



WHY A GIRLS' SCHOOL?



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International
Coalition of
Girls' Schools

Advancing Girls'
Education Globally

“...the evidence is gathering that women in single-gender classes benefit, and they benefit significantly...”

PROF ALISON BOOTH,
SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

You want your daughter to build resilience and self-esteem, to be happy and confident in an environment where she is free to be herself — free of stereotyping, bullying and harassment. You want her to grow and flourish not just at school but throughout her life, and a girls' school may be the surest path to make that happen.

Supporters of coeducational schools often argue that the 'real world' is mixed-gender and therefore schools should be coeducational too. However, the 'real world' is also one where girls and women are still not equal. Educating girls in a safe and supportive environment allows them to grow and aspire to be strong, bold and fearless women who will demand inclusion, stand up for equality in all aspects of society, and believe anything is possible.

“I really like how I can relate to many girls. Personally I feel comfortable and I am able to work hard around girls who have the same passion as I do.”

ISHANI, YEAR 10

Her academic success: higher confidence and better outcomes

A groundbreaking Australian study, “Hands Up For Gender Equality”, found that girls educated in girls’ schools are equally as confident as boys. In other words, the frequently reported gender difference in confidence levels simply does not exist for girls educated in girls’ schools.¹

An analysis of the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results shows that girls from girls’ schools in Australia and New Zealand outperformed girls from coeducational schools on all academic measures of science, mathematics and literacy.²

Several Australian studies demonstrate that girls in girls’ schools are more confident in maths and more likely to take advanced science and maths subjects than girls in coed schools.³

The 2023 OECD Education Policy Outlook in Australia identified a rise in student disengagement and described the classroom ‘disciplinary climate’ as among the least favorable in the OECD.²¹ Yet OECD data reveals that distractions and disruptions are substantially lower in girls’ school classes.¹⁰

“I love the supportive and caring environment of attending an all-girls school. At school I feel happy, excited to learn and supported by the teachers and girls.”

XINQI, YEAR 9

"You are surrounded by motivated people, you gain the confidence to do whatever you want, there's no teasing or petty comments about being smart in class and it is encouraged."

KRISHA, YEAR 11

Her career: no limits to what she can achieve

Enjoyment of science and maths and activities like coding and robotics inspire girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine. Graduates of girls' schools in Australia and New Zealand are significantly more likely to enter male-dominated fields like engineering and construction than girls from coed schools.⁴

A study of nearly 6,000 incoming female university students found that graduates of girls' schools are more likely to show higher levels of science self-confidence, consider themselves critical thinkers, score higher on measures of academic habits of mind, and demonstrate stronger study habits.⁵

"We have the space to be ourselves and find out who we are and what we want to do in life."

CLAIRE, YEAR 11



Her wellbeing: comfortable with her body image and being herself

Raising a confident, self-assured daughter who is comfortable with her body image is not an easy task these days. Studies show that girls in coed schools have lower self-esteem and feel more pressure to be thin than girls in girls' schools⁶, and girls in coed schools are more likely to fast, diet and go to other extremes often associated with eating disorders.⁷

In contrast, girls' schools encourage "improved self-esteem" and "psychological and social wellbeing in adolescent girls"⁸ helping girls through the critical middle school years when they may be struggling with social interactions relating to adolescence.⁹

Her safety: there's less bullying and greater respect

The incidence of bullying in girls' schools is markedly lower than in coed schools across all six of PISA's measures of bullying — including being made fun of, being the subject of nasty rumours, and being pushed or hit.¹⁰

Research has found less aggressive behaviours in girls' schools than in boys' and coeducational schools,¹¹ and many girls report preferring girls-only science, computing and IT classes where they are not subject to stereotyped beliefs and bullying by boys.¹² Similarly for physical education (PE) classes and sporting activities, international research shows that girls strongly prefer all-female classes where they are not self-conscious of their body image and what they are wearing.¹³

"I really appreciate not having to compete against gender stereotypes at school, especially when trying new things. PE, STEM, and other male-dominated fields seem a lot more welcoming and inviting than when I attended a coed school."

ISABELLA, YEAR 12



Her voice: there's no place for inequality

An Australian study of five coed schools confirmed previous findings that sexual bullying behaviours are commonplace within coed schools.¹⁴ Similarly, a report by Britain's Institute of Physics, Opening Doors, found that sexist language was often dismissed as "harmless banter" in coed schools.¹⁵

"I love the deep relationships and connections that you form within an all-girls school. There is a sense of unity and collaboration and a support system unlike anything else which I feel is unique to an all-girls school."

JOSIE, YEAR 12

However, in a girls' school, girls are intentionally "equipped with the knowledge and skills required to overcome social and cultural gender biases and in doing so actively break the stereotypical norms that define women in society."¹⁷

"Single-sex schools encourage improved self-esteem, psychological and social wellbeing in adolescent girls"

**DR VICTORIA CRIBB AND DR ANNE HAASE,
JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENCE**

Girls' schools create learning environments and experiences that shape girls' self-concept, helping them to overcome the gender biases and stereotypes that are rife in our society. In every lesson, every program and every opportunity — from leadership positions and girl-centric wellbeing programs, to single-sex physical education lessons and sporting activities — girls' schools bolster girls' confidence and self-esteem. Yes, girls can achieve excellent academic results in a coeducational school, but in a girls' school there are no gender stereotypes, no appearance pressures, no sexual harassment, and no barriers to participation — every aspect of school life is designed and tailored for girls.

Research from around the world provides strong evidence that girls-only education leads to higher academic achievement, higher confidence levels, greater participation in STEM and enhanced career aspirations. In the absence of boys, teaching is tailored to girls' learning needs and preferences, and activities and academic opportunities are free of gender-stereotyping. Girls are more confident and feel empowered to achieve their full potential.

"I like that there is always equality and that I feel more confident in growing as a learner."

SOPHIE, YEAR 10



The International Coalition of Girls' Schools is the leading advocate for girls' schools, connecting and collaborating globally with individuals, schools, and mission-aligned entities. We are united in elevating women's leadership worldwide by educating and empowering our students to be ethical, globally minded changemakers.



"It's a positive, judgement free environment in which I can freely express my thoughts and feelings and feel unafraid about being myself."

JAMILA, YEAR 9



International
Coalition of
Girls' Schools

International Coalition of Girls' Schools – Australasia

PO Box 139, Tugun, Qld, 4224 Australia

+61 7 5521 0749 | girlsschools.org | info@girlsschools.org

"You're able to be more open ... everyone has an equal chance to speak up and be heard."

KUDZAI, YEAR 12