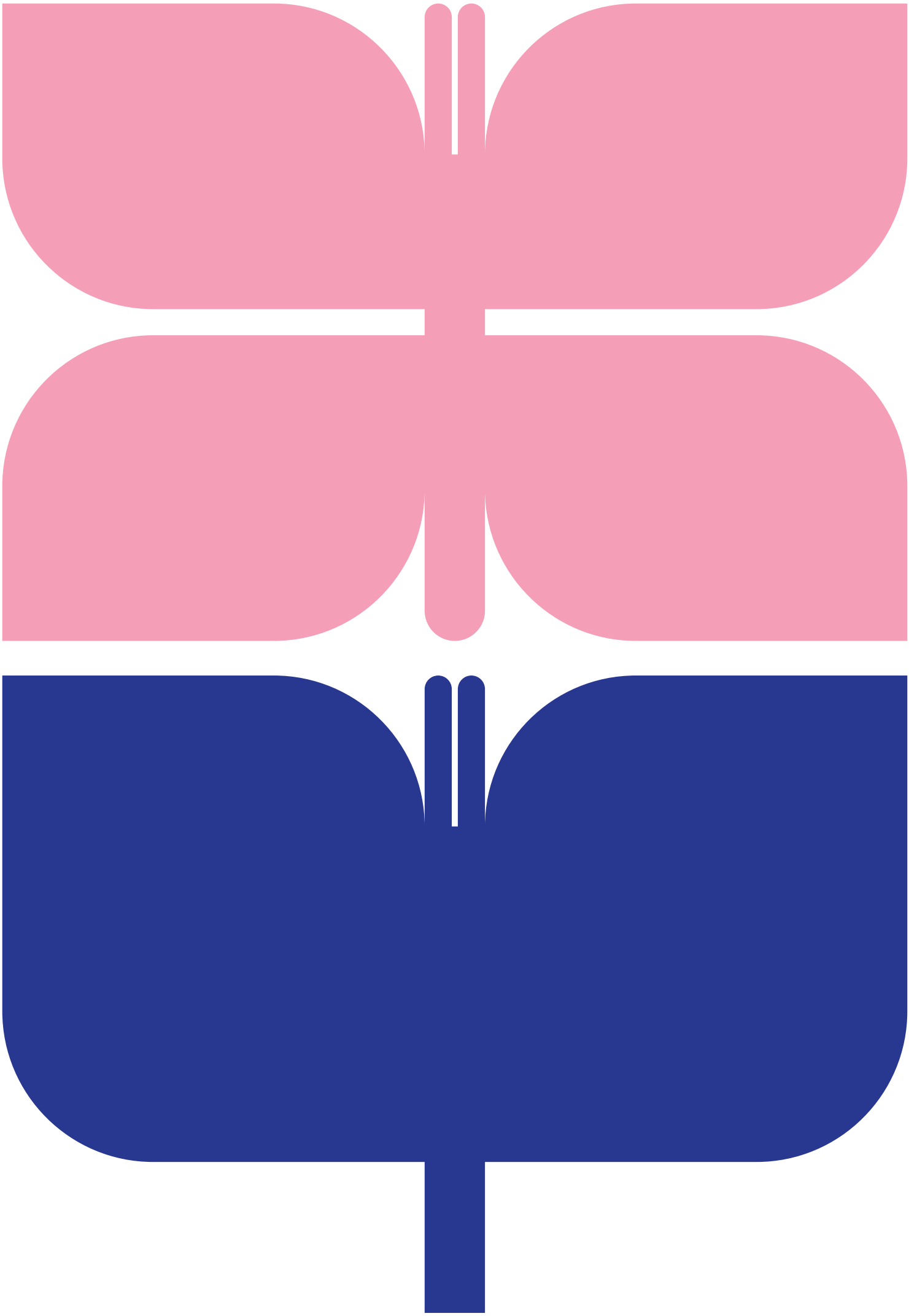
This can be the scariest thing, because it can feel as though it has the highest risk. Friends are so important, and the risk of rejection is real. But, telling friends can also be an affirming experience – especially if they respond with a big hug and say that they're 'cool' with it. If so, then your child will know that they have friends they know they can trust.

As always there are lots of different ways to go about doing this. A few things for you and your child to think about:

- Remember the concept of inviting in, vs coming out.
- Do not come out on behalf of your child, make sure they are comfortable with who you are telling.
- Consider carefully whether to use social media as the first big statement. You can lose control of information on social media and sometimes there are fewer filters when people respond.
- On the other hand, social media can also be a very positive space. Some people have taken a 'band aid' style approach: tell everyone, have a couple weeks of fielding responses, and hopefully then get on with living.
- Whichever way you decide to announce the changes in your child's life, ensure that you and your child are clear on the potential risks and benefits. If you do decide to use social media, have a plan beforehand to deal with difficult or less supportive responses – including those that may arise through social media 'sharing' of the child's disclosure.
- If you or your child experience abuse, you can report it to the e-Safety Commissioner.
- Try not to tell people in an angry outburst.
- When talking with friends, a conversation about confidentiality and trust should be part of this conversation. You may also consider following up with parents of your child's friends (especially if your child is younger), because just like you did, those parents will also have questions.

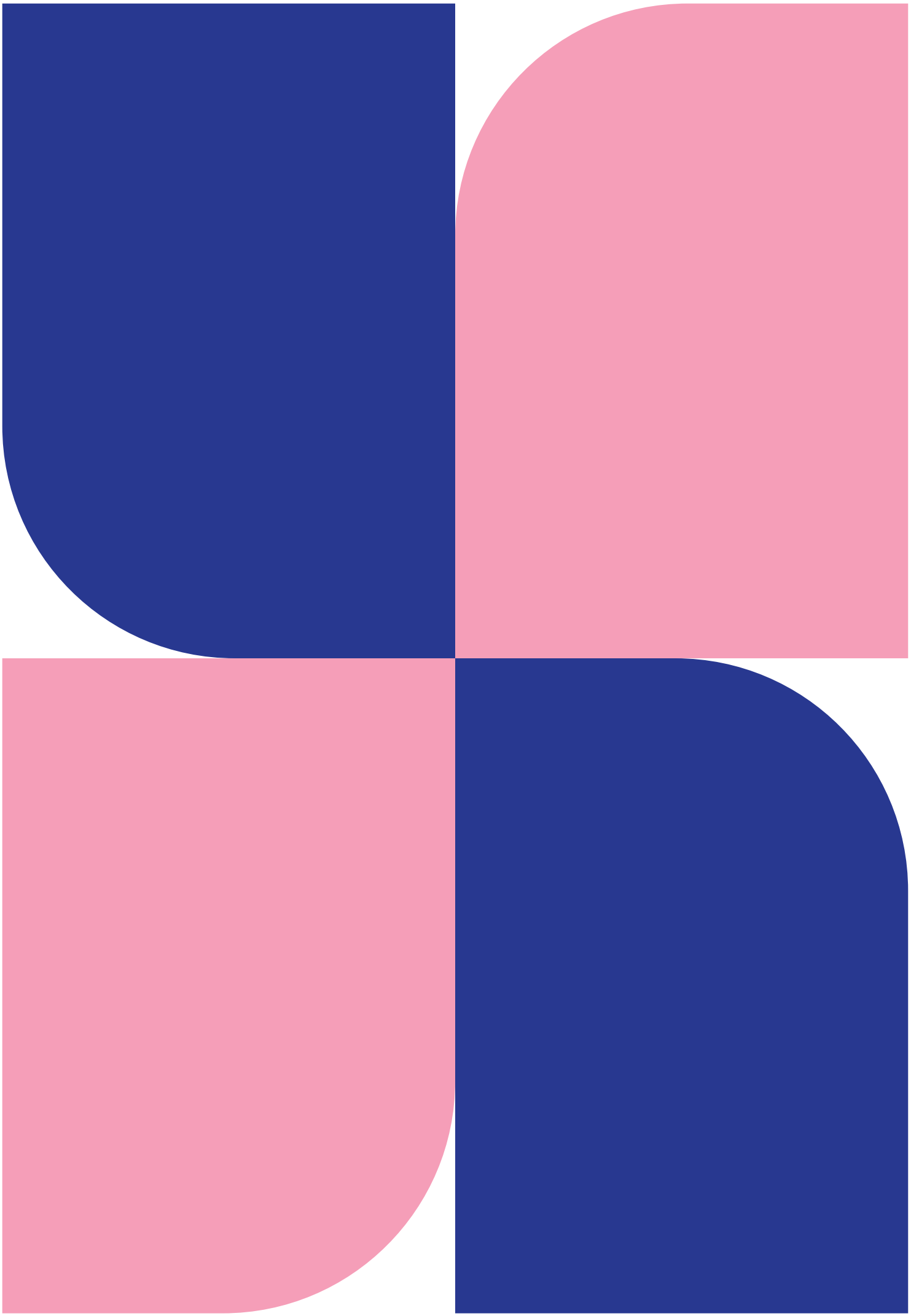
2.

