

Safe & Supportive Schools

for LGBTQ+ STUDENTS



A resource guide to policy and best practices



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Introduction

In the academic year 2020-2021, Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) partnered with the Genders and Sexualities Alliance Network to create the Transgender and Queer School Climate Committee in order to better understand and support the experiences of Transgender and Queer students on our high school campuses. This committee convened students, teachers, school site administrators from Wilson and Poly high schools, along with district administrators and community partners in three years of learning, analysis and resource development to enhance the school climate for Transgender and Queer students. This guidebook is a result of that three-year effort and serves as a critical update to previous resources within the district.

In this guidebook you will find an overview of policies, recommendations and best practices within the Long Beach Unified School District that are designed to create safe and supportive educational environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other identities (LGBTQ+) students and young people, and ultimately benefit all students. While school site administrators, educators and personnel are the primary audience for this resource, we encourage students, families and advocates to use it as a guidepost and reference for what you should expect to experience in LBUSD school sites. You can find this guidebook and more detailed policy guidance and resources on the LBUSD website at <https://www.lbschools.net/departments/student-support-services/lgbtq-students-and-resources>

How to Use this Guidebook

This guidebook explores several key areas of policy and practice that are particularly impactful when supporting Transgender & Queer students on campus. Within each key area, you will find information about the relevant state and district policies that govern each area along with best practices from across the field that enhance and/or detail the enactment of such policy. Each key area will also be supported by specific resources that further explore that topic including case studies, worksheets and external supportive resources. Our aim is for this guidebook to be both informative and practical for your day-to-day use on campus.

Terms and Definitions

Some of the terms and definitions in this guide may be unfamiliar. We have included a glossary within the appendix of this guidebook that is sourced from both PFLAG and the Human Rights Campaign to outline frequently used terms and concepts.

Implementing Policies & Best Practices

This guide includes recommendations for both policies and best practices. Both are important aspects of creating a supportive school within LBUSD, but when making changes in a school or district, it may be difficult to address both at the same time. In some cases, a supportive administrator or school board may pass the policy, which then gets implemented through training and improvements in best practices, school to school, classroom to classroom. In other situations, teachers may begin implementing best practices in their classrooms, which gradually become part of the school culture and curriculum, and are only later formalized in policy. The strategy that works best for a given context is the best strategy for that case!

- **Enhance and enforce:** In some situations, such as bullying prevention or privacy, the school may already have existing policies, and the task is simply to be sure that they are robust enough and enforced appropriately to protect LGBTQ+ students.
- **Adjust and amend:** In other situations, the policy may need a small adjustment, such as adding the terms ‘sexual orientation’, ‘gender identity’ and ‘gender expression’ to the school’s existing non-discrimination policy
- **Revise or replace:** In some situations, a school may find that historical policies are no longer in compliance with federal civil rights protections, and the policy will have to be repealed, replaced or rewritten.
- **Initiate and implement:** And finally, there may be some situations where schools have no current policies or guidance and will need to develop policy in that area for the first time.

Background and Context

Current Landscape

Schools should be supportive of all their students. Historically, most school policies, facilities, school cultures, and class curriculum were developed under the assumption that all or most students are heterosexual and cisgender, so support for students with those identities has rarely been an issue.

For many LGBTQ+ students in LBUUSD, however, the situation is very different. In a 2019 national survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth from The Trevor Project, less than half of LGBTQ+ students reported being out about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at school. These low rates of support are particularly troubling, given that for LGBTQ+ students who may not be supported at home, the school provides the most critical source of social and emotional support, and could even be the only place where they feel comfortable being who they truly are.



LGBTQ+ students report also experiencing discrimination and harassment at school, a place where all students should feel safe. In a 2019 national policy guidance report from GLSEN, almost 60% of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling unsafe at school and 89% reported experiencing victimization experiences. Sixty percent of LGBTQ+ students (compared to only 26% of heterosexual students) disclosed that they felt so sad or helpless at school that they stopped participating in usual activities.

The US is also in a historical moment when more young people are coming out as LGBTQ+ than ever before. In the most recent Gallup poll of adults in the United States, 7.1% identified as LGBTQ+. For Gen Z adults (18 to 24 years old), the rate is nearly three times as high, with 20.1% identifying as something other than heterosexual and cisgender. Although this survey did not include minors, most educators agree that the rate is at least that high, or even higher, for students under 18. Consequently, school administrators should be aware that as many as 1 in 5 of their students identify as LGBTQ+, whether or not they are out at school. Finally, it is important to note that all students benefit from attending a school that is supportive of LGBTQ+ students. Research on supportive school climates shows that positive learning environments that are welcoming and safe lead to improved behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for the entire student body. Diversity and inclusion are the hallmarks of success in the 21st century, and a school that fails to prepare its students to interact with others across lines of difference is preparing its students to fail in today’s larger society.

The Many Identities and Experiences of LGBTQ+ Students

Every individual's circumstances are unique and individual. Still, when we look at the LGBTQ+ youth population as a whole, those most likely to be 'out' at school are those who have other supportive and protective factors – such as race and/or class privilege, a supportive family, a supportive peer group, access to counseling or therapy, an accepting faith community, club, team, or organization, etc. Students with fewer or none of these factors are less likely to be out, because they are less safe in being out. Consciously or unconsciously, this dynamic can skew assumptions about the overall LGBTQ+ student population, because the visibly LGBTQ+ students are most assuredly not the only LGBTQ+ students. On average, based on The Trevor Project data cited above, the students who are out at LGBTQ+ at school are less than half of the school's actual LGBTQ+ population. Historically, schools have tended to treat various forms of discrimination as separate and distinct, but this does not reflect the daily lived experience of students who experience multiple forms of discrimination. For every marginalized population of students that faces barriers or disadvantages because of race, economic status, religion, ability, immigration status, or other factors, some of those students will also be LGBTQ+. Students who face other forms of bias or discrimination may face more barriers to being out about their LGBTQ+ identities, but just because they aren't out at school doesn't mean they aren't there at school. Similarly, if a school implemented every policy and practice in this guide but failed to also look at equity and inclusion related to race, class, religion, ability, and other factors, the school would still be failing to adequately serve many of its LGBTQ+ students. By understanding the complexities and intersectionality of student identities, schools can better support students in all of their diverse aspects.



Safety, Harassment and Bullying

LBUSD Commitment - It is our responsibility to treat students equally, prevent and respond to reports of bullying, harassment, and discrimination, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. (LBUSD Board Policy 5131.2; California Education Code Section 200-220 and 234)

Governing Policy

Numerous studies over the years have found that LGBTQ+ students experience bullying and harassment at significantly higher rates than their straight and cisgender counterparts. According to the 2021 GLSEN National School Climate survey, 76% of students surveyed reported being verbally harassed based on their sexual orientation, gender expression and gender at some point in the year and approximately a quarter reported being physically assaulted based on their identity. In alignment with LBUSD policy and California law, school personnel in LBUSD are required to take immediate steps to intervene in bullying, harassment or discrimination whenever it is safe to do so. Additionally, school districts are required to have established procedures for reporting instances of bullying and harassment.

Best Practices for School Sites

- Include 'sexual orientation,' 'gender identity,' and 'gender expression' (SOGIE) in all non-discrimination and anti-bullying statements.
- Anti-bullying policies should explicitly include how to report bullying and harassment, as well as what the steps the school will take to address the report. LGBTQ+ students feel more safe at school when they believe the perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions, and when they feel the school can and will protect them from future retaliation.
- Anti-harassment policies should take a proactive, not reactive approach to safety in schools. Start by creating a widely-shared vision statement of an ideal school climate that focuses on inclusivity, safety, and respect. This statement should be created with the input of all stakeholders in the school community, especially the students.

