

# Gender Diversity

More and more young people today are exploring their identity — not just their interests or friendships, but how they understand themselves, including their gender. For some, this is a clear and steady journey. For others, it can involve questions, uncertainty, or expressions of gender that sit outside traditional norms.

As a parent or carer, it's normal to feel unsure or to want guidance. You might not have all the answers — and that's okay. What matters most is being open, curious and supportive. Gender diversity isn't a new concept, but our collective understanding is evolving. Some young people feel aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth; others may identify as transgender, non-binary, or simply describe their experience in their own way. You don't need to be an expert — you just need to be there. Research consistently shows that when young people feel accepted by their families, their wellbeing improves significantly. Your support can make all the difference.

## How to support a child who identifies as gender diverse:

- 1. Listen without judgement**  
Create a space where your child feels safe to speak openly. Let them share their feelings and experiences without interruption or correction.
- 2. Affirm their identity**  
Use the name and pronouns your child asks you to use. This simple act shows respect and helps reduce emotional distress.
- 3. Educate yourself**  
Learn about gender diversity from trusted, evidence-based sources. Understanding the terminology and concepts builds empathy and confidence.
- 4. Validate their experience**  
You don't need to understand everything straight away — but validating your child's feelings and experiences is crucial to their self-worth.
- 5. Focus on your connection**  
Keep your relationship strong. Love, support and acceptance from a parent are powerful protective factors for mental health.
- 6. Be mindful of your reactions**  
It's okay to feel surprised or unsure. But try to avoid reacting with shock or denial — even well-meaning comments can feel dismissive.
- 7. Ask respectful questions:**  
If you're unsure about something, ask gently and respectfully. Let your child guide what they are comfortable sharing.
- 8. Seek support for yourself**  
Consider your own emotions or fears. Talking to a counsellor or joining a parent support group can help you process these to be more available to your child.
- 9. Respect their privacy**  
Let your child decide when, how, and to whom they disclose their gender identity. Outing them without consent can cause harm.
- 10. Work with the school**  
Speak with teachers or wellbeing staff to ensure your child is safe and affirmed at school — including names, uniforms, bathrooms, and bullying policies.