



**Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer (LBGTQ+) Critical Resource and Support Guide for Staff**



## Introduction

**This guide was created to provide administrators, teachers, counselors and school staff with the tools, knowledge and support that will assist schools in ensuring all students have a safe, welcoming and inclusive learning experience.**

**The diversity of our students is rich and valuable in Hillsborough County Public Schools. We affirm that all people are created equal and deserve the same rights, privileges and opportunities.**

**We affirm our commitment to the struggle for equal rights for LGBTQ+ students and staff, and we are committed to academic success of all youth and to removing barriers to that end. We believe that LGBTQ+ youth should feel safe to learn without the fear of harassment and that educators, students and families should be supported to live an affirmative life with dignity and respect.**

**We are committed to equal protection of all Hillsborough County students and staff, regardless of sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.<sup>1</sup>**

**We acknowledge the incredibly important contributions of critical stakeholders that made this guide possible including District Counsel, School Board attorney, instructional staff, school and district leaders, GSA club advisors, and our LGBTQ+ Community Coalition.**

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<sup>1</sup> LGBTQ+ History Month Proclamation, Hillsborough County Public Schools, October 2020



# Table of Contents

## I. PURPOSE

Purpose of the Guide .....	4
HCPS LGB Student Facts: Facts and Demonstrated Need .....	4

## II. ADVANCING EQUITY: PROTECTING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF OUR STUDENTS

A. Federal Laws .....	5
B. State Laws .....	6
C. Landmark Court Cases & Legislation.....	8
D. Hillsborough County Public Schools Board Policies .....	10

## III. CREATING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

A. Access to Restrooms and Sex-Segregated Facilities .....	12
B. Affirmed Names and Gender Pronouns .....	12
C. Anti-LGBTQ+ Language.....	13
D. “Coming Out” and Confidentiality.....	14
E. Dress Code .....	17
F. Extra-Curricular Activities, Clubs, Dances, Functions .....	17
G. Field Trips .....	17
H. Guidelines for an Inclusive Classroom and School .....	18
I. Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA’s) Club .....	18

## IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF

20

## V. SUPPORTS FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NONBINARY STUDENTS

A. Transgender/Gender Nonbinary Student Support Plan .....	21
B. Teaching-Talking Points about Transgender/Gender Nonbinary Individuals	22

## VI. GLOSSARY

LGBTQ+ Glossary .....	24
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## VII. LGBTQ+ RESOURCES

Community Resources for Students, Parents/Guardians, and Educators .....	28
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## I. PURPOSE

### PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to bring awareness to the needs of LGBTQ+ students. It is intended for district, school administration, teachers, and staff and offers a quick review of useful information, procedures and protocols that are aligned to our school board policies. This resource does not include all district/school board policies and procedures related to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. This is best used as part of an LGBTQ+ staff training or Principals' meeting. For more information regarding school board policies, please visit: <https://web.hillsboroughschools.org/policymanual>

### HCPS LGBTQ+ STUDENT FACTS<sup>2</sup>

Below are some pertinent facts related to the needs of our LGBTQ+ students in Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS):

- 20% of HCPS high school students reported identifying as LGB or unsure
- 61.3% reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for  $\geq 2$  weeks in a row in comparison to 32.7% of HCPS Heterosexual students
- 38.7% reported seriously considering attempting suicide in comparison to 13.5% of HCPS Heterosexual students
- 31.5% students reported having made a plan about how they would attempt suicide in comparison to 9.5% of HCPS Heterosexual students
- 23.3% reported attempting suicide in comparison to 7.6% of HCPS Heterosexual students
- 24.6% reported being bullied on school property in comparison to 13.3% of HCPS Heterosexual students
- 25.5% reported not going to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school in comparison to 11.4% of HCPS Heterosexual students
- 44.5% reported strongly agreeing or agreeing that they feel close to people at their school in comparison to 61.7% of Heterosexual students

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<sup>2</sup> Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Hillsborough County Public Schools, 2019



## II. ADVANCING EQUITY: PROTECTING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF OUR STUDENTS

Please note that the following sections referencing federal and state laws are constantly evolving and therefore, the School District will continue to consult with legal counsel and if needed, update school board policies.

### A. Federal Laws

#### The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Protects the right of students to free speech and freedom of expression, including their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

#### The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the United States Constitution<sup>3</sup>

Guarantees all person's equal protection under the law. Public school officials may be held liable for violating LGBTQ+ students' constitutional rights, or not intervening in anti-LGBTQ+ harassment. If a public school official deliberately ignores anti-gay or anti-transgender peer abuse or fails to apply anti-bullying protections on a nondiscriminatory basis, the official, and even the school district itself, may be held liable for violating students' constitutional rights.

#### 1984 Equal Access Act

Although research consistently highlights the positive effects of Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA's) (e.g., promotes school safety, decreases victimization, and improves social-emotional well-being), these clubs are frequently the center of legal challenges. In response to these legal challenges, Congress passed the Equal Access Act in 1984, prohibiting schools with a Limited Open Forum (i.e., non-curricular club formation on campus is allowed) to deny access to any non-curricular club. This legally clarifies that a public school can only deny access to a non-curricular student club if it prohibits all clubs.

#### TITLE VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal financial assistance.

- Ensuring Access to Equal Educational Opportunity
- Combating Discriminatory Discipline
- Ensuring Equal Opportunities for English Language Learners
- Protecting the Equal Rights of All Students to Attend Public School
- Preventing Discriminatory Assignment to Special Education Services
- Combating Bullying and Harassment on the Basis of Race, Color, and National Origin
- Supporting Schools, Districts, and Colleges that Voluntarily Pursue Racial Diversity

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<sup>3</sup> Confronting Anti-LGBTQ+ Harassment in Schools, A Resource for Students & Families, Department of Education



## **TITLE VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act**

Prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sex. Title VII has been further extended to include transgender status. (*Bostock v. Clayton County*) **\*\*Note: The U.S. Supreme Court has cited Title VII in interpreting Title IX.**

## **TITLE IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972<sup>4</sup>**

Prohibits discrimination based on gender in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Complaints of harassment can be filed with the U.S. Department of Education. The Office of Civil Rights has pursued actions against school districts. Title IX sex discrimination prohibition extends to claims of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity.

## **Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act<sup>5</sup> (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) provides certain rights for parents regarding their children’s education records. FERPA gives these rights to custodial and noncustodial parents alike, unless there is a court order, legally binding document, or State law that specifically provides to the contrary. The rights provided by FERPA to a parent include, but are not limited to access to education records, amendment of education records and disclosure of education records.