Tip: There is no right or wrong way to tell people. Sometimes your child will be able to invite people into their lives, other times it will feel much more like they are 'coming out'. It will depend on your child and the circumstances, and as in all of life, there is so much that we can't control. Whatever the response from others; remind your child of how brave and courageous they are, tell them they can be proud of who they are and who they are becoming.



S2

Policy — It's Your Friend



S2 Policy – It's Your Friend

Try and become familiar with your school's and your state or territory's education department policies as these provide guidance to the school about their obligations to support your child. See appendix 3 for a list of education department policies in your state or territory.

Whilst not every school will have a policy that specifically supports TGDNB students, most states and territories should have policies around health and wellbeing, duty of care, and bullying. Make sure you do some research on your school's website and your state government's education department websites for these policies so that you can either refer to them or print them out and take them with you to meetings at schools. Sometimes schools won't know what the Department is saying in this space. It is a good idea to print out the policies and highlight the sections relevant to your experience and what you are asking the school to do.

Policy can and should be used by schools to support them to act. If a school is nervous about parent or school community responses to supporting a TGDNB student, remind the school that the policy is there to guide and support them to do this work and they can use some of the language in a relevant policy to develop their narrative for why they are supporting your child.

If the school is still not being helpful, then you can use policy more forcefully, pointing out the school's legal obligations and duty of care in relation to your child. You might like to refer to some anti-discrimination laws too. As your child's advocate, it's very reasonable to remind the school that they have an obligation to support your child and point them to the law and the policies that say this.

See appendix 3 below to find a list of policy from state and territory education departments.

2.1

You're Entitled to be an Advocate — Because Your Child has Rights & the School has Responsibilities

Remember that you are entitled to advocate strongly for your child and that the school has a responsibility and duty of care towards their health and wellbeing. Your child has a right to education, this is a fundamental human right. If your child does not feel safe at the school, if their health and wellbeing is suffering because the school is not being responsive to their needs, then they cannot remain engaged in learning.

Schools therefore have a responsibility to respond to the individual needs of every student to ensure that they are able to remain engaged and connected to the school and to be able to focus on their learning.

Framing your approach to the school in this way can help as it speaks a similar to the language schools themselves would use too.

Justice Connect, Justice Connect, an organisation that provides legal support and advice on human rights and discrimination, writes that:

"As a trans and gender diverse student in Australia, you have the same rights and protections under the law which is afforded to all students. Schools have a legal duty of care to protect students from risks of harm (that the school should be able to anticipate) and to do what is reasonable to ensure you are safe at school, so that you feel safe and protected when you are attending school."

Justice Connect have developed a range of facts sheets about rights for trans and gender diverse students in each state and territory which you can find here.

S2 Policy – It's Your Friend

2.2

But My Child is Still Being Bullied — What Should I Do?

Keep going back to the school until the supports and actions you have discussed and agreed upon are in place and are working. Bullying is a serious issue and can have lifelong impacts on a person.

Make a time to meet with them again within the fortnight to discuss how things are going (don't wait for something bad to happen). Hopefully, knowing that a meeting has been scheduled will mean that they are more conscious about monitoring actions. Also, make sure you document everything you discuss, for example by sending a follow up email, thanking the school for their time and outlining what was agreed upon. You might like to consider taking a support person along with you to the meetings. This could be a friend, or if your child has any professionals like a case worker, that person might be able to attend the meeting with you.

If the bullying doesn't stop after you have spoken or met with the school a few times, it would be worth speaking with someone in your state or territory's education department. If you are at an independent or Catholic school, it would be worth contacting the peak body which oversees them in your state or territory. For example, Independent Schools Victoria have a policy supporting gender affirmation. At first you might just send an email or make a phone call without mentioning the school. They can provide you with some local advice, and if this doesn't help, there may be staff in these regional offices who can help you to work with the school.

If it persists, you could contact your your relevant state or territory's human rights and equal opportunity commission about how they can support you. Schools might find this kind of approach as new or confronting, but it is important to be aware that an appeal to the Human Rights Commission is an option.

Finally, you might consider moving schools. This might feel extreme, but it can actually be a really positive action to take and it might enable your child to make a new start in their affirmed gender.

2.3

We're Starting at a New School: To Tell or Not to Tell?

This is entirely up to you. And it can depend on why you're at a new school. As mentioned, your child might just want to be themselves, and not be known as 'the trans kid'. In which case you may tell no one, or only one or two key teachers, but no students.

One of the main reasons you would tell some key people is to make sure that all the school records match and align with your child's gender identity and show their name accurately. Schools will have a central records management system, and this might also provide the information for things like the class roll or permission slips, which can be automatically generated. *It would be wise to have a conversation to ensure that the right information the right information is, firstly, in these record systems and, secondly, that the right information is being generated from them.*

If you have had to enrol using your child's birth certificate and this does not align with their gender identity and their chosen name, then making sure that the records are accurate is key.

S2 Policy – It's Your Friend

2.4

Toilets, Camps & Change Rooms[3]

This can be one of the most difficult things for you to negotiate with the school. It shouldn't be, but it often is.

First and foremost, your child should be allowed to use the toilet that aligns with their affirmed gender and/or that they feel most comfortable using. You and your child know that they are not pretending to be TGDNB so that they can spy on other students, and that there is no safety issue for other students. Your child is not a threat. It is unlikely that anyone will suggest that this is the case, but it may be the underlying, and possibly unconscious prejudice driving the direction of this conversation. This is not ok and the school should not be suggesting that, whether out of ignorance or transphobia.Make sure the focus of conversation is centred on the safety and wellbeing of your child. Bring it back every time to your child.

You may need to remind the school that your child is likely to be hyper vigilant about their body – particularly in change rooms – and that they should be taking the needs of your child into consideration, and worrying less about how all the other children are going to respond. If cisgender students are feeling uncomfortable with a TGDNB student using the toilet, then the school should educate those cisgender students who are feeling uncomfortable and, if need be, find those particular cisgender students another toilet.