Best Practices in the Classroom

- Take a clear stance on bullying and harassment in any form as early as possible and as often as necessary. Ensure that students are aware that you will take incidents seriously, respond and take action.
- Ensure that your responses are directed at the bullying or harassing behavior and not on the young person/people experiencing the behavior. This is especially important for LGBTQ+ young people to not feel as if they should change any part of themselves.
- Have a clear and visible protocol for students to report bullying and harassment that they experience or witness.
- Keep records of incidents that arise in your classroom and the actions that were taken to address the behavior. In cases where the behavior has been reported to the school administration, make an effort to follow-up and understand how an incident was resolved outside of the classroom.
- Listen to the young people impacted by the negative behaviors and include them in decision-making about resolution when appropriate. When necessary, follow-up with them to keep them informed about your process or to check-in their experiences following the instance(s) you witnessed.

Worksheet/Pop-out Bubble

Developing your Anti-Bullying Response

Many teachers share that they are frozen or unsure of what to say or do to intervene in bullying they hear or witness in the classroom, especially as it relates to LGBTQ+ students. These questions are intended to help educators and school staff to proactively develop their own response to bullying when they see or hear it.

- 1. Before you witness anything** - What signs, posters or protocols can I proactively build a safe and supportive classroom environment?
- 2. Stop the Behavior** - What can I say or do that will proactively stop the behavior?
- 3. State Your Position** - What is the position that I have already shared with students? How are students aware of your position?
- 4. Remind of Consequences** - What consequences have you established in your own classroom for addressing negative behavior? What consequences do you have access to outside of your classroom?
- 5. Check-In with Impacted Students** - What can I do to ensure that I am hearing from the impacted student? How will I follow-up with them after the incident?

External Resources

This GLSEN resource offers several ways to build a school climate that does not accept bullying.

<https://www.glsen.org/blog/these-approaches-can-prevent-bullying-school>

Created by the Anti-Bullying alliance, here are 10 steps to take to help you respond to bullying when it happens.

https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/responding-to-bullying-tips-for-teachers_o.pdf

Learning for Justice offers a quick guide to do's and don'ts when responding to bullying in your classroom.

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/professional-development/bullying-guidelines-for-teacher>

For students and families who feel that their experiences of bullying and harassment have not been taken seriously or adequately addressed at their school site, please refer to the Uniform Complaint Procedures at

<https://www.lbschools.net/about/complaint-regulations-and-forms#uniform>

Affirmative Gender Care and Support

LBUSD Commitment

“Schools shall accept the gender identity that each student asserts. There is no medical or mental health diagnosis or treatment threshold that students must meet in order to have their gender identity recognized and respected.” - LBUSD Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Student Policy

Governing Policy

According to the GLSEN School Climate Report, Transgender and Non-binary students experience more hostile school climates than their lesbian, gay and bisexual counterparts based on a variety of indicators including, bullying and harassment, biased language, and insufficient access to vital supports and facilities (GLSEN School Climate). And although California’s School Success and Opportunity Act is meant to ensure that transgender and gender nonconforming students are protected under law, the reality remains that many transgender students within LBUSD report having negative experiences throughout their transition process.

It is essential that we understand affirmative gender care and support as a wrap-around approach that requires action and practice across various policy and practice areas. The district has a detailed and comprehensive policy that outlines how each site is expected to support the gender journey of any student within the district at any point of their academic career. In this section you will find summary policy instruction and recommended best practice that is aligned with that policy across several policy and practice areas.



Gender Transitions

Why It Matters

There is no universally “correct” way to support a student in their gender transition. The process is unique to every individual, as well as a monumental moment in their lives. Gender transition support from their school will help make the student feel safe and accepted, and can also help family members in understanding and supporting their child with their transition at home.

Best Practices for School Sites

- Listen to students and let each decide the degree to which their transition affects their day to day life at school. It is empowering for students to name their own needs in this process.
- Encourage teachers and other on-campus adults to proactively learn about and discuss gender diversity, so that a student’s transition occurs within a well-established context for learning, rather than being the precipitating event for conversations. The school should take responsibility for all adults on campus having a baseline understanding of gender and gender identity so that they are already primed to assist in educating the transgender or non-binary student’s classmates and teachers. This should not be a student or family’s responsibility.
- Accept an individualized approach. No two students’ experiences, needs or desires will be the same. When you learn that a student is transitioning, discuss what that will look like for them specifically; for example, do they want their homeroom teacher to tell the class about their change in name and pronoun?
- Use LBUSD’s Gender Support Plans to help students plan and shape their gender transition at school and ensure that every adult on campus is aware of this instrumental resource.

Pop-out Bubble

What are Gender Support plans?

Gender Support Plans are documents that aid the student, the family, and school staff in assuring the student's safety, privacy, and support and LBUSD has a process for implementing a Gender Support Plan at your school site!

Reach out to your school counselor or any administrator

Best Practices in the Classroom

- Proactively work with your administration to understand how you will be involved and made aware of any gender support plans, official or unofficial name changes for students in your classroom.
- Be open to hearing directly from the student and listen to their request. If you are the first person to learn of a student's gender transition, inform them of the resources that are available at school like official and unofficial name changes and the gender support plan. While not all students will choose to take these routes right away, it's important that they are always aware of their options.
- Work with a student to understand how they would like to share their transition with classmates, other teachers and parents. Let the student take the lead on this effort and reinforce how they wish to move.
- Have a plan for addressing mistakes that you or other students make before they happen. You can work with the student to address their preference for handling these situations before they occur or rely on already established classroom behavior expectations.

Names and Pronouns

Why It Matters

Names and pronouns are a critical way of identifying all students and a student's chosen name and pronouns declaration of who they are. Frequent misgendering can lower transgender and non-binary students' self esteem around appearance and reduce their sense of strength and continuity in their identity. According to GLSEN's 2019 National School Climate Survey, 22.8% of LGBTQ+ youth were prevented from using their chosen names and pronouns at school.

Best Practices for School Sites

- Create a school culture that takes responsibility for educating all students and teachers about gender identity and expression, like training and resources on pronouns, affirmed names, and gender identities.
- Encourage faculty to use gender inclusive language (for example, using "students," "y'all," or "scholars" instead of "boys and girls.")
- Use a student's affirmed name in all school records that do not require a legal name.
- Create a school culture that can handle accidental, occasional misgendering and "deadnaming" (using a transgender person's pretransition name). In most cases, a quick apology and correction and then moving on is the best strategy, because making a big deal about it draws even more attention to the transgender student. If there is a pattern of misgendering or "deadnaming" students, or if "deadnaming" a student has violated their privacy and 'outed' them as transgender, then the issue is considerably more serious. Staff and faculty should be made aware that such incidents could be grounds for Title IX and FERPA complaints.
- If the student is socially transitioning during the school year, let the student decide the degree to which their transition affects their day to day life at school. Normalize the student's change in pronoun and/or name by using it whenever one would have used their previous designations – don't avoid it. Please consider a gender support plan.
- When a student decides to transition socially, discuss what that will look like for them: do they want their teachers or a counselor to tell the class about their change in name and pronoun? See the site Counselor and Administrator Gender Support Plan information.

Best Practices in the Classroom

- Establish a classroom culture that normalizes the practice of all students and faculty sharing their pronouns if they wish (in introductions, on name tags, using pronoun buttons, etc.)
- Create intentional opportunities for students to introduce or update their name and pronouns with you like “get to know you” worksheets at the beginning and middle of the year
- Visibly display information about the name change process and applicable policies and know who to direct students to on campus if they ask you about it.
- Take extra care to use the correct name and pronouns for students and quickly correct yourself if you make a mistake.
- Correct students who misgender or “deadname” peers and take appropriate action if this is done maliciously or with harmful intent.
- Check in with students who are changing names and understand their Gender Support Plan.

