

Support of Transgender Students

Colorado law and District Policy AC require that all programs, activities, and employment practices be free from discrimination based on sex or sexual orientation, including transgender status. This exhibit is issued to facilitate compliance with local, state, and federal laws concerning discrimination and in keeping with the district's mandates to provide a safe learning environment for all students and to ensure that every student has equal access to all school programs and activities. This exhibit sets a protocol for schools and district staff to address the needs of students who are transgender and clarify how to protect the rights and safety of all students, including transgender students.

The goal of this exhibit is to ensure the safety, comfort, and healthy development of all students while maximizing social integration and minimizing stigmatization of transgender students. Although we cannot anticipate every situation that may occur with respect to students who are transgender, the needs of every student must be addressed in each situation.

Policy AC and this exhibit cover conduct that takes place in schools, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles, and at school bus stops. In addition, it refers to the use of electronic technology and electronic communication on district-owned devices, networks, forums and mailing lists.

The below definitions are provided to clarify the terminology used in this exhibit and assist in understanding the legal obligations of District staff. They are not intended to label students who may or may not use these terms to describe themselves.

“Gender identity” is a person’s deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, regardless of the biological sex at birth. Transgender individuals’ gender identity differs from their biological sex.

“Gender expression” describes the manner in which people represent or express their gender to others, commonly through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, or mannerisms.

“Transgender” describes people whose gender identity or expression is different from the biological sex assigned to them at birth. Other terms that can have similar meaning are “transsexual” and “trans”.

“Transition” is the process by which a person changes his or her gender expression to better reflect their gender identity. In general, presenting themselves to others in a manner consistent with their gender identity. This may include using a nickname and/or choosing clothes and hairstyles that reflect their gender identity.

Areas of Support:

1. All students have a right to privacy, including the right to keep one's transgender status private at school. School personnel should not disclose medical or other information that may reveal a student's transgender status unless legally required to do so or unless the student has authorized such disclosure.
2. When a student undergoes a gender transition during the school year, issues of privacy become much more difficult to manage. In all cases, staff must meet with the transitioning student and consider the health, well-being, and safety of all students when supporting the transitioning student.
 - a. School administrators are directed to work with parents of elementary age students to identify the appropriate steps to support their student.
 - b. School administrators will work directly with secondary students to assess the degree, if any, that the parent(s) will be involved in the process.In addition, the school will include educators who interact directly with the student when developing the transition plan.
3. Every student has the right to be addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to the student's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and official records need not be changed.
4. The student's preferred name and/or gender may be used on school records and documents which do not require use of the student's legal name and gender.
5. A student's official record shall be changed to reflect a change in name and/or gender upon receipt of documentation that such change was made pursuant to a court order, or through amendment of state or federally-issued identification.
6. Transgender students shall have access to the restroom and other facilities that corresponds to their gender identity consistently asserted at school. Students who desire more privacy may use a restroom stall or a gender neutral restroom that is accessible to students of all genders, regardless of the underlying reason. The use of a gender neutral restroom shall be a matter of choice. However, no student shall be required to use such a bathroom or facility because they are transgender.
7. Students who are transgender have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity consistently asserted at school and in compliance with the district and school dress code. The dress code may not be enforced more strictly against transgender students than other students.

This policy exhibit will supersede any provisions of prior or existing policies which conflict with this new policy.

To ensure a respectful school environment, Policy AC, Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity, and this exhibit AC-E-3, will be provided to all district departments and schools and will be available on the District website. The policy, exhibits, and complaint process shall be referenced in student handbooks.

Adopted: February 26, 2014

Fountain-Fort Carson School District #8, Fountain, Colorado