## **IDEA/Section 504 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

IDEA, Section 504 and the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act are laws that prohibit discrimination of persons with disabilities by any entity that receives federal financial assistance.

- Combating Disparities in School Discipline and Curbing Restraint and Seclusion
- Ensuring a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Ensuring Equal Access to Comparable Educational Opportunities
- Providing Necessary Academic Adjustments for Postsecondary Students
- Safeguarding Accessibility to Appropriate Technology
- Ensuring Accessibility of Programs, Services, and Facilities
- Combating Bullying and Harassment on the Basis of Disability
- Eliminating Retaliation for Exercising Civil Rights.

## **B.State Laws**

### **ARTICLE IX, Section 1(a) (Public Education)**

The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high-quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high-quality education....

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<sup>4</sup> Dear Educator Letter, June 23, 2021, Department of Education retrieved August 20, 2021

<sup>5</sup> A Parent Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) April 2021 retrieved August 21, 2021



## **ARTICLE I, Section 23 (Right of Privacy)**

Every natural person has the right to be left alone and free from governmental intrusion into the person's private life except as otherwise provided herein. This section shall not be construed to limit the public's right to access public records and meetings as provided by law.

## **Fairness in Women's Sports Act**

(Amendment to SB1028, a charter school expansion bill): Interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural, or club athletic teams sponsored by a public secondary school or public post-secondary institution must be designated: Males, men, or boys; Female, women, or girls; or Coed or mixed, including both males and females. Athletic teams designated for males must be open to students of the female sex. A statement of the student's biological sex on the student's official birth certificate is considered to have correctly stated the student's biological sex at birth if the statement was filed at or near the time of the student's birth.

*\*Note: The bill appears to conflict with the FHSAA and NCAA rules. Districts will need to evaluate how to implement this law and comply with Title IX.*

## **Florida Anti-Discrimination Law, Section 1000.05, Florida Statutes**

Prohibits discrimination against students and employees in the Florida K-20 public education system on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, or marital status. Florida state law does not currently prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Local governments within Florida, however, are permitted to implement more inclusive regulations that specifically prohibit harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

## **Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992, Section 760.01, Florida Statutes**

Secure for all individual's freedom from discrimination due to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status.

## **Florida Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession, Rule 6A-10.081, F.A.C.**

"The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all."

"Obligation to the student requires that the individual shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination."

## **Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for all Students Act, Section 1006.147, Florida Statutes<sup>6</sup>**

Requires school districts to afford all students the same protection against bullying and harassment regardless of their status under the law. Enacted in May 2008, the Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students Act created a statewide prohibition of the bullying or harassment of any student or employee of a public K-12 educational institution, whether at a school, on a school bus, or via electronic device. The law requires each individual school district to implement a policy outlining the consequences of harassment; the consequences for a wrongful accusation of harassment; and the procedure for

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<sup>6</sup> Report on Implementation Section 1006.147, Florida statute, [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org)





immediately notifying the parents of both the victim and the perpetrator of the alleged bullying or harassment. The statute leaves it up to the individual school districts to enumerate specific categories (i.e., race, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) for which bullying is specifically prohibited. The law provides that “distribution of safe schools funds to a school district... is contingent upon... the Department of Education’s approval of the school district’s bullying and harassment policy.”

## C. Landmark Cases & Legislation

### Athletic Participation

In 2019, Idaho passed a law, titled “Fairness in Women’s Sports Act”, that bans transgender girls and women from competing with cisgender athletes and provided for invasive genital inspections. The transgender athletes, represented by the ACLU, filed a federal lawsuit in April 2020, and requested an injunction to prevent implementation of the law. On August 18, 2020, the Court granted the injunction, holding that the law was unconstitutional. *See Lindsay Hecox, et al., v. Bradley Little, et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Idaho, Case No. 1:20-cv-00184-DCN (August 18, 2020) The State of Idaho is working with the Alliance Defending Freedom. Idaho has appealed the holding to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and oral argument recently took place in the case on May 3, 2021. A decision is pending.

Florida recently passed a law (Fairness in Women’s Sports Act - Amendment to SB1028) **that prohibits transgender girls and transgender women from competing with cisgender athletes.** A section of the law also indicates that athletic teams designated for males must be open to students of the female sex. The bill appears to conflict with the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules. School Districts will need to evaluate how to implement this law and comply with Title IX. This provision will likely be challenged in court if allowed to become law.

### Bullying and/or Harassment

**Flores v. Morgan Hill Unified School Dist., 324 F.3d 1130, 1134-5 (9th Cir. 2003); 2 Nabozny v Podlesny, 92 F.3d 446, 458 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996)**

\$962,000 in damages after a school failed to intervene in verbal and physical attacks on a student suspected to be gay). The Flores case is particularly noteworthy because the plaintiffs endured a litany of abuses: one boy was repeatedly beaten up by other male students and subjected to violent anti-gay slurs; a girl was subjected to repeated verbal attacks and had pornographic pictures of lesbians taped to her locker; another girl suspected to be gay was taunted with a phallic-shaped balloon in the presence of an adult monitor. When these incidents were reported to administrators, the students were either advised not to make a big deal out of them or, worse, the administrators participated in the harassment themselves (“Well if you’re not gay, then why are you crying?”).

It was ultimately held by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that **if a school knows that Anti-LGBTQ+ harassment is taking place, the school is obligated to take meaningful steps to end it and to protect the students.** The case concluded in a \$1.1 million settlement to the plaintiffs. The regulations and opinions concerning this matter are new and evolving. The following provides background concerning the federal, state, and local policies regarding this topic.





## **Dress Code**

### **Doe v. Yunits, No. 00-1060A (Mass. Super. Ct., 2001)**

A student has a free speech right to express their *gender identity* through clothing as long as it is not significantly disruptive. Some students may want to wear gender-nonconforming attire to school, to the prom, to graduation ceremonies, or in yearbook photographs. Schools are permitted to have a dress code, but it must be enforced equally among ALL students, irrespective of sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender identity.

In *Doe v. Yunits*, a biologically male student began to express female gender identity by wearing girls' clothing and accessories; principal often sent student home, even had student come to office every day to approve student appearance, student then sent home to change. Student prohibited from enrolling the next year if continued to wear girls' clothing relying on dress code provision that prohibited "clothing which would be disruptive or distractive to the educational process by which would affect the safety of students". The Court ruled the school:

- Could not prohibit the student from expressing female gender identity because it could violate the student's first amendment right to freedom of expression; and
- Disciplining a biologically male student for wearing girls' clothing constitutes sex discrimination.
- Whereby, the school may not exert its authority over a student simply to enforce stereotypical ideas of how boys and girls should look.