Popout - Pro-Tips

Introduce yourself with your pronouns

One practice to introduce your classroom to at the beginning of the year is introducing yourself with your own pronouns. If you are not used to doing this, get some practice before you start a new school year. This sounds like “Hi my name is ____ and my pronouns are she and her.”

Get used to using They/them

People often say that they struggle with using gender neutral pronouns because they’re not used to it or they feel that it is grammatically incorrect. We recommend starting to use they/them more regularly to get yourself used to the change. In cases where you’re still getting used to gender-neutral pronouns, practice using names only to refer to people. This sounds like “John forgot their jacket in my classroom. Can you tell them that it’s here if you see them?”

Own the Quick Correct

Many people worry that they will “mess up” someone’s name or pronouns by accident or unintentionally and in that worry, end up acting awkwardly around a student who is undergoing a transition. Anyone can make mistakes and we recommend a quick correction on the name or pronoun without making a big deal. Overapologizing or making a big deal in front of a classroom can often cause unwanted attention for the student. This sounds like - “Adam(dead name), I’m sorry, Angel (new name), can you please read what’s on the board?”

Documents and Records

If a student’s legal name is different from their affirmed or chosen name, the legal name should only be used when it is legally required. All other lists, records and documents should use the affirmed name, in order to respect the student’s identity and protect their privacy.

Why It Matters

The safety of all students should be at the forefront of all school decisions. Publicly “deadnaming” (using their old name) or misgendering a transgender or nonbinary student due to simple database oversights can cause them real trauma. Formally protecting a student’s legal name and sex assigned at birth is upholding their privacy, as required by FERPA. Failing to do so could be grounds for a FERPA complaint with the Department of Education.

Best Practices for School Sites

- Often, legal requirements dictate that a student's permanent record needs to include their legal name, but daily use and all other records should use their affirmed name and gender identity. This includes any email accounts, guidance logs, non-permanent records, yearbook and graduation announcements, class attendance lists for substitute teachers, team and club rosters, and so on.
- The student's legal name should only be used on legal documents, such as a school transcript. Which school documents are considered "legal documents" varies from state to state; consult your school district attorney for more information.
- If the student obtains a legal name change, then all records, files and documents should reflect that change. Schools should recognize that there are many financial and legal barriers to obtaining a legal name change, and not every student is able to change their name legally.
- Students should not have to provide schools with legal documentation to correct their first name or gender within student records, lists, reports, and other non-legal documents. A simple request from the student or a parent / guardian should suffice.
- Schools should pay particular attention to avoiding situations where use of a student's legal name might result in a privacy violation by disclosing the student's transgender identity. See the Privacy section for more information.

Best Practices in the Classroom

- Develop a system for recording tracking students' preferred names throughout the year.
- Be mindful of printing or posting classroom materials that would include students' names. For example, using printed rosters for displaying grades, sign-in sheets or any other purposes. If doing this, opt for student IDs or be sure to change official names to chosen names wherever appropriate.
- Do not require a student to share any form of legal documentation when they are notifying you of a name change and honor the name they are requesting.
- If appropriate, refer to a student's Gender Support Plan to understand where and how they plan to transition the level of involvement from parents and guardians.

Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the private information of all students. Schools may not disclose a student's gender identity or sexual orientation without the explicit consent of the student or a legal guardian. The student can share what they want about their sexual orientation or gender identity, but this does not constitute permission for the school to share the same information. School records and data systems should be organized in such a way that a student's privacy is protected, particularly privacy about their transgender identity. FERPA does not establish a student's privacy from parents or legal guardians, and in fact it includes a provision that allows legal guardians to view any of their student's school documents and records.

Why It Matters

- Decisions about how 'out' to be are among the most personal and sensitive choices that an LGBTQ+ individual can make. If a school discloses that information without the student's consent, they have taken away the student's power of self-determination.
- Transgender students should get to choose who knows about their gender transition and how they find out. It's their information to disclose on their own terms.
- By sharing that information, teachers and administrators could expose that student to social consequences, including harassment and bullying. The harm done by privacy violations is difficult or impossible to undo.

Best Practices for School Sites

- Ensure that all staff and faculty are aware that information about a student's gender identity and sexual orientation is private and legally protected, and shared on a "needs to know basis".
- Inform teachers, staff, and school administrators of a transgender or non-binary student's legal name only as needed and legally required.
- Make it easier for students and parents to maintain privacy by introducing a simple, accessible process to request a change of name and/or gender markers in school registration documents.

Best Practices in the Classroom

- Only include the student's legal name on paperwork that requires the legal name (see "Documents and Records" section for more information on this).
- Make sure all public reference to the student uses their affirmed name and pronouns (class and club rosters, awards and honors, etc.) to avoid inadvertent privacy violations.
- Be mindful of what you share about a student's name or gender transition amongst colleagues. Make sure to refer to the student's Gender Support Plan to understand how the student is approaching their transition.

Restrooms and Facilities

LBUSD Standard

It is our responsibility to:

- Provide access to school activities, spaces such as locker rooms and restrooms, that fit with a students' gender identity. (California Education Code Section 221.5)

Why It Matters:

- GLSEN's 2019 National School Climate Survey reported that many LGBTQ+ youth avoided gender-segregated spaces in school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Approximately 45% avoided bathrooms and 44% avoided locker rooms.
- This survey also reported that LGBTQ+ students were actively discriminated against in school when trying to use facilities that corresponded to their gender identity. Over 28% were prevented from using bathrooms aligned with their gender identity, and 27% were prevented from using locker rooms aligned with their gender identity.
- These barriers make it challenging for LGBTQ+ students to participate fully in school life and activities, which can result in negative academic and social outcomes.

Best Practice for School Sites:

- Transgender and non-binary students have a right to use the bathrooms and locker rooms which correspond with their gender identity, or as discussed in their gender support plan.
- Provide a single stall restroom for any student to use without stigma or hardship. This could include nonbinary students, transgender students that do not feel safe in gender-segregated restrooms, and students who have a need or desire for increased privacy for any number of other reasons. If any students object to sharing multiple-stall restrooms with their transgender peers, then they have the option of using the single stall restroom themselves.

- Single-stall restrooms should be offered, but may not be required of any student. Multiple court cases have found that requiring a transgender student to use a separate restroom constitutes illegal discrimination.
- Multiple stall restrooms, locker rooms and showers should be constructed or upgraded with stall doors, curtains, and other privacy features. No student should have to be unclothed or use the toilet in view of other students or adults. This level of privacy should be available to all students, whatever their gender identity.
- Additional alternative arrangements that a student needs to protect their privacy may be covered in the student's gender support plan.

Best Practices in the Classroom

- Know where gender-inclusive restrooms on your campus are and visibly display a map
- Be aware that students who are using gender-neutral restrooms may have to walk further to access a restroom or wait longer for the restroom. Be mindful of imposing any time limits on restroom use during classroom time.
- Acknowledge that some students may avoid using the restroom during non-instructional time in order to avoid bullying, taunting or general discomfort. Do not shame or bring attention to students who frequently ask to use the restroom during instructional time.

Pop-out - Resource - Introduction to Campaign Organizing -

<https://gsanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Intro-to-Campaign-Organizing.pdf>

If you don't have a gender-neutral restroom on campus and want to be part of the solution to making sure you get one, get started by developing a campaign on your school site. Use this resource from the Genders and Sexualities Alliance Network to help outline how to get a campaign kicked off at your school.

Dress Codes

LBUSD Commitment

It is our responsibility to:

- Respect students' dress and behavior that does not conform to stereotypes associated with their gender, with respect to the student dress code. (California Education Code Section 221.5)

All students have a First Amendment right to dress in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity, as long as it complies with the school's dress code. Ideally, dress codes should not be gendered, but if the school has a gender-based dress code, students must be allowed to wear clothing that corresponds with their gender identity. Policies may outline what types of clothing are appropriate or inappropriate for school, but should apply to all students regardless of gender.