Your child may feel embarrassed to talk about the use of toilets, so you may need to check in with the your child from time to time about this.

Finally, it can be worth informing schools that taking actions to make toilets a safe space will benefit all students. Because toilets aren't easily monitored, they can be a place where bullying takes place. If a school is considering making changes to their toilets, this is a good thing to tell them, because it can shift the focus from your child to all of the children.

For many nonbinary students, using gendered restrooms might feel especially unsafe, because others may verbally harass them or even physically attack them. Remind the school that your nonbinary child should be able to use the restroom that they believe they will be safest in. Nonbinary students can be supported by accepting their judgment about where they feel most comfortable when dealing with spaces that are based on binary gender distinctions. In an ideal world, gender neutral toilets are the best option for nonbinary and many trans students.

2.5

Camps, Extra-curricular Activities & Events

Again, the focus of this conversation should be about your child's right to participate and what the school is going to put into place to ensure this happens. It doesn't have to be complicated. Remind the school that your child will already be anxious about this, so having a discussion about how the camp is set up and the activities they will be doing is really important. Sometimes, activities or elements of them need to be changed or adjusted.

beforehand by the teacher such as: "I know wetsuits are meant to be tight fitting, but can this student have one size up?" No need to go into more detail than that.

3.

Confidentiallity Reminder:
The school does not need to inform the whole school community that a trans person is using a particular toilet. This is a private matter.

S2 Policy – It's Your Friend

Sometimes there are activities where students have to wear wet suits or harnesses for things like high ropes or abseiling. This can be anxiety inducing because of the way this equipment can emphasise body contours. You might need to get imaginative about how you work some of these things out. For example, if the excursion involves a wetsuit, the teacher could ask for a larger wetsuit and a rash vest/large t-shirt to wear. A quiet word with the instructor beforehand by the teacher such as: "I know wetsuits are meant to be tight fitting, but can this student have one size up?" No need to go into more detail than that. The important thing is that there is a plan in place before the moment occurs so that whatever is the case, your child's participation isn't diminished and your child isn't outed, made to feel uncomfortable, or embarrassed.

With regards to sleeping arrangements, most camps now have smaller rooms that sleep only 3 or 4 students. If this is the case, the school can arrange to have your child share one of these rooms with their friends. No matter their gender. This can be a challenging thought for some schools but again, a conversation with only the people that need to know should sort this out. The student's preference as to where they wish to sleep should inform this decision. If the dorm rooms are separated by gender, the student should sleep in the dorm room which aligns with their gender identity. For gender diverse or non-binary students, they should be allowed to sleep in the dorm room where they feel safest and most comfortable.

You may need to have several meetings with the school to prepare for camp.

2.6 Sport & Physical Education[4]

Participation should be the name of the game! If your child wants to participate in sport, then the conversation should be around what a school will do to enable participation. Research shows that involvement in sport and physical activity is a protective factor, not just for physical, but also mental health.

When a child is under 13, there should be no question and they should be allowed to participate however they like. There should be no obligation to exclude a student on the basis of 'strength, stamina or physique'. Schools should take a participatory approach which enables the inclusion of all students.

Ask the school whether sporting activities need to be divided by gender. For example, there may be opportunities to include more mixed teams/events in your sports/PE program. If activities are divided by gender, students should be able to participate in the gender they identify as or feel most comfortable in.

You should discuss what can be put in place to ensure your child can get changed safely. You may need to remind the school that this can be a major source of anxiety for TGDNB students and ensure that the focus on the conversation is on how your child is feeling, not on how other students are feeling.

A school could allow your child to come to school and remain in their PE uniform on days that PE and/or sport are part of the schedule, or they may need to provide an alternative, private space for the student to change. You may also need to consider arrangements for different settings and external sports providers.

4. The school should never force your child to get changed in a space that does not align with their gender and where they do not feel safe.

The Human Rights Commission has published guidelines on transgender and gender diverse inclusion in sport.

S2 Policy – It's Your Friend

Things you can remind a school about:

- Most students feel uncomfortable in change rooms and are vigilant about who sees their bodies, TGDNB students are likely to be hyper vigilant.
- Participation is a right and part of your child's education, so the school needs to work out how to enable their participation.
- Challenge schools if they bring up the 'stamina and strength' argument to try and exclude or limit your child's participation. It is normal for some students to be stronger, or faster or better than other students – no matter their sex or gender.
- Non-binary students might feel particularly conflicted having to choose a team when divided by gender. They should be allowed to choose the team they feel most comfortable participating in, and this might change from activity to activity. It's about participation, not competition.

2.7

Professional Development for School Staff

While you might have taken up the responsibility to educate the school, this responsibility is not yours or your child's. The school should be encouraged to arrange some professional development from organisations that provide LGBTIQ+ diversity and inclusion training. In some States and Territories, this option might be available free of charge to the school. Traning sessions can still be done in a confidential way. Your child does not have to be the centre of the discussion nor be at the session. It is also not imperative that your child is 'outed' as part of this training to justify it. See appendix 4 to find some organisations that might be able to provide training to a school in your state or territory.

2.8

What Will I Need to Discuss with the School?

The template below (appendix 5) can be used as a conversation guide and aims to cover all the things that you would need to discuss with the school. Also see the resource **Guide for Schools** on the Transcend Australia website, which provides a step by step guide to using this template.

2.9

External Agencies & Other Resources

There are many local services and mental health providers that can provide support for transgender and gender diverse young people. Sometimes the student will be receiving support from an external agency and they may wish for this person to be involved in the planning for school. It is a good idea to become familiar with the support services available in your area.

You can find a list of services on the Transcend Australia website. If there is not a suitable service listed, please contact Transcend and we will see if we can help as new supports and services may be available.

2.10

Final Word

Remember, you are not alone. There is a whole community of families and carers who have gone through or are currently experiencing something similar. You do not need to solve this on your own.

If you are needing some extra support, have any questions, or just want to chat through your next steps, please contact us at Transcend Australia or email us at families@transcendaus.org.

A1

Appendix 1: Sample Letter from a Principal to School Community

A1 Appendix 1: Sample Letter From a Principal to School Community

You should adapt this letter to suit your child's and school circumstances. It is just one example. He/him pronouns are used for ease of reading. The names used and example here is fictitious, although is based on examples of how some principals have communicated with their school.

A1 Appendix 1: Sample Letter From a Principal to School Community

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write to advise you that one of our students, Jennifer Smith has asked her family and the school to recognise him as a boy and to be now called Mark. Please carefully read and consider the remainder of this letter which has the support of Jennifer's parents Samantha and Ian Smith. You will have known Mark as having the name Jennifer and as she/her. In this letter, and from now on we will be calling Jennifer, Mark and using the pronouns of he/him.

Mark has always self-identified as a boy and this has been something that the family and close friends have known for many years, so whilst this information might be new for you, this is something that the family and Mark have deliberated over for sometime. Many people in our community who know Mark and his family will not be surprised. Mark is a fantastic individual; smart, kind, cheeky sense of humour, caring and loving and Mark is still this person, it is just that now he wants everyone to know this part of him too, that he is a boy.

I have been in conversation with Samantha and Ian about Mark for some time now as we have planned for how we will support Mark at the school. Samantha and Ian have sought medical advice and support and are working through their concerns and fears but above all they show courage and unabated love and support for Mark. Like any family, they want what is best for Mark.

