

MCSL Guidance for Gender Diverse Minor Athletes

MCSL's guiding philosophy is one that promotes and embraces diversity and inclusion. MCSL follows USA Swimming's policy with regards to Gender Diverse Athletes. Please refer to this link for USA Swimming's Policy:

[https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/diversity-inclusion/5.-other-related-documents/recommended-practices-for-gender-diverse-minors.pdf?sfvrsn=c32c5332_20#:~:text=The%20US%20Center%20for%20Safe,gender%20identity%20is%20prohibited%20\(304.3.](https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/diversity-inclusion/5.-other-related-documents/recommended-practices-for-gender-diverse-minors.pdf?sfvrsn=c32c5332_20#:~:text=The%20US%20Center%20for%20Safe,gender%20identity%20is%20prohibited%20(304.3.)

There are a few portions of the USA Swimming policy that are either not applicable to MCSL or that require minor modifications.

- *Unlike USA Swimming, MCSL does not have established procedures for requests to change an athlete's gender in the MCSL database. **Until a procedure is established, contacting the MCSL Board and/or MCSL Rules Committee is sufficient notification.***
- *USA Swimming Rules on travel are not applicable to MCSL.*
- *"Clubs should provide training to their staff and regular volunteers regarding their responsibilities to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Such topics should include terms and concepts of gender identity and expression and bystander intervention strategies related to bullying." **MCSL does not currently have a formal training program on Diversity and Inclusion. Individual teams will need to address this training at this time.***

It is also important for pools and teams to follow state and local regulations. Although MCSL does not have the expertise to provide legal advice, it is important to recognize that Maryland State law also protects diversity and inclusion (Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2014).

Suggested Guidelines from Board Members who have had positive experiences with respect to assisting gender diverse athletes in the MCSL:

The swimmers should register and swim according to the gender with which they identify. In case of a non-binary athlete, the athlete will have to decide which category of competition they feel is most appropriate/comfortable: to swim the boy events or to swim the girl events.

The transgender swimmer is allowed to use locker/changing areas and restrooms of the identified gender. Some teams have designated a single restroom (if available) as a family restroom, which may be preferable for the swimmer, if so chosen.

The teams who have had swimmers in this category did not make a big deal about it, but they did let the opposing team reps know of the situation in advance.

New swim times are established during time trials and through swimming A & B meets.

Team Reps and the athlete/athlete's parents/guardians may want to speak with the athlete's head coach in advance to discuss how to facilitate and communicate the transition to the team. Some of these groups (athlete/parent/team rep/coach) chose to send an email to the parents/guardians of their team members which explained the transition and directed any questions towards the parents of the athlete.

Questions may be directed to board@mcsf. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment for the athletes and assist our teams in achievement of enjoyable and successful competitive swimming experiences.