

GENDER EQUALITY

POLICY

Ripponlea Primary School (RPS) is committed to creating a school community where all staff and students are equally respected and valued and enjoy equity of both opportunity and outcomes.

PURPOSE

RPS recognises 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.¹ RPS recognises the prevalence and impact of gender-based discrimination and harassment, and is committed to building a school culture that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality.

RPS recognises that gender inequality is both structural and individual; this means it is not only the result of individual attitudes and actions, but also of biases in structures, systems, policies and processes throughout our community.

Gendered stereotypes and expectations influence how people 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.²

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

On behalf of the whole school community, the Principal and the School Council support this policy.

¹ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2011) *Positive duty: Know your responsibilities*, <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/our-resources-and-publications/know-your-responsibilities-brochures/item/133-positive-duty-know-your-responsibilities-aug-2011>.

² Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our commitments

RPS, as an education institution and an employer, is committed to promoting gender equality and to ensuring equality of opportunity and outcomes for all staff and students.

Gender equality involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between women and men and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all.

RPS will ensure that all staff, students and school policies, procedures, systems and structures actively promote gender equality and seek to expose and redress gender inequities.

School culture and environment

At RPS all students and staff are responsible for promoting gender equality and modelling respectful relationships through positive actions and language.

Promoting gender equality and modelling respectful relationships is just as important for staff as it is for students.

RPS 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.

RPS will support staff who experience domestic/family violence or sexual assault including by making reasonable efforts to grant appropriate leave, adjust work assignments or accommodate requests for flexible work hours.

Ratified by School Council: 11 December 2017
Next review date: 2020