### **Gilman v. School Board of Holmes County, Florida, 567 F. Supp. 2d 1359 (N.D. Fla. 2008)**

In 2008, in Holmes County, Florida, the school board banned students from wearing pro-gay slogans such as "I Support My Gay Friends" and "Gay? Fine by Me." A student sued the school board and won; school board was ordered to pay \$325,000 for student's legal fees and expenses. [The messages on the clothing was not vulgar or obscene, but rather an expression of tolerance and fairness. The school board acted in violation of the student's free speech rights].

## **Extracurricular Activities**

### **Carver Middle School Gay Straight Alliance v. School Board of Lake County, FL, 842 F. 3d 324 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2016) – Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 407(a)-(b)**

Any public secondary school that receives federal financial assistance and permits noncurricular student groups to use school facilities must provide equal access to extracurricular clubs.

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) or Diversity Clubs are student clubs, just like the Drama Club and the Key Club, allowing students with a common interest to get together and have events or discussions about that interest. In this case, the school district passed a rule that restricted middle school clubs to curricular themed; denied middle school GSA. Also argued that middle school is not a secondary school under Florida law and thus not subject to Equal Access Act. The Court held that middle school offers high school course credit for graduation and is subject to Equal Access Act. Case remanded.

## **Restrooms/Locker Rooms**

### **Adams v. School Board of St. Johns County, FL, 318 F. Supp. 3d 1293 (M.D. Fla. 2018)**

Transgender student Drew Adams used boys' bathroom for several months until complaint by others. The student had obtained an amended birth certificate and driver's license indicating that he was now a



boy. School board policy required use of bathroom based on biological sex or neutral single-use bathroom. Court found that “Adams identifies as a boy, is identified by others as a boy, is legally deemed by the state of Florida to be a boy, lives as a boy, uses the men’s restroom outside the school setting, and is otherwise treated as a boy – except when it comes to his use of school bathrooms.” The student had also obtained an amended birth certificate and driver’s license indicating that he was now a boy.

School Board argued that other students’ privacy rights would be affected but could provide no evidence that a transgender student using a restroom acted in a manner that invaded another student’s privacy. They also testified that there were no incidents in which student safety was compromised by the presence of a transgender student in the restroom that matched their gender identity. Court held that the transgender student’s individual rights under Title IX and Equal Protection Clause were violated. Awarded \$1000 in damages. The Court cited *Glen*, quoting “All persons, whether transgender or not, are protected from discrimination on the basis of gender-stereotype.”

School Board appealed decision to 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit. On August 7, 2020, a three-judge panel affirmed the lower court in favor of the student in a 2-1 decision, saying “a public school may not punish its students for gender nonconformity. Neither may a public school harm transgender students by establishing arbitrary, separate rules for their bathroom use.” The Court further held that the school’s bathroom policy constituted discrimination based on sex under Title IX, citing *Bostock*, that workplace discrimination against transgender people is contrary to law, saying “neither should this discrimination be tolerated in schools.” The School Board has requested an *en banc* hearing and the request remains pending.

## **2021 Executive Order**

On January 20, 2021, the Biden administration issued an Executive Order stating that "Children should be able to learn without worrying about whether they will be denied access to the restroom, the locker room, or school sports." The Executive Order does not have the same force as “guidance” or rules and does not mandate anything. But it is expected that new guidance and actual rules will eventually be promulgated that do follow the Executive Order.

## **D. Hillsborough County Public School Board Policies**

### **2260 - Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity**

Any form of discrimination or harassment can be devastating to an individual's academic progress, social relationship and/or personal sense of self-worth. Therefore, the School Board will not discriminate nor tolerate harassment in its educational programs or activities for any reasons, including on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age (except as authorized by law), national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social and family background (collectively protected characteristics). Additionally, it will not discriminate in its employment policies, harassment and bullying policies, and practices...

### **5517.01 - Bullying and Harassment**

The School Board is committed to providing an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from bullying and harassment for all students and employees. The Board will not tolerate bullying and harassment.

...**"Bullying"** includes "cyberbullying" and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is defined as any unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or



offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve:

- A. teasing;
- B. threats;
- C. intimidation;
- D. stalking;
- E. cyberstalking;
- F. physical violence;
- G. theft;
- H. sexual, religious, or racial harassment;
- I. public or private humiliation;
- J. destruction of property; and
- K. social exclusion...

... **"Harassment"** means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- A. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/ her person or damage to his/her property;
- B. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits; or
- C. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school...

### **1362 - Anti-Harassment**

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against harassment based on sex, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other legally prohibited basis, and encourages those within the district community as well as third parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify the problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of unlawful harassment and, in those cases where legally prohibited harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action...

### **4310 - Freedom of Speech Outside of the Workplace**

The Board acknowledges the right of district employees, as citizens in a democratic society, to speak out on issues of public concern. When those issues are related to the district, however, the support staff member's expression must be balanced against the interests of the district. The following procedures are adopted by the Board to help clarify and, therefore, avoid situations in which the support staff member's expression could conflict with the district's interests. In such situations, she/he should ... E. refrain from making derogatory comments or expressions regarding another's race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or social and family background.



## III. Creating Safe and Supportive Environments

### A. Access to Restrooms and Sex-Segregated Facilities

All students are allowed to access restrooms and locker rooms that are consistent with their gender identity or be provided appropriate accommodation in collaboration with the District's Office of Equity and Inclusion.

#### **Restrooms**

Students who identify as transgender shall have access to the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity asserted at school. This means that transgender students are entitled to use the restroom that matches their gender identity. When meeting with the transgender student (or student and parent(s)/guardian if a young student) to discuss transgender safety and care, it is essential the principal and student address student's access to the restroom, locker room, and changing facility. Each situation needs to be reviewed, addressed, and customized based on the particular circumstances of the student and the school facilities.

In all cases, the school administrator(s) should meet with the student to develop a plan and be clear with the student (and parent(s)/guardian, if appropriate) that the student may access the restroom, locker room, and changing facility that corresponds to the student's affirmed gender identity.