Mark and his family need your support on this journey, which is why we are sending this letter to you. As a school community I believe that we are perfectly positioned to be able to provide this support. Our school values of _____ attest to our aspirations as a school for our students. Our staff are committed to support each and every student to be their best, this means supporting the whole student. We are proud of the positive role that the school community has in influencing our students and in helping them to be people who are accepting of diversity and who care for one another.

The most powerful influence over children is that of their parents or significant carer. So it is with this in mind that I ask, and expect our school community in the form of parents and carers, to restrain from gossip, malicious and/or transphobic conversations, particularly in the vicinity of your children and those of others concerning our student and friend Mark. You can find more information and resources on the Transcend Australia website.

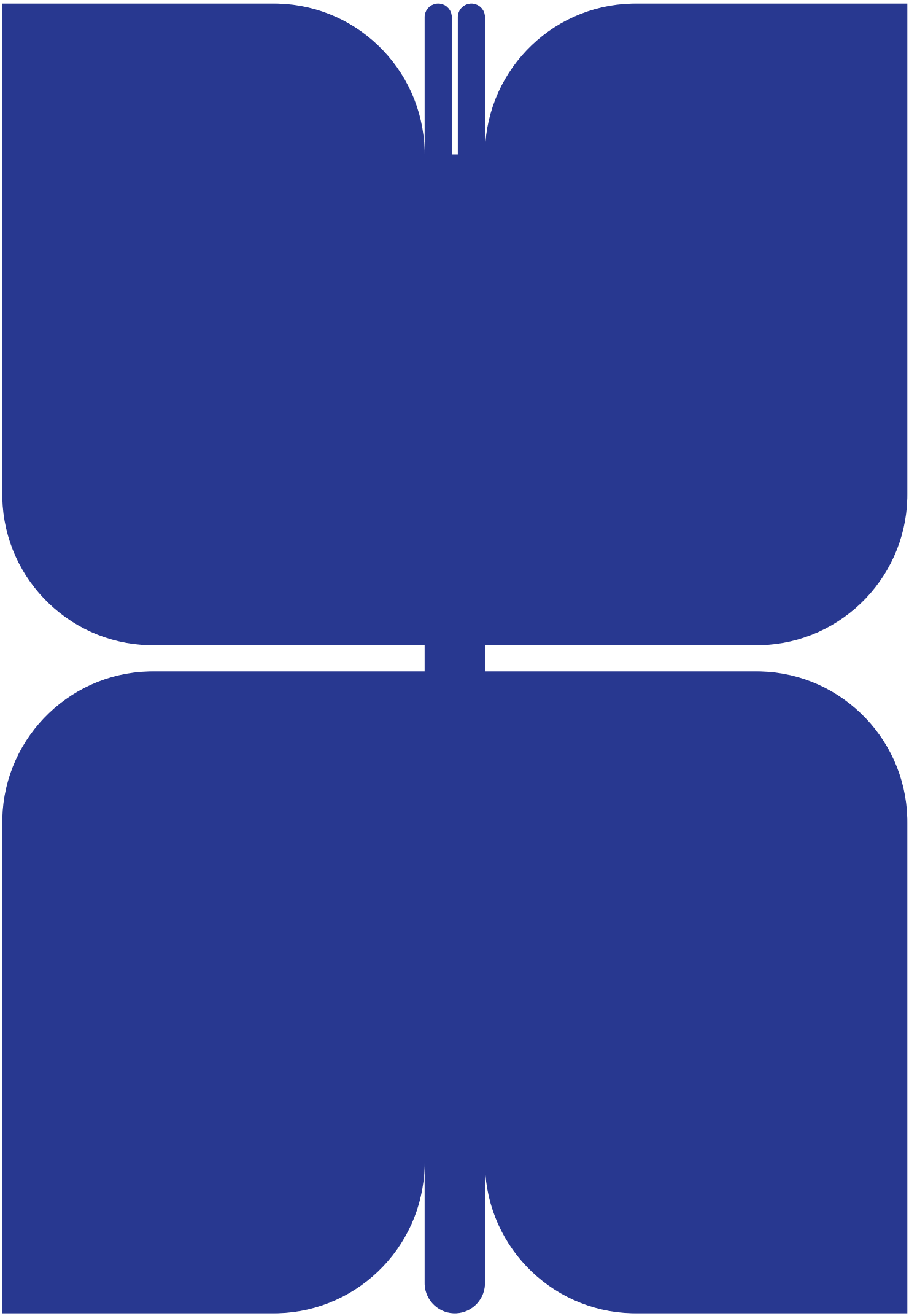
I believe that that is where we the school community can really shine and rightly claim to be a great school when we accept Mark as who he is with a minimum of fuss. We simply carry on as usual; only we now have a student we call Mark and not Jennifer, he not her.

I understand that there are those who may not always agree with the support we are providing Mark, however as the Principal I will continue to make decisions and take actions that support all children in our school. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please make an appointment to see me.

I urge you to not make this a topic of conversation amongst yourselves and if you do have any concerns that you speak with me directly. Samantha and Ian have said that they are also comfortable to talk about their journey and that of Mark's with any of you.

A2

Appendix 2: Talking to Your Class & Other Students About Gender Affirmation



A2 Appendix 2: Talking to Your Class & Other Students About Gender Affirmation

Things to Consider Before Speaking With Your Class or Other Students

- Do you want to be there for the conversation? If not, what information would you like the teacher to be sharing with the class? Perhaps you could prepare some speaking points for the teacher.
- If you are going to be there, will you say something as well or just let the teacher say everything? How will you prepare — will you write it down, like a letter or speech?
- Will you stay for the whole session?
- Do you want to answer questions from students?
- Would you like the conversation to be specifically about you or would you like it to be kept as a general conversation/lesson about gender diversity?
- Does it need to be a direct discussion regarding gender or can it be incorporated into other subjects discussed in class for example PE, Humanities?
- How would you like the teacher to follow up with the class about the conversation?

Suggestions for the Teacher/Adult Facilitating the Conversation

- Use a rights perspective when discussing why respecting the identity of the student is so important. You may be able to link this back to your school values and expectations.
- It might also be useful to have a member of the wellbeing team in the class for this conversation.
- Always focus on identity and expression, not body parts.
- Be prepared to have follow up conversations and sessions with the class. Make sure students know that they can approach you with questions after the discussion.
- Ensure that you check in with the student after the session and regularly from then on.

A2 Appendix 2: Talking to Your Class & Other Students About Gender Affirmation

Classroom Discussion Narrative

The following narrative was developed for a primary school setting and is designed as a guide that a teacher might be able to use to help facilitate the conversation. But it could also be used in a secondary setting with age appropriate adaptations. You and your child could use this to get some ideas about how you would like to tell the class.

Begin the Conversation

- Set the scene and create space for a confidential and sensitive conversation. Use a meeting space that is usual for your class.
- Let students know that you are about to discuss something important that requires careful listening and thoughtfulness. Remind students of expectations/ norms about respect.
- Start the conversation with something similar to: “A friend of ours has chosen to share some important information with you all, that person is someone that most of you know as _____. _____ would like you to know that they identify as trans/gender diverse/nonbinary.”
- Ask students if they understand what this means - allow this to become a conversation, and not just you informing them.

Clarify Students’ Understanding with the Following Explanations

- Trans/gender diverse/nonbinary means that a person’s gender identity differs from that which was assigned at birth. For example, a person who was assigned a female identity at birth may identify as male.
- In _____’s case, they have always identified as male but this didn’t match the female gender they were assigned at birth. By sharing this information with you, we are affirming their gender identity as male.
- It is not just about how a person expresses their identity — i.e. how they look on the outside or present themselves to the world — but about how they feel inside.
- Allow think time and avoid rushing through this — students may need some moments to process.
- Invite clarifications, but make sure students understand that it may not be appropriate to answer all questions (see notes below about how to respond to inappropriate questions).