Why It Matters

- 18.3% of students in GLSEN's 2019 National School Climate Survey were prevented from wearing clothes considered "inappropriate" based on their gender.
- Dress codes which regulate students' clothing choices by gender allow for transgender and non-binary students to be punished for dressing appropriately for their genders.
- Classifying students by gender creates stress and anxiety for transgender and non-binary students, and encourages gender stereotyping by (and even of) cisgender students.

Best Practices for School Sites

- Review dress code policies to remove gendered language from dress codes as necessary. Ensure that the dress code policy is the same for all students, regardless of gender that the language supporting this is clear.
- Try to make dress codes as simple as possible and universally applicable so that all staff can easily and consistently uphold dress code requirements with minimal room for personal interpretation. This will make intervention easier and minimize potential bias.
- Dress codes should also be reviewed and revised to eliminate any religious, cultural, or ethnic bias; dress guidelines are an opportunity to create inclusive schools for all.

Best Practices for Classrooms

- Be sure that you are aware of the campus dress code requirements and be mindful of applying them fairly.
- Develop a clear and consistent process for addressing dress code violations that can apply and be followed equally across gender identities. Ensure that all students are aware of this protocol prior to any violations are addressed.
- Post any images or aids that can support students in visually assessing their dress code requirements.
- Do not assume a student's gender identity when assessing for dress code violations. If your school does have gendered dress-code policies, be sure that you know a student's gender identity prior to assuming or enforcing any dress code violations.



Classroom and Curricular Inclusion

LBUSD Commitment:

It is our responsibility to Provide LGBTQ-inclusive social studies, history and comprehensive sexual health education.

Governing Policy

California Education Code - California Healthy Youth Act

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=51933.&lawCode=EDC

Inclusive Curriculum

Culturally diverse and inclusive school curriculums play a critical role in shaping the culture of the school and emotionally supporting students who are LGBTQ+, transitioning, or questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. They also help create an affirming and inclusive culture among all students. As always, school policies should explicitly state their goals of creating an inclusive school culture, including what is taught in the classroom. Book censorship and harassment legislation like “Don’t Say Gay” laws directly target the inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities in school curriculums. School staff and administrators must be resolute in standing up against censorship practices. Every student has a right to see people with identities like their own reflected in the school curriculum, and every student benefits from seeing people with identities different than their own (often referred to as the “mirrors and windows” principal of curriculum development).

Why It Matters

According to GLSEN’s 2019 School Climate report, LGBTQ+ students in schools with inclusive curriculums report less hostile language and victimization throughout the school’s population, less student truancy, greater senses of belonging at school, better academic performance, and higher rates of students who plan on pursuing higher education. However, 66% of students reported that their classes did not include representations of LGBTQ+ people, events, or history.

Best Practices for School Sites:

- Schools should provide age-appropriate lessons on gender and sexuality, integrated into lessons that help students understand and celebrate human diversity. Further, “appropriate” gender behavior based on gender stereotypes should never be taught, and instead educators should use gender neutral language and phrases like “some people like the color pink,” or “many kids like to play sports.”
- School and classroom libraries, both print and digital, should be intentionally curated to offer a diverse and inclusive representation of authors, characters, and historical figures.
- Schools should require their faculty and staff to attend professional development workshops about gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and how to ensure that what they are teaching in class is inclusive and affirming for all students.

Best Practices for the Classroom

- Seek resources and curriculum that highlights the contributions for LGBTQ+ people throughout history and within a specific field of study. Be open to including these lessons throughout the year, rather than only focusing on one month or week of the year.
- Share resources with peers and teachers when you find them!
- Create a robust book or resource library that uplifts the contributions of LGBTQ+ people and make it readily visible and available to all students.
- In social studies classes like history, geography, economics, and civics, lessons should include historical figures that represent diverse identities, as well as address important historical contributions and perspectives of diverse communities.
- In science and health classes, topics like human development, sexual health and wellness, personal boundaries, gender identity, and non-heterosexual sexual orientation need to be discussed in an affirming and scientifically accurate way. Not discussing these topics does not make the topic disappear in student's lives – instead, it just makes them more confusing for students and increases the risk of future social, emotional, and sexual harm.

Tools - Lesson Plans

Not sure of where to start? Here are some resources that include pre-made lesson plans, curriculum guidance and book lists to help you decide which approach to inclusive curriculum is best for you and your classroom.

<https://schools.laigbtcenter.org/out-for-safe-schools-training-lesson-plans/>

<https://www.glsen.org/activity/inclusive-curriculum-guide>

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity/librariesrespond/Services-LGBTQ>

Pop-Out Bubble - Podcast

In 13 episodes, this Learning for Justice Podcast takes us throughout time and history to explore the often untold stories of queer people and their contributions. Choose one episode or create a plan to listen to them all. The last episode focuses explicitly on how to use these stories and themes in your classroom.

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/podcasts/queer-america>

Inclusive Comprehensive Sexual Health Education

Why it Matters:

Sexual health education has historically shamed or completely ignored the experiences of LGBTQ+ students leaving young people without access to crucial information about their health, well-being and safety. Several years of reports from the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey have shown that LGBTQ+ students are at increased risk for negative sexual health outcomes due to their ill informed environment, not because of their identity than their heterosexual and cisgender peers including new HIV infections, experiences of coerced sex and sexual violence ([CDC YRBS 2021](#)). Comprehensive sexual health education that includes the experiences and identities of LGBTQ+ is not only an imperative for school sites but required by California state law and should be readily available to all students during their journey at the LBUSD.



Best Practices for School Sites:

- Ensure that sexual health education is medically accurate, developmentally appropriate, culturally inclusive and grounded in science ([CDC, what works](#))
- If health and sexual education classes are gender-segregated, students should attend the class that coincides with their gender identity. If school staff are unsure, they should follow the wishes of the student. More and more schools are moving away from having any gender-segregated classes, including health and sex education.
- Health and sex education classes should reflect the full range of diversity in human bodies, genders, and sexual orientations, rather than reinforcing the bias that only heterosexual and cisgender people are “normal.”
- Ensure that sex-educators feel properly supported and prepared to implement their curriculum with students by checking-in actively and providing resources as needed.
- Be well informed about the state requirements and recommended standards related to comprehensive sexual education in order to better support your school staff and parents that may have questions.
- Ensure that students are well-aware of their rights to have safe and supportive comprehensive sexual education classes and information by providing posters, school announcements and other student facing communications.
- Engage parents and community partners

Best Practices in the Classroom:

- Prepare students for respectful conversations about sexual education by reiterating any classroom expectations around appropriate questions and bullying.
- Adopt a trauma-informed lens
- Ensure that you have adequate resources available for students who may need additional support following any sexual health education course

Pop-Out Bubble: Resource Sex-Ed To-Go

Sex-Ed To-Go is a free online resource that trains you on how to have conversations about inclusive sexual education. At your own pace and on your time you can take courses on gender diversity, promoting healthy relationship boundaries, addressing student’s questions and much more. This is a resource that is made especially for sex-educators and can be used by all staff and administration eager to learn more.

Access it for free here: <https://sexedtogoteachers.thinkific.com/>

You can also find a student facing version of these courses here: <https://sexedtogostudents.thinkific.com/>.

External Resources:

Healthy Teen Network #SexEdforAll Month Tool Kit - Use this resource to help bring awareness and momentum for inclusive sexual health education on your campus.

<https://www.healthyteennetwork.org/resources/sex-ed-for-all-tool-kit/>

AMAZE is a fully digital resource that aims to “take the awkward out” of sexual health education by providing short and relatable videos that are age-appropriate and informative.

