



Friendswood ISD Guidance to Provisions in SB 12

Senate Bill 12, passed by the 89th Texas Legislature and enacted into law, includes specific provisions regarding what a school is allowed to do with and without consent for many student services. These services include, but are not limited to, health related services, counseling services, and organization/club participation.

Important Note: Friendswood ISD is currently awaiting official guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), as well as formal policy adoption by our school board. The guidance provided in this document represents our current understanding of SB 12 requirements, but direction may change as official interpretations and policies are finalized. Parents & Staff will be updated as new information becomes available.

Key Legal Requirements

Under SB 12, Friendswood ISD personnel are required to comply with the following:

- **Parental Consent for Health Services:** Parents must consent for their student to receive health services including general first aid provided by the school nurse with the exception of life-threatening care.
- **Parental Consent for Counseling Services:** Parents must provide consent in order for counselors to provide some services. Please see FAQ section below:
- **Parental Consent for Club/Organization Participation:** Parents must provide consent for students to participate in extracurricular and co/curricular clubs/organizations.
- **Prohibition on Assistance:** Staff may not assist with or participate in a student's social transition as defined by SB 12.
- **Use of Names and Pronouns:** Staff must use names and pronouns consistent with a student's biological sex as recorded in official school records, unless a legal name change has occurred.
- **Notifying Parents:** Schools must notify parents or guardians if a student requests accommodation related to gender identity. This notification is for informational purposes to keep parents informed about their child's experiences at school. While SB 12 prohibits staff from assisting with social transitioning, the law also strongly emphasizes parental rights throughout the legislation. The interaction between these parental rights and the prohibition on staff assistance with social transitioning is not explicitly addressed in the



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302 Laurel Drive
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281-482-1267

legislation and may require legal interpretation in specific situations. Until clear guidance is provided, staff should consult with district administration and legal counsel when parents make requests related to their child's name or pronoun usage.

- **Record Keeping:** School records must maintain information consistent with a student's biological sex at birth unless legal documentation indicating a change has been provided.
- **Facility Usage:** Students must use facilities (restrooms, locker rooms) according to their biological sex, with reasonable accommodations made as needed (such as single occupancy facilities).

Staff Communication Protocols

- Use the student's legal name and pronouns consistent with biological sex in all school communications and records.
- If a student requests different name/pronoun usage, explain there is a new law and respectfully direct the matter to counselors and administration for appropriate parent communication.
- Document and report to administration any student requests regarding gender identity or name/pronoun usage to ensure proper parent notification occurs.

Classroom Management

- Maintain classroom environments focused on academic content while enforcing respectful conduct among all students.
 - Address instances of teasing, bullying, or disrespect immediately, regardless of the basis.
- Use seating arrangements, group activities, and classroom procedures that are consistent across all students.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What should a teacher do if a student requests to be called by a different name?

A: Teachers should use the student's legal name as recorded in school records. If a student requests a different name, the teacher should respectfully explain the new SB 12 law and inform counselors/administration to ensure appropriate parent communication occurs.

Nicknames that do not relate to gender identity transitions (e.g., using "Rob" for "Robert") may still be permitted as they have been traditionally.

Q: Can parents give permission for school staff to use pronouns or names that don't align with their child's biological sex?

A: Under SB 12, Texas law prohibits school employees from assisting with a student's social transition, including using names or pronouns that "deny or encourage denial of the



student's biological sex at birth." However, the law also affirms the fundamental rights of parents to direct their child's upbringing, education, and care.

Once parental consent has been verified and documented, and after consultation with district legal counsel and clarification from TEA, staff may be allowed to follow the parent's directive in accordance with the most current legal guidance and district policy.

Until more definitive clarification is issued by the Texas Education Agency or courts, staff should not act independently on such matters. Any parental request of this nature should be referred to campus or district administration to ensure compliance with SB 12 and alignment with legal requirements.

Q: What if other students use a name or pronouns for a classmate that don't align with biological sex?

A: While teachers cannot prevent student-to-student communications entirely, they should not encourage or facilitate such usage. Teachers should continue to model the use of names/pronouns aligned with biological sex in their own communications.

Q: How should teachers handle discussions about gender identity that arise in class?

A: Teachers should redirect classroom discussions to curriculum-related content. If the topic relates to the approved curriculum (e.g., in health classes), teachers should present information according to approved instructional materials.

Q: What accommodation can be made for students experiencing discomfort?

A: Students may be provided with access to single-occupancy restrooms or changing areas upon request. Staff should work with administration to provide reasonable accommodation that complies with the law while supporting student privacy and dignity.

Q: What documentation should teachers maintain regarding these matters?

A: Teachers should document any student requests related to gender identity, names, or pronouns and share this information with administrators to ensure proper parent notification. All communications should be maintained confidentially in accordance with student privacy laws.

Q: What services can a counselor provide without parent permission?

- **Routine school counseling (academic, career, social-emotional learning, prevention programs, responsive services in the educational context)** → Allowed and required, no separate parental consent (see comprehensive list below).
- **Clinical-level services (therapy, psychiatric or psychological testing, formal treatment, ongoing mental health care, medication)** → Requires written parental consent under SB 12.



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- **Crisis safety interventions (suicide risk, abuse reporting)** → Allowed immediately, and disclosure rules follow mandated reporter standards and SB 12's exception for risk of abuse/neglect.

Routine Counseling Services which can be provided without parental consent:

State law requires school counselors to provide the following services as part of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program:

- A guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives.
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk.
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development.
- System support to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students.

School counselors routinely provide the following services:

- Advise students and their parents regarding the importance of postsecondary education, coursework designed to prepare students for postsecondary education, and financial aid availability and requirements;
- Early mental health prevention and intervention;
- Building skills related to managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention;
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention;
- Grief-informed and trauma-informed practices;
- Positive school climates, meaning the quality and character of school life, including interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures, as experienced by students enrolled in the District, parents of those students, and personnel employed by the District;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and



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- Safe, supportive, and positive school climate.