Some transgender students may not be comfortable using sex-segregated restrooms. If so, using a safe and adequate alternative, such as a single stall, gender-neutral restroom (i.e., the office restroom, staff restroom, health office, etc.) As a proactive action, administrators should take steps to identify gender-neutral restrooms on campus. Note that a gender-neutral restroom may be used by any student at a school, transgender or otherwise, who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, however, the single-user bathroom may not be given as the only option for transgender students.

Contact the District's Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for further information to develop a plan that best meets the needs and privacy concerns of everyone involved. *Note that the Office of Civil Rights has guidance and clear language regarding transgender student rights inclusive of facilities.*

#### **Locker Rooms**

Transgender students can have access to the locker room that corresponds to the gender identity the student asserts at school, considering the available accommodation and the needs and privacy concerns of all students involved. If any student has a need or desire for increased privacy or safety, regardless of the underlying reason, upon request, the student may be provided access to a reasonable alternative changing area or locker room such as: An on-site coach should ensure there is no harassment of student. Adult supervision should be available to ensure no harassment.

### B. Affirmed Names and Gender Pronouns

All students should be addressed by the name and gender pronoun (he/him, she/her, they/them) corresponding to the student's consistently asserted gender identity and should be used at all times, unless otherwise requested by the student.



With the consent of the student, all relevant teachers, administrators and staff should be informed of a transgender/gender nonbinary student's affirmed name and pronoun. The student's affirmed name and pronoun does not need to correspond to the student's birth certificate and other official records.

Public school students have privacy rights provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which provides, among other matters, that education records and personally identifiable information set forth in them are confidential against release except under certain situations. While Florida law provides a process for people to seek a legal name change, there may be extenuating circumstances that make a legal name change desired. Parents/guardians, or students who are age 18 or older, also have the right to seek amendment to the school records under FERPA if their records are deemed "inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy".

The District modifies a student's official records upon receipt of a court order reflecting a legal change in name and/or gender. However, the absence of official court documentation does not preclude a transgender student being addressed by their preferred name and pronoun (by way of example, students are referred to by nicknames), since legal modification is typically unavailable to minors. Student records may be noted accordingly.

Please note that there is no law that requires teachers to call students by their legal name. These guidelines recommend referring to a transgender student by the name and gender pronoun that makes the student feel safe and comfortable.

Please note that a student's ID card is not considered an official student record and can be changed to the student's affirmed name when requested. Reasonable and good-faith efforts should be made with regard to these requests in order to promote consistency among teachers, substitute teachers, school administrators, and other school staff.

Class and team rosters, yearbooks, school newspapers and newsletters are also considered unofficial student records and can be changed upon request. Section VII. of this guide includes a Transgender/Gender Nonbinary Student Support Plan that includes information pertaining to unofficial documents and situations where affirmed name is used.

## C. Anti-LGBTQ+ Language

Statistics tell us that anti-LGBTQ+ slurs and bias toward gender expansive youth abound in our schools, regardless of whether the target of the slur is actually LGBQ or T, or just perceived to be LGBQ or T. Here are some guidelines for intervening in anti-LGBTQ+ language (i.e., "tranny," "dyke," "faggot," "no homo," etc.), the most common of which is the intended insult, "That's so gay!" (Hillsborough County Youth Risk Behavior Survey LGB).

Stop It – Keep it simple with quick responses. You could say:

- "We don't use gay as a put-down in this class."
- "It's not OK to say that's so gay."
- "It's not OK to use that phrase."
- "What did you mean by that?"
- "You may not have meant to be hurtful, but when you use the word gay to mean something is bad or stupid, it is hurtful."
- "Do you know why that comment is hurtful?"



If you have the time and opportunity to educate on the spot, do it. If you don't, be sure to make time later.

Educate - Whether explained at the moment of the incident or shortly after, be absolutely clear with students that when they use the word “gay” as an insult they are being disrespectful. Calling something or someone “gay” is hurtful not only to the target (who may or may not be gay), but also to others who may have parents, neighbors, friends or other family members who are gay.

Be Proactive - Create an environment of respect and caring for all students in your class and school. Establish clear school-wide and classroom policies against name-calling and hurtful teasing. If you have been hearing the phrase, “That’s so gay!” at school, be explicit that rules against name-calling include this phrase and other anti-gay put-downs.

Don’t Ignore It - Ignoring name-calling and hurtful teasing allows it to continue and possibly get worse. If other students do not see action, they get the message there is nothing wrong with it. Harassment does not go away on its own.

Don’t Be Afraid of Making the Situation Worse - Almost any response is better than ignoring the situation. You may not know exactly what to say. However, you must stop the harassment. Taking action reaffirms limits. Interrupting name-calling is not always easy. Experience will help you to become more comfortable handling future situations. In addition, you can always go back to the student and say or do something else if you feel you did not respond effectively.

Don’t Excuse the Behavior - Saying, “Josh doesn’t really know what it means,” or “Sarah was only joking,” excuses hurtful behavior.

Don’t Try to Judge How Upset the Target Is - We have no way of knowing how a student is really feeling. Often, targets are embarrassed and pretend they were not offended or hurt. Saying “Michael didn’t seem upset by Laura’s remark” trivializes the child’s feelings. It tells the harasser it is OK to make hurtful comments. It teaches both the child targeted and also anyone within hearing range they will not be protected from harassment.

Don’t Worry About the Tables Being Turned - If you are worried a student will respond to your correction by saying something like, “What do you care... are YOU gay?” prepare a response in advance. An example of your response may be, “My own personal life is completely irrelevant here; bullying is forbidden at this school” or “Actually, I am – which has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that your comment is inappropriate.” Note: Use your professional judgment and be in touch with what you personally are comfortable disclosing to your students.

*\*NOTE: The derogatory words and expressions in this section are only used to illustrate the negative impact they have on LGBTQ+ students.*

## **D. Coming Out and Confidentiality**

All LGBTQ+ students have the right to decide when and to whom their sexual orientation and gender identity is shared, including their parents, guardians, and/or family. In our society most people are presumed to be heterosexual. There is no need for a heterosexual person to make a statement to others





that discloses his or her sexual orientation. Similarly, most people feel their gender is aligned with their biological sex. They typically have no need to disclose their gender identity.<sup>7</sup>

However, for LGBTQ+ youth, “coming out” is often a delicate and emotional process. They have the right to decide when, and how to reveal to others, their sexual orientation or gender identity (or even the fact that they are questioning their orientation or identity).

