



## Gender Philosophy at Harpeth Hall

Harpeth Hall affirms its history, mission, and presence as a school for girls and young women. Our school uplifts the female voice and perspective and educates our students to embrace our school's values of integrity, individuality, and respect for others. Harpeth Hall's commitment to an inclusive educational environment is a hallmark of its excellence.

As the world evolves, so do our students. The concept of gender has expanded and deepened over time. The members of our school community have asked good and important questions about gender inclusion and have looked for greater clarity on the school's practices. Harpeth Hall's administration, faculty, and the DEI Committee of the Board of Trustees have come together to discuss and more deeply understand gender diversity. They have heard from experts on the topic, shared educational articles, and consulted with other girls schools.

We believe that, as an excellent school, Harpeth Hall must foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment in which to teach and learn. Nurturing each student's unique path and fostering care and respect for all community members builds a learning environment that is welcoming and vibrant. Our efforts are to ensure our mission reaches each student fully as we educate girls and young women "to think critically, lead confidently, and live honorably."

With this objective in mind, we have adopted the following guidelines that outline how Harpeth Hall approaches gender diversity within the context of our girls school mission.

- *Harpeth Hall is a girls school. The school culture is unique and distinctly about girls, complete with the use of references to students as girls and young women and the collective use of female pronouns. Any girl or young woman may apply to our school in accordance with past practices. Students who join and remain at Harpeth Hall do so because our mission as a school for girls resonates with them.*
- *Harpeth Hall acknowledges the developmental journey of each student and recognizes that adolescence includes natural searching and questioning about many topics. For some students, this may include the question of gender identity and the desire to identify as nonbinary or use they/them pronouns. Harpeth Hall approaches gender identity with understanding and open communication, rather than with shame or othering, and will provide a safe environment to partner with each student and family to consider the needs and requests of the student on an individual basis.*
- *If a student communicates a desire to be identified as male or adopt he/him pronouns, we recognize that our school, being a girls school, may no longer be a place that serves that student well. We see this acknowledgment as the ultimate form of respect: an understanding that we support the individual and the student's gender identity. Harpeth Hall administration will work thoughtfully with the student and family to evaluate next steps.*

The cultural dialogue around gender is evolving rapidly. At Harpeth Hall, we are inspired and guided by our girls school mission and work every day to live fully and truly into our purpose.

*Adopted September 23, 2022*