<https://amaze.org/>

Extra Curricular Supports and Activities

Governing Policy

LBUSD Board Policy

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1656862869/lbusdk12caus/hm1c4ureu4lfsz1hixoc/Trans-gender-and-Gender-Nonconforming-Student-Name-Change-policy-Rev-10-06-21.pdf>

California Interscholastic Federation Bylaws -

https://www.cifstate.org/governance/constitution/Guidelines_for_Gender_Identity_Participation.pdf

Sports and Athletics

LBUSD Standard

It is our responsibility to:

- Ensure that participation in competitive athletic, intramural sports, athletic teams, competitions and contact sports are facilitated in a manner that is consistent with the students gender identity asserted at school. (CIF Gender Identity Participation (2015-2016, page 56)

Why It Matters

The psychological benefits of youth participation in sports include improved emotional regulation, academic improvement, decreased hopelessness and suicidality, fewer depressive symptoms, and higher rates of self esteem and belonging. All students should have the right to engage in such an opportunity. However, GLSEN's 2019 National School Climate Survey reported that one-tenth of LGBTQ+ students were prevented or discouraged from participating in school sports teams because of their gender identity and sexual orientation. Further, 60% of LGBTQ+ students reported being very uncomfortable discussing LGBTQ+ issues with their coaches and P.E. teachers.

Best Practices for School Sites:

- Transgender athletes should participate and compete under the same terms and conditions as their cisgender peers.
- Schools should work with each transgender and non-binary student individually to ensure that they can participate on the athletic teams that feel the most safe and affirming to them.
- To support an equitable and inclusive PE environment, we do not recommend grouping students based on gender.
- Ensure that coaches and all supporting staff members are well trained on the standards and expectations of district policy. This training should include how to respond to bias remarks from adults, fellow students and opposing teams.
- Coaches and supportive staff should make every effort to honor a student's affirmed name and gender, as well ensure that their teammates, opponents, fans, and announcers do the same. This includes instilling a sense of respect, appreciation for diversity, and student empowerment in the values of school athletic departments.
- Prohibit hazing activities, which frequently involve forms of gender-based harassment.

- A student’s gender identity, including their health records and personal information, must be kept confidential to the school in question. The student should be consulted on whether and how much they would like to disclose to their teammates about their gender identity.
- Schools should support and encourage all-gender athletic activities, which offer all students an option free from gender segregated sports.
- These laws are being challenged in the courts, and have been found to violate both Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.



Pop-Out Bubble: Did You Know?

- In states with inclusive gender policies, high school girls’ participation in sports remained unchanged from 2011 to 2019. In states with exclusive policies, girls’ participation has decreased.¹⁴
- In California and Connecticut, which have inclusive policies, girls’ sports participation has increased, including by almost 14 percent in California from 2014 to 2020.¹⁵
 - From the Center for American Progress, Fair Play Report 2021

Fact Sheet

Participation in sports and extra curricular activities should be a right and not an option for only some. This resource serves as a reminder as to why this right is especially important for trans and gender non-conforming students.

The Importance of Sports Participation for Transgender Youth - Center

<https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/Importance-of-Sports-Participation1.pdf>

External Resources

Transathlete.com has a substantial list of policy resources and medical research regarding transgender athletes in schools. <https://www.transathlete.com/>

Athlete Ally is an organization that works to end transphobia and homophobia in all athletic institutions. They have several resources for supporting transgender student athletes and advocating for inclusive policy and practice.

<https://www.athleteally.org/>

The Fair Play Report by The Center for American Progress is a fantastic resources for finding comprehensive data and research that supports the positive benefits of inclusive sports policies across the country.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fair-play/>

School Clubs & Activities

LBUSD Commitment:

It is our responsibility to:

- Provide students opportunities to speak out about LGBTQ issues, including wearing LGBTQ-affirming t-shirts, stickers and bracelets, and access information about LGBTQ issues on school computers, and to bring same-gender dates to prom. (California Education Code Sections 48907 & 48950)
- Support the formation of Genders & Sexualities Alliance (GSA) clubs or similar LGBTQ-related student clubs. (Federal Equal Access Act; California Education Code Section 220)

Why it Matters

Student clubs that are specific to and support the experiences of LGBTQ+ students on campus have an important role in not only creating a more affirming experience for students individually, but positively impacting student experience as a whole. (GLSEN 2019, GSA Study). While these clubs are often called Genders- and Sexuality Alliances (formerly Gay and Straight Alliances), students may choose to name and lead them however they are comfortable. What's most important is that they are student-led, school-sponsored, and visibly active participants in a school site's identity and culture.

Additionally, ensuring that LGBTQ+ students are encouraged and supported to participate in any school activities and events without fear of harassment, intimidation and bullying is equally important to upholding a strong and healthy school climate for all. This includes being aware of all social activities on campus that have the potential to assume heterosexual and cisgender gender norms and relationships including overnight field trips, proms and dances, graduation ceremonies and other student social activities.

Best Practices for School Sites

- Play an active role in your school sites' GSA or student-led LGBTQ+ affirming club. Doing so shows support for student leadership and helps you to better understand the needs and realities of LGBTQ+ students that are specific to your site and community.
- Ensure LGBTQ+ voices are represented on all student councils, advisories, committees and school-wide events.
- Proactively recruit teachers and school personnel to serve in staff supportive roles to GSA's and other student-led LGBTQ+ affirming clubs. If there are barriers to staff recruitment, take an active stance on understanding why and addressing those barriers.
- Make information about starting and maintaining GSAs easily accessible and consistently visible to all students.
- Reach out to local community supporters to find out if they offer any supportive services for GSAs or other student clubs.
- Be aware of leadership opportunities outside of campus that are available to students who participate in GSAs and other LGBTQ+ affirming clubs.
- Be mindful of any students who may need additional accommodations for any overnight field trips by staying in tune with Gender Support Plans and having thoughtful conversations with students about their own needs.
- Avoid gender segregation when possible at social and celebratory events like rallies, proms and graduations.

Pop-Out Resource - GSA Advisor Handbook

Whether you've had a GSA on campus for decades or are just getting started, there are ways that the GSA Network can help you to be the best advisor you can be. The Advisor Handbook is a resource for you to turn to over and over again when you're looking to fund raise, build a youth leadership pipeline or integrate racial justice in your program. Always have it on hand here - <https://gsanetwork.org/resources/advisor-handbook/>

Pop-Out Resource - Models of Pride

Models of Pride is an annual free one-day event that brings together LGBTQ+ youth, youth-serving professionals and community members for workshops, performances and sense of community. Don't miss out on the opportunity to bring your youth leaders to this unique day of celebration and support. <https://modelsofpride.org/faq/>

External Resources

Education Week - Article on Student-Led initiative for Gender Inclusive Prom

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/king-queen-and-sovereign-prom-courts-grow-more-diverse/2023/04>

Staff Training and In-District Support

Governing Policy

LBUSD Board Policy - Code of Excellence, Equity and Ethics

<https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/lbusd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9GVMX817B3F#>

Staff Training and Cultural Responsiveness

Why it Matters

Caring and supportive school staff has consistently shown to have a positive impact on LGBTQ+ students' feelings of acceptance, belonging and overall mental health. According to the Trevor Project's 2023 US National Survey on the Mental Health of Young People, students who feel that their teachers cared a lot or very much about them significantly lower the odds of attempting suicide. In LBUSD, it is expected that staff are skilled at working in culturally diverse classrooms, including working with LGBTQ+ students. Schools are required to provide professional development to all school staff on a bi-annual basis to increase familiarity and awareness of human diversity in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity. It is also important to note that administrators, staff, and faculty members who discriminate against or harass LGBTQ+ students are risking a Title IX sexual harassment complaint, with consequences that could include the termination of staff members.