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Discuss What it Means for the Student, Our Class and School

- The first priority is to celebrate and support _____. It takes a lot of courage to share something so personal and we would like you to take a moment to recognise how brave this is.
- _____ would like you to know that he identifies as a male/as a boy and from today on would like everyone to use the pronouns 'he/him'.
- His chosen name is _____ and he would like you all to start using this. You will hear all his teachers use this name from now on.
- You don't need to do anything more than this and you can go about your interactions with him as per normal and maintain your usual level of friendship.
- _____ is exactly the same person you have always known – his personality, likes/dislikes/hobbies/sense of humour/skills haven't changed.
- The best thing you can do is be inclusive and friendly – that way _____ will know you are being supportive without you having to say/do anything more.
- You can refer to _____ as a boy/male, you do not need to refer to him as a transgender male/boy.
- Maintain _____'s privacy – understand that he has willingly chosen to share this information with you, but it is not yours to share on. Use his name and his pronouns openly, but do not walk around sharing his confidential information. (But you should let students know that they can come and talk to you, or to their parents/carers if they have any questions).
- We will look out for _____ and make sure that people are being respectful and inclusive – tell an adult if you suspect that someone is being neither of those things.
- Allow time for thoughts and invite clarifications, but make sure students understand that it may not be appropriate to answer all questions (see notes below about how to respond to inappropriate questions).

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Pre-empt Questions from Students

What do I do if I accidentally say 'she/her' or use ___ (their old name)?

- Don't panic: _____ understands it might take people a little while to get used to using a different name.
- Try and correct yourself on the spot, if able to do so without making a big fuss.
- Help each other use _____ /he/him.
- Avoid making a big deal if you hear someone else you know use _____ she/her.

Am I allowed to ask _____ questions?

- If you think it's a question you would ask any other friend — then think carefully and go ahead if you're sure.
- If you think you wouldn't ask another friend the same question, then perhaps check with a teacher first.
- If you wouldn't be comfortable with someone asking you the same question — don't ask it.
- Always ask yourself: do I need to know?
- If in doubt, always check with your teacher or your parents first.

A student might ask if this means _____ is gay/or might be confused with the differences between gender and sexuality.

- You might need to clarify that gender identity and sexuality are two different things.
- Sexuality is about who you are attracted to.
- Gender identity is about how you identify — as a male or female or neither male nor female.

What to do if a student asks an inappropriate question?

- Remember it's natural for students to ask questions — if they ask something that we recognise as being inappropriate, avoid telling them off and instead explain why that question is not OK.
- Examples might be: what genitals do they have? What sexuality are they etc.
- Refer students back to: 'Do we usually ask this information about each other?" No ... so we don't need to do so in this case either.
- A basic response to any inappropriate questions is to guide students to consider whether they would ask the same question of anyone else. If the answer is 'Maybe' or 'No', then it is perhaps best to stop and check the question with an adult.

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Finish the Session

- I'm really proud of the way you have listened/shared your understandings during this conversation etc.
- Set high expectations: eg: we all know you will be supportive and confidential about this. We expect to see things continue as per usual, and we expect to hear stories of support and acceptance.
- This isn't a topic for conversation in the school yard or on social media - remember this is not your story/ information to share. You are a person who has been trusted to look after this information. Again, remind the students to come and speak to you if they have any questions.

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Appendix 3: State & Territory Education Department Support for Trans, Gender Diverse & Non-binary Students

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Appendix 3: State & Territory Education Department Support for Trans, Gender Diverse & Non-binary Students

Knowing about policy and legislation which supports your child will be very helpful for when you approach your school. It is a good idea to print out the relevant documents, read and highlight the sections that you think are most applicable. Take these with you to the school so that you can use them if the school is not responding as they should be. There are also links here to the human rights and/or equal opportunity commissions in your state or territory, they will be a helpful source of advice and information and may also be able to provide you with advocacy assistance.

National Resources

Transcend Australia
Transcend Australia's purpose is to support, affirm and celebrate the lives of trans & gender diverse children and their families and carers. We provide information, support and referrals to families across Australia and work to empower trans and gender diverse children and young people. Transcend Australia also provides support and training for organisations and schools.

Transforming Families
Transforming Families is an academic and community collaboration supporting parents of gender diverse children. Find research, resources and support for your family: transformingfamilies.org.au

The Student Wellbeing Hub
Funded by the Federal government, it is a resource hub for parents, teachers and students to build safe, inclusive and connected school communities that promote wellbeing and learning.

A guide for schools about supporting a student to affirm their gender at school: studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educator s/resources/supporting-a-student-to-affirm- or-transition-gender-identity-at-school

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework is based on evidence that demonstrates the strong association between safety, wellbeing and learning. The language in this booklet will be helpful if you are needing to advocate to the school about inclusion, using a wellbeing framework: studentwellbeinghub.edu.aumedia/9310/aswf_booklet.pdf

All of Us is a Health and Physical Education resource for years 7 & 8 on the topic of gender and sexual diversity. Includes some great short videos of people talking about their experiences of being LGBTI: studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/ resources/all-of-us-unit-guide

Justice Connect
Has a LGBTIQ resource hub with a series of fact sheets, including some with advice about your legal rights at school in each state and territory: justiceconnect.org.au/resources

A3 Appendix 3: State & Territory Education Department Support for Trans, Gender Diverse & Non-binary Students

ACT

Justice Connect
- Your legal rights at school
- How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia

ACT Government
- Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative

ACT Department of Education
- Support for Students and Families

NT

Justice Connect
- Your legal rights at school
- How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia

NT Government
- Fact Sheet fot TGD young people

NSW

Justice Connect
- NSW:Your legal rights at school.
- NSW:How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia.

NSW Department of Education
- Transgender students in schools.
- Biased-based bullying fact sheet

QLD

Justice Connect
- Your legal rights at school
- How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia

Queensland Government
- Support for young people who identify as LGBTIQ+

Queensland Department of Education
- Diversity in Queensland Schools – Information for Principals

A3 Appendix 3: State & Territory Education Department Support for Trans, Gender Diverse & Non-binary Students

SA

Justice Connect
- Your legal rights at school
- How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia

South Australia Department of Education
- Gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse children and young people
- Supporting gender diverse,

VIC

Safe Schools
- Guide to making your school safe and inclusive for LGBTIQA+ students.

Justice Connect
- Your legal rights at school.
- How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia.

Victorian Government
- Inclusive Language Guide.

TAS

Justice Connect
- Your legal rights at school
- How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia

Tas Department of Education
- Supporting Sexual and Gender Diversity in Schools and Colleges Guidelines

WA

Justice Connect
- Your legal rights at school
- How to deal with gender discrimination and transphobia

WAAC
- LGBTIQ+ Education and Inclusion training

School Sports WA
- Inclusion and Trasngender Students

A3 Appendix 3: State & Territory Education Department Support for Trans, Gender Diverse & Non-binary Students

Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commissions

These are a great source of information and advice, and some may even be able to offer training to the school.