It is an unfortunate reality-LGBTQ+ youth commonly experience parental rejection because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Indeed, studies have shown approximately one-third of LGBTQ+ youth are victims of physical violence by a family member after the teen “comes out” or their sexual orientation is disclosed. A 2006 Child Welfare League of America study found a high proportion of LGBTQ+ youth in state-run foster care facilities leave home or are banished from their homes as a result of conflict related to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Even more recently, data generated by The Family Acceptance Project<sup>8</sup> indicates gay and transgender teens rejected by their parents and caregivers are:

- More than eight times more likely to have attempted suicide
- Nearly six times as likely to report high levels of depression
- More than three times as likely to use illegal drugs
- More than three times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and other STDs

The degree to which teachers and administrators need to be sensitive about this issue, cannot be overstated.

#### If a Student Comes Out to You:

- Offer support
- Be a role model of acceptance
- Appreciate the student’s courage
- Listen, listen, listen
- Assure and respect confidentiality
- Demonstrate understanding, acceptance and compassion
- Be prepared to give a referral for resources and/or for emotional support
- Remember the student has not changed.<sup>3</sup>

#### What Not to Say:

- “I knew it.”
- “Are you sure? Are you confused?”
- “This is just a phase.”
- “You just haven’t found the right woman/man.”
- “Shhhh, don’t tell anyone.”
- “You’re too young to know.”
- “You should come out to everyone and be honest.”
- “You can’t be gay; you’ve had relationships with people of the opposite sex.”

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<sup>7</sup> CWLA Best Practices Guidelines [CWLA Best Practice Guidelines: Serving LGBT Youth in Out-of-Home Care \(prearesourcecenter.org\)](https://www.prearesourcecenter.org)

<sup>8</sup> Family Acceptance Project, Supportive Families, Healthy Children Helping Families with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Children, 2009





In short, it is a compliment when a student trusts you enough to come out to you. It is up to you to prove yourself worthy of that trust. Barring extenuating circumstances in which you fear for the student's safety, value confidentiality above all else.

“Unless a student chooses to disclose certain information, their transgender status, legal name or sex assigned at birth is confidential medical information and considered “personal identifiable information “under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA). Disclosure of that information to other school staff or parents/ guardians could violate the schools’ obligation under FERPA or constitutional privacy protections.” (NASSP, 2021)<sup>9</sup>

Administrators, teachers and staff should extend respect and dignity to students who are open about their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression. Even when they are open, it remains the student's right to limit the extent to which, and with whom, the information is shared. *C.N v. Wolf 410 FSupp.2d 894,903 (CD Cal 2005)*<sup>10</sup>.

### **Talking to Parents/ Guardians<sup>11</sup>**

Federal courts have repeatedly held the Constitution prohibits government officials from disclosing information about a person's gay, lesbian or bisexual orientation, except under limited circumstances. The expression of sexual orientation is an innately personal choice [*Sterling v. Borough of Minersville*, 232 F.3d. 190, 196 n.4 (3d Cir. 2000); *C.N. v. Wolf*, 410 F. Supp. 2d 894, 903 (C.D. Cal. 2005)]. Therefore, just as teachers and school administrators cannot discourage a student from being “out” at school, they also cannot encourage (or even force) a student to be “out” at home. It is up to the student, and the student alone, to decide where and when to be open about his or her LGBTQ+ status.

Occasionally, a parent may contact teachers, school counselors, or administrators to ask if their child has confided in them about his/her sexual orientation, or if it is suspected their child may be gay. With the limited exception involving the imminent fear of physical harm, it is never appropriate to divulge the sexual orientation of a student to a parent.

**IMPORTANT:** It is imperative that these guidelines regarding confidentiality be kept clearly in mind when communicating with parents or guardians about bullying or other misconduct. To the extent that administrators must relay the exact wording of an altercation due to reporting requirements, care should be used to neutralize potentially incriminating language that was used.

For example, if a student suspected to be gay is called a “faggot” by an aggressor, the parent might be told, “Mrs. Smith, your son was involved in an altercation today as the result of being bullied by another student who called him a ‘faggot.’ Unfortunately, this term is frequently used by students as a generalized put-down.” Failure to practice discretion regarding language could place a student in a hostile, dangerous, or even life-threatening, environment.

Please contact the Office of Diversity before contacting parents or guardians if you have any questions or concerns about this issue.

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<sup>9</sup> NASSP Position Statement: LGBTQ+ Students and Educators, July 2021 retrieved August 30, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> ACLU Open Letter to Schools about LGBT Student Privacy, [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org) retrieved August 30, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> <sup>11</sup> NASSP Position Statement: LGBTQ+ Students and Educators, July 2021 retrieved August 30, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> ACLU Open Letter to Schools about LGBT Student Privacy, [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org) retrieved August 30, 2021.



**\*NOTE:** *The derogatory words and expressions in this section are only used to illustrate the negative impact they have on LGBTQ+ students.*

## E. Dress Code

Schools are permitted to have a dress code, but it must be enforced equally amongst all students, irrespective of sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender identity. All students should be permitted to wear clothing or makeup in accordance with the student's consistently asserted gender identity and/or expression but must still comply with the established dress code. As noted in Section I of this guide, students have First Amendment rights; thus, the dress code must be equally enforced, and clothing is prohibited if it causes a substantial disruption that is objectively provable to other people. Refer to Student Code of Conduct for additional information.

## F. Extracurricular Activities

All students have the right to equitable access to activities and programs in their schools that are consistent with their gender identity. Students shall not be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to harassment or other forms of discrimination on the basis of the students' sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or expression. As long as it's not a legal/official document, a student's affirmed name should be used (such as, the SGA ballot, graduation ceremony, etc.). **Formal legal/official documents may only be changed after receipt of a court order.**

### School Clubs

All school districts must adhere to the 1984 Equal Access Act. Schools with historically sex-segregated clubs cannot deny a transgender or gender nonbinary student access to membership. Schools clubs may set general dress code standards for functions (i.e., performances, competitions). A school may not dictate that only sex assigned at birth males may wear pants and ties, and only sex assigned at birth females may wear skirts/dresses. A student may choose to compete for any historically gender specific roles in the category of the student's consistently asserted gender identity. Students may also may bring same-gender dates to any school sponsored event or function.

### School Dances (Homecoming, Prom, School Dances)

Schools may set general dress standards for dances (i.e., prom), such as the requirement of formal attire. A school may not dictate that only sex assigned at birth males may wear tuxedos, and only sex assigned at birth females may wear dresses. A student may choose to compete or run for any gender specific title (such as Homecoming/Prom Queen) in the category of the student's consistently asserted gender identity. Students may also bring same-gender dates to any school sponsored event or function.