Best Practices for School Sites:

- Establish policies that require school staff to be proactive in their support of LGBTQ+ students, and pair it with regular staff education about the needs of LGBTQ+ students.
- Staff and faculty should receive regular training about implicit bias and strategies for bias reduction. Implicit bias training should include gender bias and binary thinking bias.
- Title IX and other non-discrimination training should explicitly include issues and examples of legal protections for LGBTQ+ students.
- Training should include information on best practices for the school and classroom, grounded in the 'why' of student safety and well-being.
- When other students misgender a transgender or non-binary student, all informed staff should respond as discussed in the student's plan. Do not ignore the situation. If the student wishes, staff members should gently correct any misgendering and move on with the conversation. When an administrator, faculty, or staff member misgenders the student, they should set a good example by apologizing and correcting themselves.
- Make sure active support is available to staff and faculty members. Identify a support person, such as a counselor or social worker, that faculty can approach with questions or challenging situations.
- Assess for LGBTQ+ cultural competency, as well as other forms of cultural responsiveness, when interviewing and hiring new staff.

Pop-Out Resource - LBUSD Request for Training

External Resources

The Safe Zone Project has training and resources available for free. Student support specialists can use these to facilitate workshops for faculty and staff. <https://www.thesafezoneproject.com/>

This Safe Space Kit is another free resource for school faculty to learn more about gender identity, their own implicit biases, how to create a safe and inclusive space for their LGBTQ+ students, as well as how to handle microaggressions and overt harassment of LGBTQ+ students by other students.

<https://www.glsen.org/activity/glsen-safe-space-kit-solidarity-lgbtq-youth>

My Gender Journey and Understanding Gender from Gender Spectrum are great resources for professional development for school faculty and staff members. <https://www.genderspectrum.org/resources>

This resource from Learning for Justice is for teachers looking to understand intersectionality and elevate the experiences of students with intersecting identities, specifically BIPOC students.

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/gender-sexual-identity>

Social and Emotional Support

Why it Matters

Students who identify as LGBTQ+ are vulnerable to several concerning mental health outcomes including increased rates of depression and thoughts of suicidality due to their environment not because of their identity. This is particularly true if students are also students of color, rural students, low income students, or live with a disability. In the Trevor Projects' 2023 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ young people, Young LGBTQ people of color transgender and non-binary people and young people from lower socio-economic status all reported lower rates of feeling cared about by their teachers. Schools have a key role to play in offering social and emotional support, both formally through counseling and social work, and informally through active acceptance from faculty and staff.

Best Practices for School Sites:

- Creating explicit and proactive school policies to protect LGBTQ+ students is paramount in creating a safe and welcoming school for everyone.
- In addition to the creation of inclusive school policies, such policies should be regularly evaluated for effectiveness.
- Develop a systematic way to hear from LGBTQ+ students on your school site. Whether through annual school climate surveys or student advisory councils, having a consistent method to assess well-being on your campus will direct you to more targeted intervention opportunities.
- School counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals have professional codes of ethics that guide their support and advocacy for LGBTQ+ students, including creating a safe and affirming school environment, and protecting all vulnerable students from harassment and discrimination. Schools should understand and support the professional obligations of counselors and social workers.
- Encouraging the formation of a GSA at school is an important step in providing social and emotional support for LGBTQ+ students. The term "GSA" originally stood for "Gay-Straight Alliance," but now typically stands for the more inclusive "Genders and Sexuality Alliance." GSAs are traditionally student-led and student-organized and open to all students, regardless of gender and sexual identity. They allow students to work together to address issues that affect all students, like harassment and discrimination, as well as educating others in their school about the LGBTQ+ experience.

Pop-Out: Did you know? LBUSD Wellness Centers

LBUSD has partnered with The LGBTQ Center Long Beach to provide consistent support for LGBTQ+ young people at school site wellness centers. If you have not yet visited your school site's wellness center to find out the full scope of services available to you and students' do so today!

External Resources:

American School Counselor Association Resource Bank

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Publications-Research/Publications/Toolkits/LGBTQ-Students>

Families:

Why it Matters:

Like all diverse populations, LGBTQ+ students come from a wide range of homes and family dynamics. There will be some students who experience support in their homes, their faith communities, and their neighborhoods, and there will be some who do not. It is essential for schools to provide a supportive and welcoming environment for all students to explore and express their identities away from the family-integrated spaces they inhabit outside of school.

Several states have considered or passed harassment legislation that requires school staff to notify parents if students may identify as LGBTQ+. These 'mandatory outing' laws are promoted as protecting a parent's right to information about their student, but the underlying purpose and actual effect is to keep students from seeing school teachers, counselors, and social workers as adults who are safe to approach with questions and concerns. The most vulnerable LGBTQ+ students are those who lack a safe and supportive home environment, and laws like these keep those students isolated and unsupported at school as well, significantly increasing their risk of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.

The tension between a student's right to privacy and self-determination and a parent or guardian's right to information about their child can create complicated situations for school staff. The student's safety should always be the primary concern. Also, remember that questioning, coming out, and gender transitioning are all processes, and processes take time. Allowing the student as much self-determination and control over the process as possible tends to create the best outcomes for both the student and their family.



Best Practices for School Sites:

As in all aspects of LGBTQ+ student health and well-being, center the student's safety as the primary concern.

- Ideally, a "triangle of trust" exists between the student, the parents or caregivers, and school staff. In cases where caregivers have broken that trust with their child through expressing hostility to LGBTQ+ people, the school staff must be extra careful to maintain trust with the student. In many cases, school staff can act as a third party educator or mediator to provide accurate information to uninformed or misinformed parents, and help them rebuild a trusting relationship with their child.
- School staff should communicate with the student about their parents' level of awareness of the student's LGBTQ+ identity, and insofar as possible, respect the students' wishes around privacy and confidentiality.

- School staff should follow the student's lead on which name and pronouns to use when communicating with parents and caregivers.
- School staff should also communicate to students the limitations of privacy from parents and guardians, including the fact that legal guardians have a right to request the student's files, documents, and records.
- School staff should be aware that many LGBTQ+ young people have negative experiences when parents and guardians first learn of their identity, including verbal abuse, physical violence, and being kicked out of their home. If a student communicates that they feel at risk if their parents should learn of their identity, this concern should be taken very seriously. It is often appropriate to involve a school counselor or social worker in working with the student to create a safety plan.
- Even caregivers who are fully supportive of their LGBTQ+ child might need or desire the school's assistance in finding accurate information about LGBTQ+ identities and how to support their child. Parents also may benefit from a referral to a family / caregiver support group, such as a local PFLAG chapter.

Pop-Out Resource: AMAZE's #AskableParent Challenge

AMAZE is an online resource that helps educators, parents and young people make uncomfortable conversations less awkward and more informed. Their #AskableParent Challenge is an opportunity for parents and caregivers to get expert tips from sexuality and mental health practitioners that ensure that they are ready for any conversation with their child. Encourage parents and caregivers to start the challenge to engage in six-days of learning delivered straight to their inboxes. <https://amaze.org/askableparent/>

Pop-Out Resource: Did you know? PFLAG Long Beach

PFLAG is the nation's largest organization dedicated to supporting, educating and advocating for LGBTQ_ people and those who love them.