Australian Human Rights Commission
humanrights.gov.au/our-work/lgbti

ACT Human Rights Commission
hrc.act.gov.au/discrimination

NSW Anti-discrimination Commission
antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au

NT Anti-discrimination Commission
adc.nt.gov.au

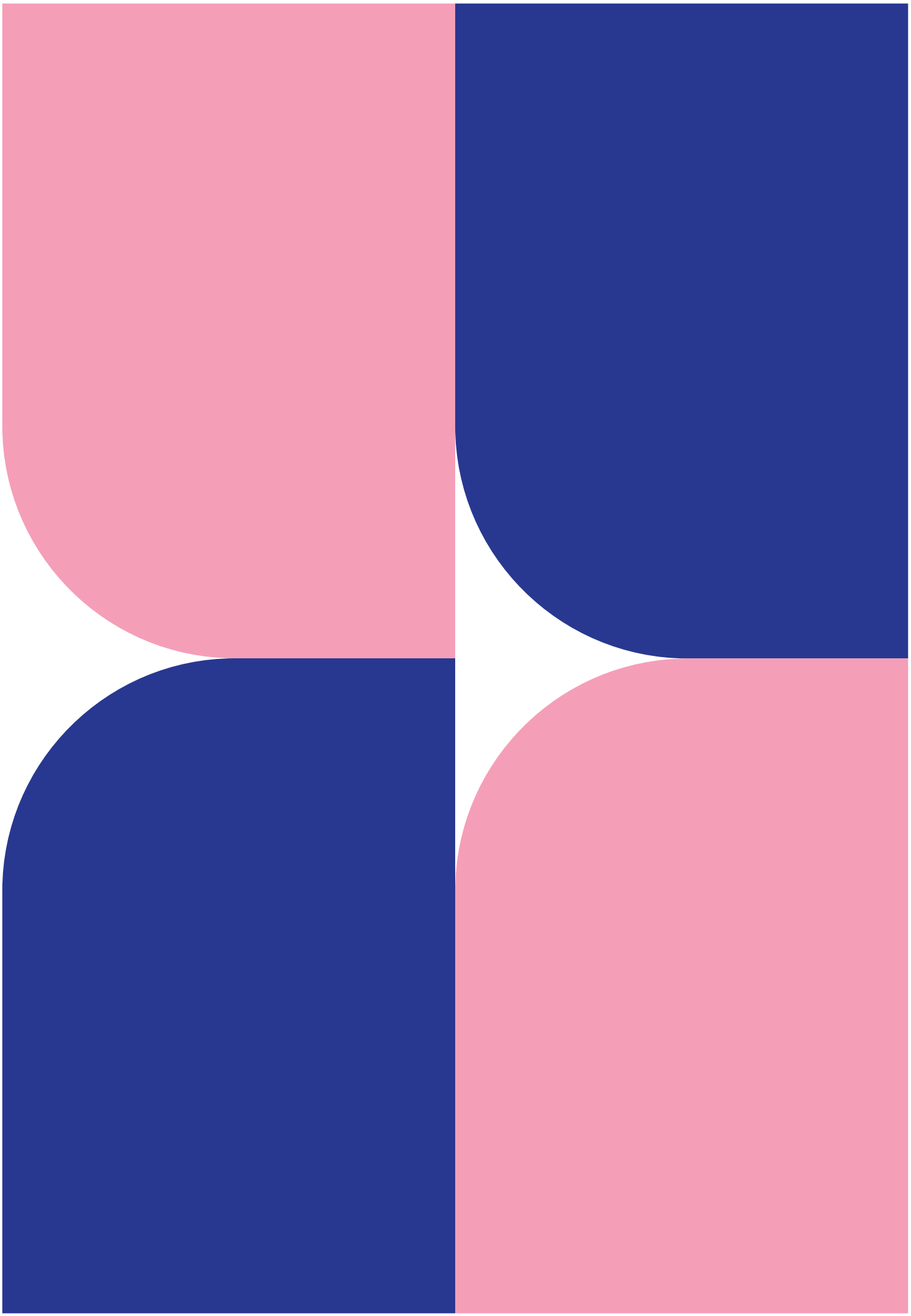
QLD Human Rights Commission
qhrc.qld.gov.au

SA Equal Opportunity Commission
eoc.sa.gov.au

TAS Equal Opportunity
equalopportunity.tas.gov.au

VIC Human Rights & EO Commission
humanrights.vic.gov.au

WA Equal Opportunity Commission
eoc.wa.gov.au



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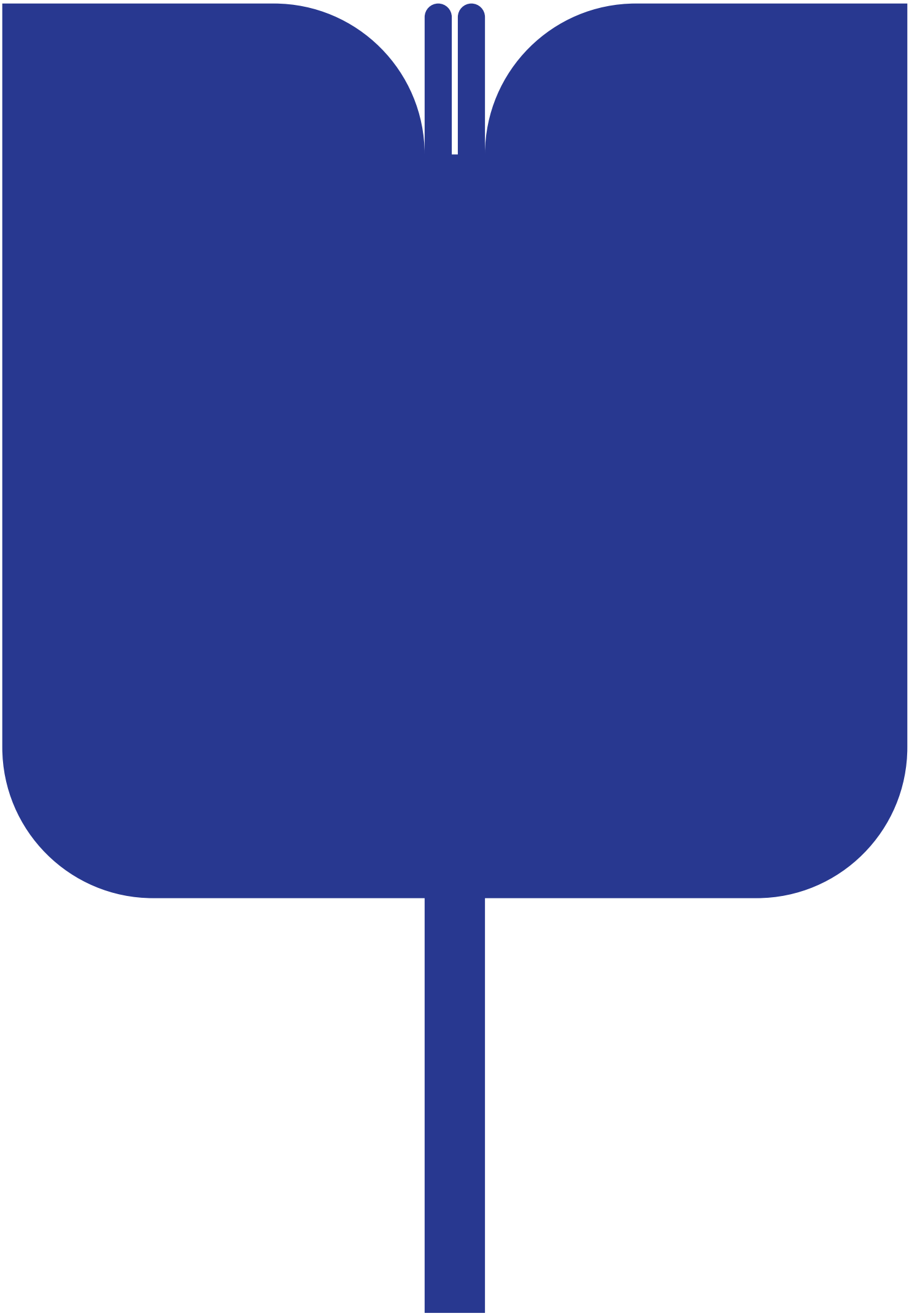
Appendix 4: Diversity & Inclusion Training and Advice