## G. Field Trips

As a general rule, in any circumstance where students are separated into male/female groups for school activities, transgender and gender nonbinary students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with their consistently asserted gender identity. In general, efforts should be made to ensure all students are able to use facilities (i.e., restrooms/locker rooms) and participate in activities that are aligned with their consistently asserted gender identity.

### Overnight Field Trips



A transgender student's comfort level with sleeping arrangements will dictate the manner in which related issues are addressed. This should be handled delicately, respectfully, and on a case-by-case basis with assistance from the Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

## H. Guidelines for an Inclusive Classroom and School Environment<sup>12</sup>

Hillsborough County School Board Policy #2260 ". . . will not discriminate nor tolerate harassment in its educational programs or activities . . ." Thus, Hillsborough County Public Schools promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.

### Inclusive Classrooms<sup>13</sup>

"Educators can promote safer school environments that avoid bias and that include positive representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, history and events. For LGBTQ students, attending a school with an inclusive curriculum is related to less-hostile school experiences and increased feelings of connectedness to the school community. Inclusive curriculum benefits all students by promoting diversity and teaching them about the myriad of identities in their communities. Inclusive curriculum supports students' abilities to empathize, connect, and collaborate with a diverse group of peers, skills that are of increasing importance in our multicultural, global society." (GLSEN, 2021) All students deserve to see themselves reflected in their classrooms.

- Celebrate contributions of the LGBTQ+ community during LGBTQ+ History month.
- Address name calling and bullying in the moment and use as a teachable opportunity.
- Review current curriculum to measure presence of inclusion.
- Adopt gender inclusive language in school communications and signage including using identity-affirming pronouns for all students and staff.
- Adopt SEL learning programs that are inclusive and embrace LGBTQ experience.
- Use curriculum resources affirmed by the LGBTQ+ community and allies. <sup>14</sup>

## I. Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) Club

Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA) are student led clubs, just like the Drama Club or Key Club, allowing students with a common interest to get together and have events or discussions about that interest. GSAs are made up of students of any sexual orientation; in fact, many GSA members are straight-identifying youth. GSAs can be support groups, or educational or civic clubs dedicated to making the school and community a safer space for all individuals.

*"As a transgender student in the beginning of my transition, it was so relieving to have a GSA. Being surrounded by others who understood my situation and the struggles I was going through, I knew I*

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<sup>12</sup> Information from this section was adapted from Welcoming Schools Checklist for a Welcoming and Inclusive School Environment: <https://welcomingschools.org/resources/checklist-for-a-welcoming-and-inclusive-school-environment>

<sup>13</sup> Developing LGBTQ Inclusive Classroom Resources <https://www.glsen.org/activity/inclusive-curriculum-guide>

<sup>14</sup> GLSEN Developing LGBTQ+ Inclusive Classroom Resources [https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/GLSEN\\_LGBTQ\\_Inclusive\\_Curriculum\\_Resource\\_2019\\_0.pdf](https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/GLSEN_LGBTQ_Inclusive_Curriculum_Resource_2019_0.pdf)



*could be out, open, and respected. The GSA gave me a place to get the resources and comfort I needed during this difficult time in my life.” Andrew Klumb, 2016 Hillsborough County Graduate*

All students have the right to form and participate in a GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance), as they would with any other club. GSAs are inclusive and therefore not all members identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning/queer; many members are often “straight” allies.

Under the Federal Equal Access Act (20 U.S.C. §§ 4071-74), a public school permitting any non-curricular club (meaning, a club that does not directly relate to a class taught at school) must also allow students to form a GSA. In addition, according to the Equal Access Act, the school must treat the GSA the same as it does any other non-curricular club in terms of access to facilities, resources, and opportunities to advertise.

For over 10 years the National School Climate Surveys conducted by GLSEN found that students who had a GSA at their school reported hearing fewer homophobic remarks. The students surveyed experienced less harassment and assault because of their orientation and gender expression. In addition, they were more likely to report incidents of harassment and assault and were less likely to feel unsafe because of their orientation or gender expression. This was true regardless of whether the respondent actually joined the GSA club.

Parents may have questions about a GSA. Furthermore, students have a legal right to privacy and confidentiality when it comes to their sexual orientation. Remind parents that all school clubs are inclusive and therefore GSAs have ally student membership. Therefore, a student is not making any statement about his or her orientation or identity simply by participating in the club.

Please note that in 2006, the HCPS School Board agreed that schools cannot require parental permission as a prerequisite for acceptance into any school club, including a GSA. [Hillsborough County Schools Keep Open-Door Policy for Gay-Straight Alliances | American Civil Liberties Union \(aclu.org\)](#)

For additional information about how to start, or supervise a GSA, please refer to the HCPS GSA Club Advisor Handbook or contact the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, 813-273-7125.



## IV. Professional Development for Staff

### **The Respect Online Course from The American Psychological Association (5 in-service points)**

Free and supported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): The Respect Online Course includes three self-paced modules that provide school staff with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to make schools safe and supportive for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ+) students. The course teaches participants about direct services they can provide to LGBTQ+ students. The workshop also promotes school-wide protective practices to address school climate, peer and family support, access to school and community health resources, and inclusive sexual health education. <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/training/respect-online-course>

### **HCPS Creating Safe and Welcoming Environments for LGBTQ+ Students (3 in-service points)**

Provided by the HCPS Department of Professional Development: This live virtual training will focus on how to create classrooms where all students, particularly LGBTQ+ students, feel safe, included and successful. Participants will explore the latest research related to LGBTQ+ students and learn tips and tricks to implement in their classroom to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment. The HCPS LGBTQ+ Critical Resource and Support Guide for Staff will also be referenced so that participants may be aware of the supportive district procedures that are aligned to school board policies.

### **HCPS Implicit Bias Canvas Training (3 in-service points)**

Provided by the HCPS Department of Professional Development: Participants will receive an overview of the current research about implicit bias, complete and reflect on the results of an implicit association test and consider the role that bias plays in our response to student behavior. District discipline data and student testimonials regarding their experiences with teacher bias will be shared to illuminate the impact and lasting effects that our interactions have on our students' academic success and the trajectory of their lives. Finally, strategies and resources for neutralizing the effects of bias in the classroom are presented.



