



SUBJECT: Transgender Students

Date Proposed: 1/18/24

Date Approved: 3/21/24

Committee of Origin:

Thornton Academy is committed to supporting the needs of transgender students. For the purposes of this policy, a student will be considered transgender if, at school, the student consistently asserts a gender identity or expression different from the gender assigned at birth. This involves more than a casual declaration of gender identity or expression.

The following procedure will be used to address needs raised by transgender students and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s).

1. If a student needs additional support, the student and/or the student's parent/guardian, whether currently enrolled or in the process of enrollment, should contact the Associate Head, the TAMS Principal, the Assistant Head for Student Affairs, or the Director of Residential Life.
2. A meeting may be scheduled to discuss the student's particular circumstances and needs. In addition to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s), other participants may include the Associate Head, the TAMS Principal, the Assistant Head for Student Affairs, the Director of Residential Life, a school counselor or social worker, school nurse, teachers and/or other school staff, and possibly outside providers who can assist in developing a plan for that student.
3. If the student has an IEP and/or a 504 Plan, the provisions of the 504 or IEP plan should be taken into consideration in developing the plan for addressing transgender issues.
4. The school may request documentation from service providers as necessary to assist staff in developing a plan appropriate for the student.
5. If the parties cannot reach an agreement about the elements to be included in the plan, the Headmaster shall be consulted as appropriate.
6. If the school has a credible and objective reason to believe that a student's gender identity is being asserted for an improper purpose, the school may request a written statement from the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), and from a qualified healthcare provider or counselor who has met with the student.

Guidance on Specific Issues

1. **Privacy:** The student plan should address how to deal with disclosures that the student is transgender. In some cases, a student may want school staff and students to know, and in other cases the student may not want this information to be widely known. School staff should take care to follow the student's plan and avoid inadvertently disclosing information intended to be kept private or that is protected from disclosure (e.g., confidential medical information).
2. School personnel should keep in mind that student records may only be accessed and disclosed to staff with a legitimate educational interest in the information. Disclosures to others should only be made with appropriate authorization from the administration and/or parents/guardians.
3. **Official Records:** The school is required to maintain a permanent record for each student which includes legal name and gender. This information is also required for standardized tests and official school reports. This official information will only be changed upon receipt of documentation that a student's name or gender has been changed in accordance with any applicable laws. Any requests to change a student's legal name or gender in official records should be referred to the Associate Head, the TAMS Principal or Assistant Head for Student Affairs.

To the extent that the school is not required to use a student's legal name or gender on school records or other documents, the school should use the name and gender identified in the student's plan.

4. **Names/Pronouns:** A student who has been identified as transgender under these guidelines should be addressed by school staff and other students by the name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity that is consistently asserted at school.
5. **Restrooms:** A student who has been identified as transgender under this policy should be permitted to use the restrooms assigned to the gender that the student consistently asserts at school. A transgender student who expresses a need for privacy will be provided with reasonable alternative facilities or accommodations such as using a separate stall or a staff facility. However, a student shall not be required to use a separate non-communal facility over his/her objection.
6. **Locker Rooms:** The use of locker rooms requires the school to consider a number of factors, including but not necessarily limited to the safety and comfort of students: the transgender student's preference; student privacy; the ages of students; and available facilities. As a general rule, transgender students will be permitted to use the locker room assigned to the gender which the student consistently asserts at school. A transgender student will not be required to use a locker room that conflicts with the gender identity consistently asserted at school. A transgender student who expresses a need for privacy will be provided with reasonable facilities or accommodations, such as using a separate stall, a staff facility or separate schedule.
7. **Other Gender-Segregated Facilities or Activities:** As a general rule, in any other facilities or activities when students may be separated by gender, transgender students may participate in accordance with the gender identity consistently asserted at school. Interscholastic athletic activities should be addressed through the Maine Principals Association Transgender Participation Policy.
8. **Dress Code:** Transgender students may dress in accordance with their consistently asserted gender identity, consistent with any applicable requirements in the dress code or school rules.
9. **Safety and Support for Transgender and Transitioning Students:** School staff are expected to comply with any plan developed for a transgender student and to notify the student's school counselor or other designated support person for the student if there are concerns about the plan or about the student's safety or welfare.

School staff should be sensitive to the fact that transgender and transitioning students may be at higher risk for being bullied or harassed and should immediately notify the Associate Head, the Assistant Head for Student Affairs, or the TAMS principal upon becoming aware of a problem.

10. Staff Training and Informational Materials: An abbreviated protocol will be distributed to all faculty/staff. Teachers and other staff who have responsibilities for a transgender student with a plan will receive support in implementing the plan.