A4 Appendix 4: Diversity & Inclusion Training and Advice

This is by no means a definitive or extensive list. Some of these organisations may just be able to point you in the right direction to someone who can provide training. Every region is different, and if you are in a regional or rural area, it can be more difficult to find an appropriate trainer.
If you are unable to find someone there are many great YouTube videos that might help. Also the education resource All of Us, although designed for year 7 and 8s, is actually a great resource for teachers to also learn about LGBTI diversity. This was written by the Safe Schools Coalition Australia and you can find this at the Student Wellbeing Hub.

You can also contact Transcend Australia for more recent updates on training available indifferent areas, or we may be able to put you in contact with someone who knows. transcendaus.org/contact

ACT

A Gender Agenda
Will be able to provide localised advice and connections.
genderrights.org.au/about-aga/

NSW

Gender Centre
gendercentre.org.au/services/family- support-services

NT

NT AIDS & Hepatitis Council (NTAHC)
ntahc.org.au/contact

QLD

Australian Transgender Support Association Queensland
Advice on locally available training. atsaq.org.au

True
true.org.au/Education/Course-Catalogue/education-community-services

SA

Shine SA
Provides a range of services to support schools to implement a whole school approach to relationships and sexual health education. shinesa.org.au/support-for-schools/

shinesa.org.au/community-information/ sexual-gender-diversity/gender-wellbeing/

TAS

Working It Out
Includes resources, counselling, education programs, and information sessions for students.
workingitout.org.au

VIC

Safe Schools
The Safe Schools program is managed and delivered directly by the Department of Education and Training. The program provides advice and training to all schools in the state including primary and secondary government schools and catholic and independent schools. https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-schools

Transgender Victoria
tgv.org.au

WA

Inclusive Education WA
waaids.com/item/773-inclusive-education- wa.html

The Freedom Centre
Will be able to provide localised advice.
freedom.org.au

TransfolksofWA
www.transfolkofwa.org

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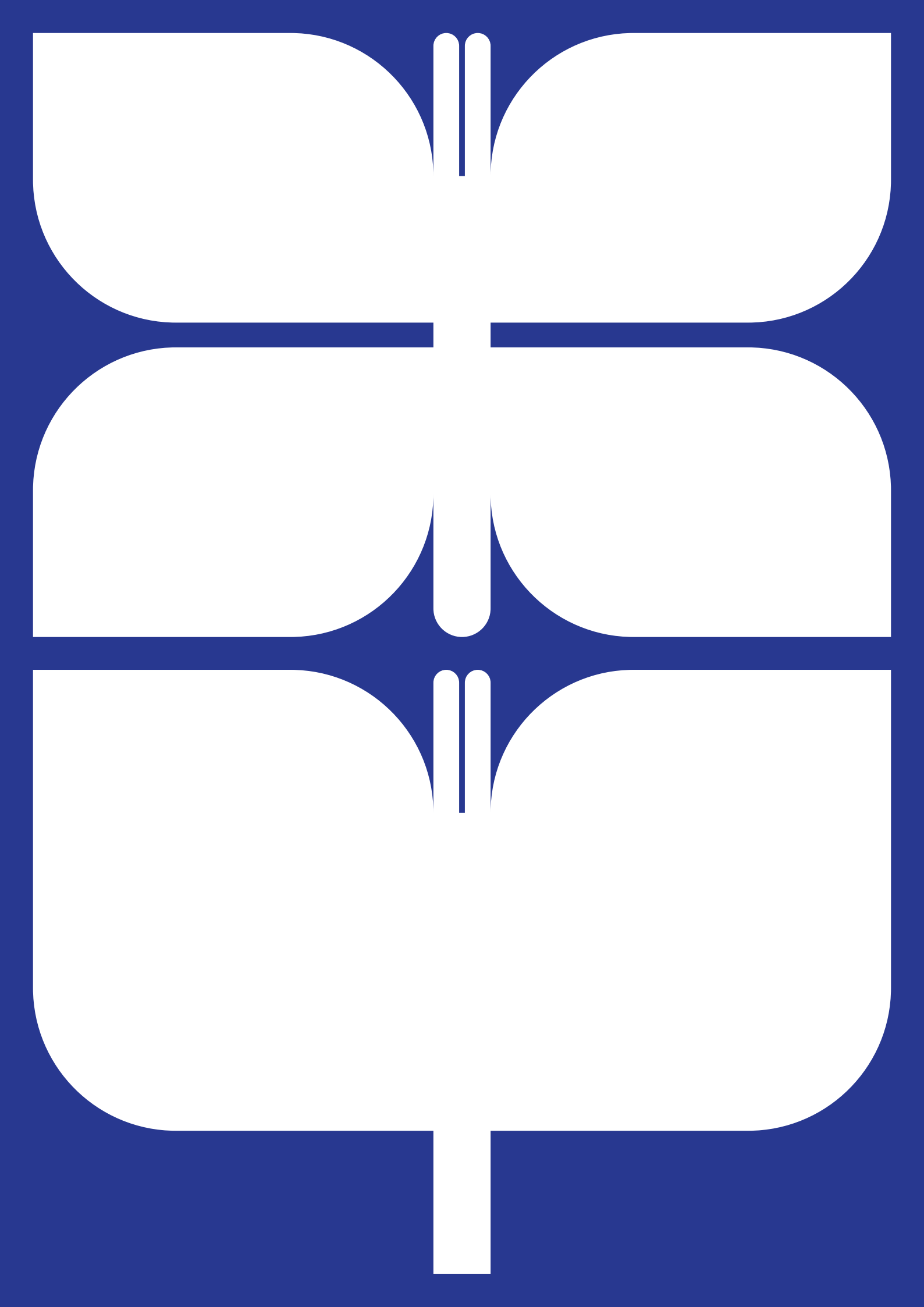
Appendix 5: Student Support Plan — Gender Affirmation



Student Support Plan — Gender Affirmation

Acknowledgement:
This plan has been adapted and developed over a number of years by a range of people in the LGBTI youth sector in Victoria. This will help to guide a conversation to support a student with affirming their gender at school.

Two things to keep in mind:
1. Make sure you keep the school accountable about things on this template that haven't yet been implemented, and;
2. Keep in mind that the timeframes you have set may need to change to meet your child's needs.