## V. Supports for Transgender and Gender Nonbinary Students

Our district is committed to honoring the rights of transgender and nonbinary students. Our own nondiscrimination and bullying policy statement (Policy 5517 and 5517.01) includes gender identity and sexual orientation in the list of categories for which discrimination and harassment are prohibited.

The dynamics concerning transgender youth in schools are complicated. As societal attitudes evolve, the district must balance competing interests, such as requests for accommodations, and concerns of students and parents for privacy and safety.

In this evolving legal area, the district must provide educational access and a safe learning environment for all students free from discrimination and harassment. District officials must act on any complaint of discrimination, harassment, or bullying by a student (whether or not transgender) with the same diligence, follow through, and resolution in each instance.

### A. Transgender/Gender Nonbinary Student Support Plan<sup>15</sup>

The following checklist serves as the initial intake for a student who self-identifies as transgender or gender nonbinary. This checklist provides guidance to administrators and others in setting up an action plan for ways to which a student’s authentic gender will be accounted for and supported at school. School staff, caregivers (if the child is out and safe at home) and the student should work together to complete the plan.

<b><sup>16</sup>Transgender/Gender Nonbinary Student Support Plan<sup>17</sup></b>
<b>Parent/Guardian Involvement</b>
<p><b>Does the student or has the student:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a parent/guardian who is aware and supportive of the student’s gender transition?</li> <li>• Discussed how communication will take place with parent/guardian when using student’s name and gender?</li> <li>• Have siblings at the school?</li> </ul>
<b>Confidentiality, Privacy, Disclosure</b>
<p><b>Does the student or has the student:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed to disclose their gender identity?</li> <li>• With whom? (Parent/guardian, school site level leadership, support staff, direct contact teachers, teachers and staff, coaches, some students, all students, other).</li> </ul>
<b>Student Safety</b>
<p><b>Does the student or has the student:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a “trusted adult” on campus?</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Information from this plan was adapted from “Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools” by *Gender Spectrum*.



- Have a person to go to if the “trusted adult” is not available?
- Have a support group on campus (e.g. Gay-Straight Student Alliance, counseling support group, etc.)?
- Have a process for periodically checking in with a trusted adult?
- Have a code word or phrase to discretely alert a nearby adult of an unsafe situation?
- Spoken with you about the bathroom(s) she/he/they will use on campus?
- Know who to go to if there are questions or concerns about bathroom(s)?
- Spoken with you about activities or programs such as, after school, theater, sports, clubs, etc.?
- Know the steps for gaining support if needed?
- Spoken with you about if the student is out at school, out with particular students only, or out with parent(s)/guardian(s)?
- Spoken with you about which roommates are being requested for field trips, if any?

**Names, Pronouns, Student Records**

**Does the student or has the student:**

- Asked for affirmed name to be used when addressing them?
- Asked for affirmed gender pronoun be used when addressing them?
- Verbally agreed to allow their “Affirmed Student First Name.” *Note: Please inform the student that parent(s)/guardian have the right under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to review education records, including information stored on electronic databases.*
- Have a trusted adult ensure these adjustments are made and communicated as needed?

**Unofficial Documents and Situation Where Preferred Name is Used**

Substitute teacher’s roster* School photos Lunch line Taking attendance Extracurricular activities Awards Graduation announcement *The substitute must be made aware via sub plans or sub roster that the preferred name and pronoun must be used.	Student ID and library cards Posted lists of newspapers and newsletters Calling student to office PA announcements Announcements at assemblies Student held positions/ballots Students must be made aware that some information may be made public, i.e., PA announcements (graduation ceremony, yearbook)
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Information from this plan was adapted from “Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools” by *Gender Spectrum*.

**B. Teaching-Talking Points about Transgender/Gender Nonbinary Individuals**

- Our school district has a number of transgender individuals. Transgender persons know their gender identity to be an internalized, deeply felt sense of one’s core being as different from that assigned sex at birth. For example, a transgender male would know that his core identity and internal self is male, however was born in a female body; a transgender female know her core sense of self is female yet was born in a male body. In other words, a person’s/child’s gender (sense of self as a male or a female) is different from the assigned sex at birth.
- Bullying, mistreatment, or harassment toward students who are transgender is pervasive in schools across the United States. For example, Seventy-five percent of transgender students feel unsafe at school and those who are able to persevere have significantly lower GPAs. Transgender youth were more likely to miss school out of concern for their safety and were less likely to plan to continue their education. Fifty-nine percent have been denied access to restrooms consistent with their preferred gender identity, and nine out of ten transgender students report being verbally harassed due to their





gender expression. More than half have been physically assaulted. It is concerning that 42 percent of transgender individuals have attempted suicide.

- The expression of transgender identity, or any other form of gender-expansive behavior, is a healthy, appropriate and typical aspect of human development. We know that when students are harassed or bullied based on their gender, or others' perceptions of it, learning often takes a back seat.
- Children typically begin expressing their gender identity between the ages of two and four years old. Around this age, transgender children often express their cross-gender identification to their family members or caregivers. Also, not all youth who identify as transgender begin the process at an early age; for some, gender identity is a slower, more nuanced process for a variety of personal, social, development and societal reasons. The consequences of not affirming a student's gender identity can be severe, and it can interfere with their ability to develop and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, focus in class and be able to learn. The longer a transgender student is not preferred, the more significant the negative consequences can become.
- We know that there is a social system that constructs gender according to two discreet and opposite categories –male and female. Yet, this gender binary is being challenged by our students whose innate sense of core identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. It is also being challenged by students who are gender nonconforming and not fitting neatly into the gender binary of male and female.
- Gender identity is the personal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, both or neither. Everyone has a gender identity. Those that identify as transgender signify three clear factors: These individuals are 1) insistent, 2) consistent and 3) persistent about the internal, core understanding that their gender identity does not match/align with their sex that was assigned at birth.
- One step of transition that transgender people go through is social transition, meaning that the person begins living as the gender they identify with, and commonly begin to switch name and pronouns. They will be referred to by the pronoun that aligns with the core gender identity. Transgender etiquette includes the importance of not “misgendering” a person which means ensuring that the person's preferred name and preferred gender pronoun is used correctly. Transitioning means different things to different transgender individuals and can look different based on many factors such as a person's age, if they are out, etc. If unsure, it is appropriate to ask. In order to assure respect, affirmation, safety, and the ability to excel academically, Hillsborough County Public Schools will ensure, through our policies, procedures and practices that transgender individuals are treated with respect as their preferred gender identity at all times.
- The American Psychological Association provides basic information and clear answers to questions about transgender individuals. Go to <http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/transgender>



## VI. Glossary

**Advocate:** (1) a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. (2) To actively support/plea in favor of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance, educate others, etc.

