

Transgender Students in Schools - Guidelines and Implementation Plan

Definitions

Gender Identity - one's sense of self as male, female, or an alternative gender that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth

Transgender - an umbrella term used to describe individuals whose gender identity, expression, or behavior does not conform with that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth

Restrooms and Locker Rooms

Students are allowed to use the same restroom as their peers, unless they request alternative accommodations. Transgender students are allowed to use the same restrooms that matches their gender identity. Students have the right to access a single-user restroom (gender-neutral), such as an identified staff restroom or the restroom in the nurse's office. Please identify single-user restrooms at your school by providing specific signage on doors showing restrooms are available to students. Restroom should be accessible to students without special codes or keys. Please advise all students that these restrooms are available for their use.

Locker Rooms

Schools may maintain separate locker room facilities for male and female students. However, all students must have access to the locker room facility that corresponds to their gender identity. If there is a request for increased privacy, students should communicate with their school staff and *any* student should be offered access to a reasonable accommodation, such as:

- A separate changing schedule
- Use of a private area in the facility (e.g., a restroom stall with a door or an area separated by a curtain)
- Use of a nearby private area (i.e., nearby restroom or health suite)
- Assignment of student locker in close proximity to staff office or a supportive peer group.

Dress Codes

Schools may enforce dress codes, but any dress code must be gender neutral. Students must have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the dress codes adopted by the school.

Gender neutral dress code guidelines apply to regular school days as well as any special events, such as graduation ceremonies and prom. For example, schools may require formal attire for all students at a ceremony, but may not specify that girls must wear dresses and boys must wear ties.

Extracurricular Activities or Athletic Events

All students should have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on a student's records or identification documents.

Athletic participation regulated by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) and the Virginia Scholastic Rowing Association (VASRA) as well middle school athletics, however, shall be in compliance with rules outlined by that organization. Students should work with their athletic administrators to comply with these organizations' regulations.

Extended Instructional Field Trips

Students should be allowed to participate consistent with their asserted gender identity. Sleeping arrangements should be discussed with staff, the student and family (if the family is supportive of the student). Upon request, the student should be provided with a safe alternative sleeping area.

A student's transgender status is confidential information and school staff members should not disclose a student's transgender status as it relates to a field trip without the consent of the student and/or the student's parent/guardian.

Names and Pronouns

Schools are required to maintain a permanent student record for each student which includes their legal name and gender of the student. For instance, schools are required to use the legal name and gender from the student's permanent record, such as for standardized tests or reports to the Virginia Department of Education.

However, students have the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to the student's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is **not** required, and the student does not need to change their official records. If a student wishes to go by another name, the school's registrar can enter that name in the "Names Goes by" name field of the Synergy database.

Transgender and gender-nonconforming students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and decide when to share information, with whom, and how much to share. When contacting the parent or guardian of a transgender or gender-nonconforming student, school staff should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's sex assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise.

Educational and Classroom Records

Please note that the name in the database is part of an official educational record and is therefore covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), meaning that if a parent or guardian requests access to see their student's records, they will have access to the student's preferred name. If a student transitioning at school is not ready to share with their family about their transgender status, this should be respected. In this scenario, school staff should make a change socially, calling the student by the preferred name, while their official Synergy information remains the same. Generally, if a student wishes for their name to be changed at school, despite whether or not a student has brought in a legal name change, all unofficial records should reflect their preferred name. Examples of unofficial school documents include yearbooks, team and class rosters, and newspapers/newsletters.

Reference:

Link to Policy: [J-2 Student Equal Educational Opportunities-Nondiscrimination](#)

Link to PIP: [J-2 PIP Transgender Students in Schools](#)