Affirming Name:	Parent/Carer Name:
Affirming Pronouns:	
Previous Name:	Contact Information:
Year Level:	
Class Group:	Are Parent Carer(s) aware and supportive?
Date:	
Siblings at school:	Are they aware? Are they supportive? Will they need extra support?
Who is part of the school staff support team/group?	This should be made up of a team of staff that the student feels comfortable in talking to.
How often will the support group meet?	This may change over time.
Who is the main contact person?	
Who would the student like to speak with at school if issues arise?	
How do they access this person?	
Time Frame	

Transcend Australia
Thrive & Flourish
transcend.org.au
info@transcend.org.au

Suppport Categories	Management & Support Strategies	Responsible Person
School Documents & Records What school records would the student like changed? Name, gender identity and marker? Think about the documents where the student's name and/or gender appears (eg. class lists, academic records). Who will update the school records? Who will check and update other official school software packages?		
Privacy & Confidentiality Who is aware the student is affirming their gender? Are these people at school or community members? Who needs to be informed? What needs to be shared? (or doesn't need to be shared) How will the student's privacy be maintained?		
Timeframe for Gender Affirmation When will this occur? Note: a student may not make all the changes at the same time, they may have a more staged approach. Confirm a date for the changes to be made at school.		
School Uniform & Policy What uniform items does the student feel comfortable to wear? Do new uniform items need to be considered? What arrangements are needed to support any uniform changes for the student? Look at uniform policy. Is it gendered? Can it just be a list of uniform items for anyone to wear? Note: PE uniforms can be used as an interim, this should not be an ongoing solution.		
Toilets & Changing Rooms What toilets would the student prefer to use? What change rooms would the student prefer to use? If events outside of school are taking place (swimming, etc.) clarify these arrangements with the student.		
School Camps, Events & Extra-curricular What accommodation would make the student feel comfortable? Are there people who need to be informed? (Keeping in mind the student's privacy) Are there any extra arrangements for activities, toileting, changes spaces, etc. that need to be considered for the student?		

Suppport Categories	Management & Support Strategies	Responsible Person
School Sports & Physical Education What support does the student need in order to feel safe/comfortable playing sport and taking part in PE?		
Other Spaces Are there other places and spaces at school where you don't feel safe? Are there times at school when you don't feel safe? Are you experiencing any cyber bullying? Discuss options to respond to this. Revisit this question.		
Communication to Staff Who else on staff would the student like to be informed? (Keeping in mind the student's privacy) Will all staff need to be informed? How would the student like this to happen? Who is responsible for informing relief staff of the plan (if appropriate/necessary)?		
School Community Response Considerations Who will respond to any potential community concerns? What information will you provide to staff so that they are responding correctly? Key question: What does the student want people to know about them? (Note: You need to affirm facts but maintaining confidentiality is paramount.)		
Bullying & Discrimination Is the student experiencing bullying? Has there been any discrimination towards the student? Has it been dealt with? Is there anything else you would like the school to do?		
School Camps, Events & Extra-curricular What accommodation would make the student feel comfortable? Are there people who need to be informed? (Keeping in mind the student's privacy) Are there any extra arrangements for activities, toileting, changes spaces, etc. that need to be considered for the student?		

Suppport Categories	Management & Support Strategies	Responsible Person
Siblings Is there additional support required for siblings or other family members who attend the school?		
External Agencies Does the student have access to support from any outside agencies? Does the student think it would be useful for the school to liaise with these agencies or have them involved in any support meetings? If relevant: What are the names and contact details of the external agencies? What is the nature and length of their support?		
Other Considerations What has been working well for the student? What is the student finding hard? Are there any questions or concerns you want to raise now? Are there other supports the student may need?		

Review

Plan Review Who will monitor this plan? When will the plan be reviewed? Who has a copy of this plan? Include feedback from student, parents and teachers.		

Signatures	Student	Date
	School Representative (e.g Principal, Assistant Principal, Wellbeing Leader)	Date
	Parent/Carer	Date

Transcend

Please don’t hesitate to contact Transcend if you need further advice, have any question or if you want to chat through your approach. We’re here to help. You can contact us with this link: transcend.org.au/contact

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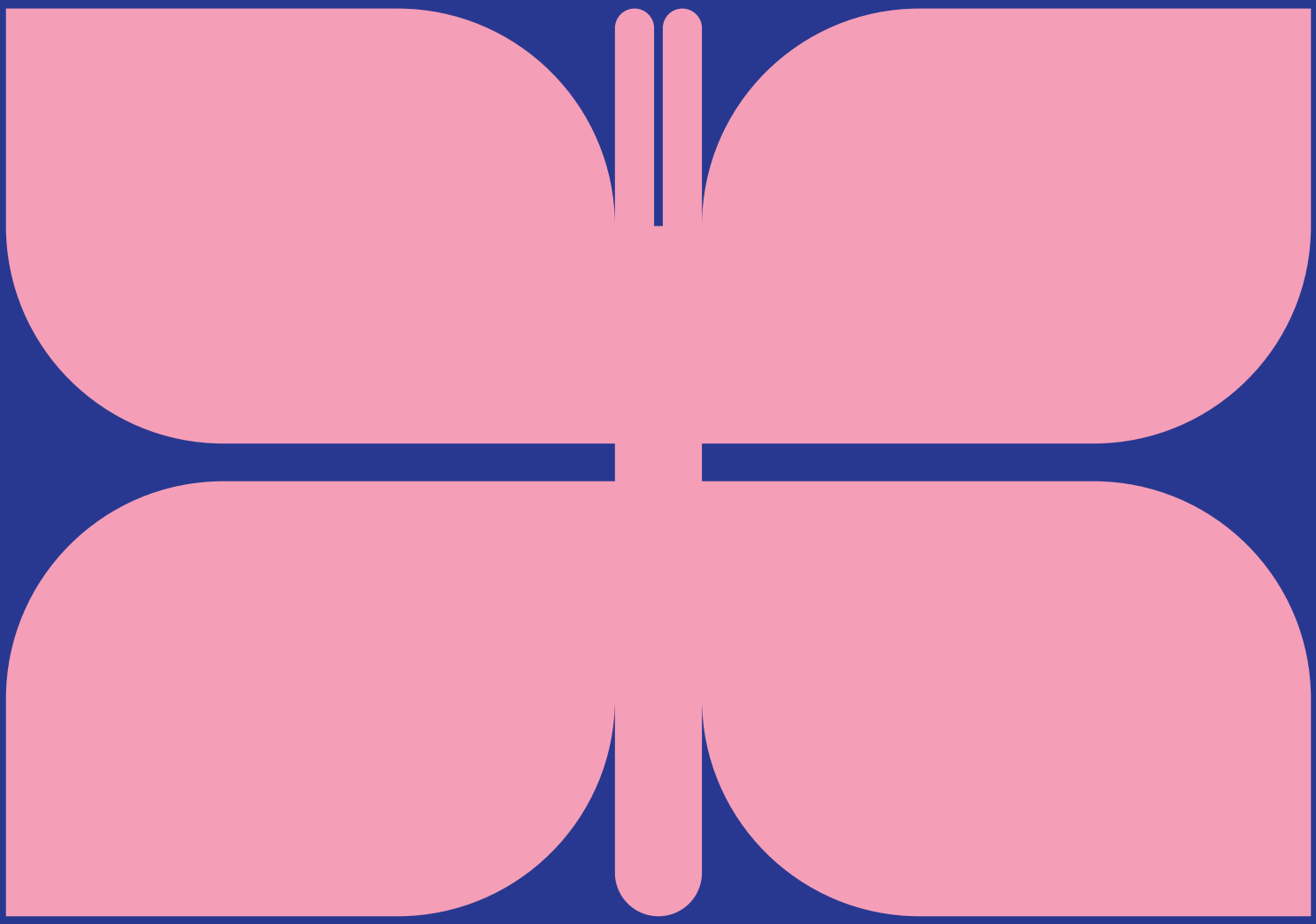
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