Strategies for Supporting LGBTQ+ Students

- **Know your rights.** Knowledge is power, and even if—especially if—your rights are being violated, you should know clearly and specifically what those rights are.
- **Educate.** Very few educators or administrators have received sufficient training in understanding LGBTQ+ identities/incentives or working in a culturally responsive way with LGBTQ+ students, but most have been exposed to stereotypes, hate speech, and anti-LGBTQ+ disinformation campaigns.
- **Share this guide.** The policies and best practices in this guide are presented with an audience of administrators and decision makers in mind, and we hope it will be an effective tool for both education and advocacy.
- **Take incremental steps, and choose your battles.** It is common for LGBTQ+ students to face many different forms of discrimination and bias, which can feel overwhelming. Tactically, it may work best to choose one area of change where progress seems possible, and then build from there. Many student and faculty advocates choose to start with addressing bullying and harassment, since most schools have strong anti-bullying policies in place; they just need to be applied to protect LGBTQ+ students.
- **There's power in numbers.** It can be difficult for one individual to make change in a school or district, but when students, faculty and adults organize and speak with a collective voice, it is much more difficult for the administration to ignore or dismiss.
- **Find local allies.** Supportive faculty, guardians, or community members can be a valuable resource. You might talk with individuals who you know to be sympathetic, or you might find an existing community group with a commitment to social justice. National organizations like GLSEN, the GSA Network, and PFLAG provide guidance and support for organizing groups both inside and outside of school. Finding affirming clergy or faith leaders can be a powerful step, because so much anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment is rooted in a misinterpretation of the Christian scriptures.
 - **Those most affected should have the loudest voices.** As you organize and find allies, do your best to stick to the principle that those who are most affected by discrimination and at the most risk of retaliation should have the greatest say over choosing priorities, tactics and strategies. This often means that adults and allies should step back or quiet down so that student voices can be heard.
 - **Step by step, one by one.** Best practices can sometimes be put into place incrementally, even when policy change isn't possible. For instance, a school should have a policy that requires school staff to respect the names and pronouns of all students. If the site refuses, however, a small group of students can still go around their school, talk to each teacher, and ask that teacher to commit to respecting the names and pronouns of all students. Some teachers may agree, and some may refuse, but in either case, the students are raising awareness and shifting the culture of the school.

- **Document, document, document.** It is always best to write things down. Telling your principal that LGBTQ+ students often get bullied is one thing; handing the principal a list of six bullying incidents in the last two weeks, including what happened, who participated, who witnessed it, and where and when it happened is much more difficult for the principal to ignore. Sometimes the act of documenting can be a strategy in and of itself; for example, if a teacher is known for making anti-LGBTQ+ comments, they may be less likely to do so if they know that students are going to get out a notebook and write down what they said. Documentation is also an important part of preparing to file a complaint.
- **File a complaint.** The bottom line is that you do have civil rights that the school may not violate – but you may need to file a complaint before those rights are respected. In general, you should know that you have the right to file a complaint at the district level, or with the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education. It sounds intimidating, but isn't actually too difficult, especially if you already have documentation. Once a complaint is filed, the district has many legal requirements and responsibilities that come into play, which increases the scrutiny they are under and may make it more difficult for them to continue to discriminate.
- **Have someone else file a complaint.** If retaliation is a concern, then it's important to know that any person may file a Title IX or other civil rights complaint on behalf of someone who is experiencing discrimination. Talk with a trusted ally about this option.
- **Express a willingness to file a complaint.** Sometimes the possibility of a complaint is enough to motivate an administrator to take action, but don't bring up the possibility if you aren't ready and willing to follow through. An effective strategy has been to respectfully communicate the following six points with a principal or superintendent. This formula has been effectively used in letters, emails, phone calls and face-to-face meetings. Your evidence should be as specific and factual as possible, and your solution should be something that is reasonable and realistic.
 - » We believe that your school / district is not currently complying with (reference and link the law or policy).
 - » This belief is based on the following evidence (share information about discriminatory incidents, actions, policies or practices).
 - » Students / faculty / guardians are currently documenting additional violations of this law/policy.
 - » We believe that the situation may be effectively addressed through (share your solution).
 - » We would prefer for the school to implement this solution and come into compliance with the law without the need for a formal complaint process, but we are willing to file a complaint if necessary.
 - » We would like to see (name the next steps you'd like to see from the school or administrator) by (give them a reasonable deadline), and at that time we will be deciding upon our own next steps.



LGBTQ+ TERMINOLOGY SEX AND GENDER

Sex - A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external sex organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. A binary system (male/female) set by the medical establishment, usually based on genitals and sometimes chromosomes. Because this is usually divided into “male” and “female,” this category often ignores the existence of intersex bodies. See intersex.

Gender - A complex combination of roles, expressions, ideas, performances, and more that are assigned gendered meaning by society. Gender is both society-defined (a social construct), and self-defined (gender identity). A person’s gender can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. Gender is a spectrum, not a binary, meaning there are more than 2 possible gender identities.

Intersex - A person born with any manner of supposed “ambiguity” in terms of gendered physical characteristics, including organs, genitals, hormones, chromosomes, or any combination thereof. At birth, attending physicians may choose to perform reassignment surgery on individuals with ambiguous genitalia, thus assigning a gender identity. Many who identify as intersex believe that early childhood surgical intervention is not only unnecessary but cruel, and advocate counseling and support for children and families.


Cisgender - A person whose gender identity aligns with the gender typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth; someone who is not trans*.

Trans* and Transgender - An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the gender they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. The asterisk in “Trans*” signifies a specific effort to include all transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming identities, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, genderless, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, and bigender, in addition to trans men and trans women.

Transition - The process by which some people strive to more closely align their outward appearance with their gender identity. Transitioning may include social, physical, mental, and emotional components, and may or may not include things like changing one’s name, taking hormones, having surgery, changing legal documents to reflect one’s gender identity, coming out to loved ones, dressing as one chooses, and accepting oneself among many other things. Transition is an individual process.

Transsexual - This term often refers to binary trans* people (trans men and trans women), or to trans* people who physically transition in any way. While still a preferred term for many, some people dislike the term because of its connection to the medicalization of trans* people and the focus it can put on physical transition.

FTM/F2M/female to male - A term usually synonymous with trans man, but also occasionally used by other AFAB (assigned female at birth) trans* people. This term is problematic to some AFAB trans* people, because “X to Y” terms can put too much focus on traditional means of physical transition. Additionally, some trans* people may feel they were never female.



MTF/MzF/male to female - A term usually synonymous with trans woman but also occasionally used by other AMAB trans* people. This term is problematic to some AFAB trans* people, because “X to Y” terms can put too much focus on traditional means of physical transition. Additionally, some trans* people may feel they were never male.

Transphobia - The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who are transgender.

Passing - When used by trans* people, it can either mean that one is being read as the gender they identify as or that one is being read as cisgender. For example, a trans man who is regarded at a glance as a cisgender man.

Gender binary - The societal expectation that there are only masculine cisgender men and feminine cisgender women, and there can be no alternatives in terms of gender identity or expression.

Gender expression - How one expresses their gender outwardly and/or the facets of a person’s expression which have gendered connotations in our culture. This can include behavior, clothing, haircut, and/or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with one’s gender identity.

Gender identity - An internal sense of one’s self as woman, man, trans*, non-binary/gender non-conforming, or another identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. A person may or may not identify with the social constructs that define options for gender.

Gender neutral pronouns - Pronouns other than the usually gendered “he/him/his” or “she/her/hers.” Some examples are “ze/ zir/zirs” and “they/them/their,” but there are many others.

Gender non-conforming - A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. Gender role | Cultural expectations for what people should do with their lives, what activities they should enjoy or excel at, and how they should behave, based on what their gender is.

Non-binary - Non-binary people are those who identify as a gender that is neither man nor woman, or who are not men or women exclusively. Non-binary can refer to a specific gender identity, or it can function as an umbrella term which can include (though not always) people who are genderqueer, agender, bigender, and others.

Agender - Some people who are agender would define their identity as being neither a man nor a woman, while others would define agender as not having any gender.

Genderfluid - This term can be used as a specific identity or as a way of articulating the changing nature of one’s gender identity or expression. People who are genderfluid may feel that their gender identity or expression is constantly changing, or that it switches back and forth.

