

SOFTBALL ONTARIO Inclusion Policy

Guiding Principles

1. The Association supports the recommendations outlined in *Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport*, the guidance document developed by the Trans Inclusion in Sport Expert Working Group and published by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES). Association adopts the best practices outlined in the document and has used the four Policy Guidance statements in the development of this *Inclusion Policy*. The Policy Guidance statements are:
 - a. Individuals participating in development and recreational sport (LTAD stages Active Start, FUNdamental, Learn to Train, Train to Train, Train to Compete (until international federation rules apply), Train to Win and Active for Life) should be able to participate in the gender with which they identify and not be subject to requirements for disclosure of personal information beyond those required of cisgender athletes. Nor should there be any requirement for hormonal therapy or surgery
 - b. Hormone therapy should not be required for an individual to participate in high-performance sport (LTAD stages Train to Compete (once international federation rules become a factor) and Train to Win) in the gender category that is consistent with their gender identity, unless the sport organization can prove that hormone therapy is a reasonable and bona fide requirement
 - c. Individuals should not be required to disclose their trans identity or history to the sport organization in order to participate in high-performance sport (LTAD stages Train to Compete (once international federation rules become a factor) and Train to Win) unless there is a justified reason requiring them to do so.
 - d. Surgical intervention should not be required for an individual to participate in high-performance sport (LTAD stages Train to Compete (once international federation rules become a factor) and Train to Win) in the gender category that is consistent with their gender identity

Definitions

2. The following terms have these meanings in this document:
 - a. “*Association*” – Softball Ontario
 - b. “*Cisgender*” – *A term to describe a person whose gender identity corresponds with their birth-assigned sex (e.g. someone whose gender identity is man and was assigned male at birth).*
 - c. “*Gender*” – The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society assigns to masculinity or femininity
 - d. “*Gender Expression*” – The way an individual communicates their gender identity to others. This is done through behaviour, body language, voice, emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics, choice of clothing, hairstyle, and wearing make-up and/or accessories. The traits and behaviours associated with masculinity and femininity are culturally specific and change over time
 - e. “*Gender Identity*” – A person’s innermost sense of their own gender. This can include man, woman, both neither or something else entirely. Gender also refers to a variety of social and behavioral characteristics (e.g. appearance, mannerisms). There are lots of words people may use to talk about their gender identity and expression
 - f. “*Gender reassignment*” – medically-supervised program of treatment to transition a person’s body to align with their gender identity through hormone therapy and/or surgery
 - g. “*Intersex*” – Refers to a combination of features that distinguish male and female anatomy
 - h. “*Sex*” – The classification of people as male, female or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person’s reproductive system, hormones, chromosomes and other physical characteristics, most notably by external genitalia
 - i. “*Trans*” – *An umbrella term that describes people with diverse gender identities and gender expressions that do not conform to stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a girl/woman or boy/man in society. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross dressers (adjective) or gender non-conforming (gender diverse or genderqueer or non-binary).*

- j. “*Transgender Female*” – Someone who was assigned the male sex at birth, but whose gender identity is female
- k. “*Transgender Male*” – Someone who was assigned female sex at birth, but whose gender identity is male

Purpose

- 3. The Association believes that all individuals deserve respectful and inclusive environments for participation that value the individual’s gender identity and gender expression. The Association wants to ensure that all participants have access to programming and facilities in which they feel comfortable and safe. The Association is committed to implementing this policy in a fair and equitable manner.

Actions for Inclusion

- 4. The Association pledges to:
 - a. Provide this *Policy* to Association staff, Directors and Provincial/Territorial members and provide education on the importance of trans inclusion and what this entails in terms of practices, policies, procedures and norms of behavior.
 - b. Provide registration forms and other documents that allow:
 - i. the individual to indicate their gender identity and expression, rather than their sex or gender; and
 - ii. the individual to abstain from indicating a gender identity with no consequence to the individual
 - c. Maintain organizational documents and the Association website in a manner that promotes inclusive language and images
 - d. Refer to individuals by their preferred name and pronoun
 - e. Work with trans athletes on the implementation, monitoring and/or modification of this *Policy*
 - f. When the Association has the authority to determine participants’ use of washrooms, change rooms, and other facilities, the Association will permit individuals to use the facilities of their gender identity
 - g. Ensure uniforms and dress codes that respect an individual’s gender identity and gender expression
 - h. Determine Eligibility Guidelines for transgender participants (as described in this *Policy*)

Eligibility Guidelines - Exceptions

- 5. When applicable, the eligibility guidelines of the World Baseball Softball Confederation, and/or any major Games regarding trans athlete participation will supersede the eligibility guidelines as outlined in this *Policy*.

Eligibility Guidelines

- 6. As a general guiding principle for the Association’s eligibility guidelines, the Association supports the following statement from *Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport*:

Based on this background and available evidence, the Expert Working Group felt that trans athletes should be able to participate in the gender with which they identify, regardless of whether or not they have undergone hormone therapy. Exceptions could be made if a sport organization is able to provide evidence that demonstrates hormone therapy is a reasonable and bona fide requirement (i.e., a necessary response to a legitimate need) to create a fair playing field at the high-performance level (p. 19)

- 7. At both recreational and competitive levels, an individual may participate in their expressed and identified gender category.
- 8. Individuals are not required to disclose their trans identity or history to the Association or any of the Association’s representatives (e.g., coaches, staff, Directors, officials, etc.).
- 9. All athletes must be aware that they may be subject to doping control testing pursuant to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program. Trans athletes undergoing gender reassignment are encouraged to contact the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) to determine what procedures, if any, are required to obtain a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE).

Confidentiality

- 10. The Association will not disclose to outside parties any documentation or information about an individual’s gender identity and expression. A trans individual’s privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

Ongoing Monitoring

11. The Association commits to monitoring ongoing developments regarding national and international participation guidelines for trans athletes and pledges to monitor the implementation, review and/or revise this *Policy* whenever new information becomes available.

Resolving Gender Identity and Expression Issues

12. Should an individual feel they have been subject to, or witness, discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, vilification or victimization based on gender identity or expression, they should take appropriate action through Softball Ontario's Discipline and Harassment Policy. Should the person not feel safe in doing so, they should seek assistance from the President and Secretary of Softball Ontario for advice and support, or action on their behalf.

Appeal

13. Any decision rendered by the Association in accordance with this *Policy* may be appealed in accordance with the Association's *Appeal Policy*.

Review

14. Softball Ontario will conduct a review of this policy annually.

Policy Name: Inclusion

Ratification Date: February 2022

Review Date: February 2023