Genderqueer - This term can be used as an umbrella term to include people who are gender nonconforming, people who are non-binary, and many more. As a specific identity it can be generally understood as a gender that is neither man nor woman, possibly in between, or completely separate.

Additional Resources:

Data:

[Coming of Age as an LGBTQ Southerner: Family, Faith, Education & Health](#)

- This report from the Campaign for Southern Equality and Campus Pride details the findings of the 2021 Survey of Southern LGBTQ Experiences, a survey of 4,186 LGBTQ people who live in the South. Questions capture respondents' experiences with their families, in religious settings, at school, and with regard to healthcare.

[The Trevor Project's National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2021](#)

- With over 34,000 respondents, this survey is the largest survey of LGBTQ+ youth mental health ever conducted and provides a critical understanding of the experiences impacting their lives.

[GLSEN 2021 LGBTQ+ School Climate Report](#)

Legal Resources:

[Department of Education's Interpretation of Bostock](#)

- The U.S. Department of Education issued this interpretation to clarify the Department's enforcement authority over discrimination based on sexual orientation and discrimination based on gender identity under Title IX.

General Resources for Creating Supportive Schools:

[Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 schools](#)

- This is a comprehensive guide for supporting transgender students in schools, compiled by the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Gender Spectrum, the Human Rights Campaign, and the American Civil Liberties Union.

[GLSEN Respect for All Policy Recommendations](#)

- This resource provides education policymakers and practitioners, particularly at the district and school levels, with concrete recommendations related to creating safe and affirming learning environments that uphold the dignity of all students.

[Project Thrive Checklist for Creating Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ Youth](#)

- This checklist from the HRC offers strategies for creating a safe and inclusive school for LGBTQ+ youth.

Safety, Harassment, and Bullying:

[Measuring Bullying, Victimization, Perpetration, and Bystander Experiences](#)

- This compendium from the Center for Disease Control provides researchers, prevention specialists, and health educators with tools to measure a range of bullying experiences: bully perpetration, bully victimization, bully-victim experiences, and bystander experiences.

[Guidance from GLSEN: Replacing Punitive Discipline with Restorative Policies and Practices](#)

- GLSEN offers school policy guidance for the elimination of punitive and exclusionary discipline policies that differentially impact LGBTQ+ students, especially those who are also students of color and students with disabilities, and the introduction of proactive and positive restorative discipline practices.

[GLSEN Local School Climate Survey](#)

- A free assessment tool to survey students about how they experience their school climate. US Department of Education School Climate Survey · A school climate assessment survey from the US Department of Education.

Privacy:

[Privacy Lambda Legal's FERPA guidance and FAQs](#)

- Lambda Legal provides information and guidance about student privacy violations and how to address them.

[How to File a FERPA complaint](#)

- Students and families have the right to file a FERPA complaint if the student's right to privacy has been violated at school. This is the online portal for filing FERPA complaints with the Department of Education.

Names and Pronouns:

[Healthline's Information on Misgendering](#)

- Frequent misgendering can lower transgender and non-binary students' self-esteem around appearance and reduce their "sense of strength and continuity in their identity." This resource explains why pronouns matter and how individuals can prevent misgendering a student.

[GLSEN's Pronoun Guide](#)

- This is a helpful resource for understanding pronouns and why they matter for people who identify as LGBTQ+. This can be used for professional development for school staff.

Documents and Records:

[Lambda Legal's A Transgender Advocate's Guide to Updating and Amending School Records](#)

- This is a detailed resource for students who are interested in amending their school records with their affirmed name and pronouns, as well as how FERPA protects their right to do so.

[Gender Inclusive Schools Student Records School Policy Guidance](#)

- These are model policies for schools and districts across the U.S. to protect students' privacy in school records.

Restrooms and Facilities:

[Grimm vs. Gloucester County ruling](#)

- The US Court of Appeals ruled in 2020 that not allowing transgender students to use the restrooms that align with their gender identity is a violation of their Title IX rights.

[Transgender Students and School Bathrooms: Frequently Asked Questions from Gender Spectrum](#)

- This is a list of frequently asked questions from parents concerned about transgender students using facilities that align with their gender identity. This can be a helpful resource for schools to know how to address these concerns.

Dress Code:

[Equality Florida's Equitable Dress Code For Students](#)

- This resource provides further exploration into best practices for inclusive and affirming school dress codes, as well as some proactive and protective model dress code policies.

Trans Athletes Resources and Research:

[ACLU Tracker](#)

- The ACLU tracks legislation affecting LGBTQ rights across the country, including state policies regarding exclusions of transgender youth in sports. It is updated weekly.

[Transathlete Resources and Research](#)

- Transathlete.com has a substantial list of policy resources and medical research regarding transgender athletes in schools.

[Equal Opportunity for Transgender Athletes Report from NCLR](#)

- The National Center for Lesbian Rights published an extensive report about transgender students in school athletics, including the importance of sports on student health, policy guidance, best practices for schools, and research disproving notions that female transgender students have a competitive advantage over their peers.

Gender in school and classroom activities:

[Media Matters for America “17 School Districts Debunk Right-Wing Lies About Protections For Transgender Students”](#)

- This 2015 article uses data and evidence from school districts around the nation to debunk myths about the “danger” of allowing transgender and non-binary students to participate in traditionally gender-segregated activities.

[“Sex-Ed To Go” from Planned Parenthood](#)

- These are free 15-20 minute videos for teachers to learn some best practices for creating inclusive health and sexual education programs in schools.

Inclusive Curriculum:

[Inclusive Curriculums GLSEN’s Nondiscrimination Protections and Inclusion of LGBTQ+ Students in K-12 Learning Communities](#)

- GLSEN provides guidance for schools in their efforts to increase inclusivity in their curriculums and beyond (see page 18). This resource also includes the civil rights of LGBTQ+ students, as well as some best practices for record-keeping, names and pronouns, and gendered activities and facilities.

[GLSEN’s Inclusive Curriculum Resource](#)

- This guide was created to assist schools in making their own inclusive curriculums that are tailored to their school’s standards and social climate.

[Learning for Justice Classroom Resources](#)

- Resources for teachers and schools in creating inclusive curriculums. This website contains sample lesson plans, assistance with creating personalized lesson plans, ideas for student engagement, teaching kits, and film kits.

[American Library Association Defending Intellectual Freedom: LGBTQ+ Materials in School Libraries](#)

- This is a guide for school librarians on how to choose LGBTQ+ inclusive materials that are right for their school’s collection. It follows the commitments of inquiry, inclusion, exploration, engagement, exploration, and curation.

Staff Training and Cultural Responsiveness:

[The Safe Zone Project](#)

- The Safe Zone Project has training and resources available for free. Student support specialists can use these to facilitate workshops for faculty and staff.

[GLSEN’s Safe Space Kit](#)

- This is another free resource for school faculty to learn more about gender identity, their own implicit biases, how to create a safe and inclusive space for their LGBTQ+ students, as well as how to handle microaggressions and overt harassment of LGBTQ+ students by other students.

[Intersectionality in the Classroom](#)

- This resource from Learning for Justice is for teachers looking to elevate the experiences of students with intersecting identities, specifically BIPOC students. My Gender.

[Journey and Understanding Gender from Gender Spectrum](#)

- These resources offer professional development strategies for school faculty and staff members to explore their own gender identities and implicit biases.

Social and Emotional Support:

[GSA Network 10 Steps for Starting a GSA](#)

- Guides to create a school GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance). These resources provide step-by-step guides to creating a school GSA, which can serve as critical places for providing social and emotional peer support for students.

Family Support:

[GLSEN's Model Local Education Policy](#)

- This guide may help schools navigate supportive and unsupportive family members of LGBTQ+ students.

[PFLAG Chapter Finder](#)

- PFLAG is a national organization providing regular, free spaces for parents and caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth to support and connect with each other.





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