**Ally:** Someone who does not identify as LGBTQ+ but who is supportive of LGBTQ+ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate.

**Allyship:** The state or condition of being an ally specifically with the members of a marginalized or mistreated group to which one does not belong.

**Androgynous:** Having both female and male characteristics – neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine, as in dress, appearance, or behavior.

**Asexual:** having a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest or desire for sex or sexual partners. Asexuality exists on a spectrum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex to those who experience low levels and only after significant amounts of time, many of these different places on the spectrum have their own identity labels. Another term used within the asexual community is “ace,” meaning someone who is asexual.

**Bisexual:** a person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to both male/men and females/women.

**Cisgender:** A gender identity consistent with a person’s biological sex.

**Closeted:** an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one’s safety, peer or family rejection or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being “in the closet.” When someone chooses to break this silence, they “come out” of the closet. (See coming out)

**Coming Out:** (1) the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity. (2) The process by which one shares one’s sexuality or gender identity with others.

**Cross-dressing:** Refers to the act of wearing clothing and other accessories associated with the opposite gender/sex.

**Dead Naming/Misgendering:** Referring to an individual with names, pronouns, or other gender terms that is not preferred by the individual, whether intentional or unintentional.

**Gay:** (1) a term used to describe individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. More commonly used when referring to males/men-identified who are attracted to males/men-identified but can be applied to females/women-identified as well. (2) An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

**Gender:** A person’s internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither gender identity. Not related to biological sex.



**Gender Binary:** the idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

**Gender Expansive:** Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. A person who has gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to traditional or societal gender expectations; for example, “girly” boys and “masculine” girls; and those perceived as androgynous. Other terms used have been gender nonconforming or gender variant. Teachers have recently reported seeing an increase in gender-nonconforming behaviors at the elementary and middle school levels.

**Gender Expression:** The manner in which a person chooses to communicate their gender identity to others through external means such as clothing and/or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Gender Fluid:** Gender fluid is a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

**Gender Identity:** Refers to a person’s internal, deeply felt sense of their gender. Everyone has a gender identity, even if it does not always correspond with the person’s biological sex.

**Gender-Nonbinary** (Gender Diverse or previously known as Gender Nonconforming): someone who’s gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, does not align in a predicted fashion with gender-based expectations.

**Genderqueer:** Blurring the lines around gender identity and sexual orientation, genderqueer individuals typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation.

**Gender Role:** The social expectations of how a person should act, think, and/or feel based upon one’s biological sex. This definition includes traditional and stereotypical roles, characteristics, mannerisms and behaviors associated with societal norms of what is male and what is female. These expectations are often stereotypical, such as “boys like blue and girls like pink.”

**Gender Variant:** Someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g., transgender, transsexual, intersex, gender-queer, cross-dresser, etc.).

**Heteronormative:** The belief system that heterosexuality is the norm; the assumption that heterosexuality is universal and anything other than heterosexuality is unnatural.

**Heterosexism:** Behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more “right” than queerness, or makes other sexualities invisible.

**Heterosexual:** A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex. Also known as straight.

**Homophobia:** An umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. The term is extended to



bisexual and transgender people as well; however, the terms biphobia and transphobia are used to emphasize the specific biases against individuals of bisexual and transgender communities. **Homosexual:** The sexual orientation of a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to members of their own gender. This is a somewhat outdated term originating in the medical and psychological communities. Currently, many LGBTQ+ persons prefer the term “lesbian” or “gay.”

**Intersectionality:** The interconnected nature or social categorizations (as race, socioeconomic level, gender, religion, disability, etc.) as creating overlapping systems of discrimination/disadvantage.

**Intersex:** An intersex person has reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not correspond to the typical notions of “male” or “female.” Previous generations might have referred to an intersex person as a “Hermaphrodite.” This is the “I” that is sometimes included in the broader umbrella acronym “LGBTQIA+.”

**Lesbian:** A term used to describe women attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

**LGBTQ+:** A frequently used acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning or Queer. This plus includes many other identities of the community such as gender nonbinary/gender diverse without making the acronym excessively long.

**“Out” or “Out of the closet”:** A term used to refer to a person whose LGBTQ+ status is, to some degree, public. Note: It is not always the LGBTQ+ person who makes this information public. Sometimes it is made public without the LGBTQ+ person’s knowledge and/or consent. This is called “outing” someone. The act of “outing” an individual can create an at-risk situation.

**Outing:** The act of revealing a person’s LGBTQ+ status to others, including parents without permission. *Under no circumstances should someone “out” someone without their permission.*

**Queer:** Used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight. Also used to describe people who have non-normative gender identity or as a political affiliation. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community. The term queer can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ.

**Questioning:** Exploring one’s own sexual orientation or gender identity; or an individual who is exploring their own sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Sex Assigned at Birth:** A label that you’re given at birth based on medical factors including hormones, chromosomes, and genitals. Most people are assigned male or female and this is what is put on their birth certificate.

**Sexual Orientation:** The type of sexual, romantic, emotional / spiritual attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to (often mistakenly referred to as sexual preference)

**Transgender:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Note that being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.



**Transition(ing):** This term is primarily used to refer to the process a trans\* person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.

**Transphobia:** A fear or aversion to transgender people.

*Information from this Glossary was adapted from The Safe Zone Project Vocabulary Extravaganza ([www.TheSafeZoneProject.com](http://www.TheSafeZoneProject.com)) and Duval County Public Schools LGBTQ+ Support Guide.*



## VII. LGBTQ+ RESOURCES

### Local Supportive Resources

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) (TPA)	<a href="https://www.aclufl.org/en/chapters/greater-tampa-chapter">https://www.aclufl.org/en/chapters/greater-tampa-chapter</a> LGBTQ+ Rights: <a href="https://www.aclufl.org/en/issues/lgbtq-rights">https://www.aclufl.org/en/issues/lgbtq-rights</a>
GLSEN Education Network (TPA)	<a href="https://www.glsen.org/chapter/tampa-bay">https://www.glsen.org/chapter/tampa-bay</a>
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay	<a href="https://bbbstampabay.org/">https://bbbstampabay.org/</a>
Hillsborough County Council PTA:	<a href="https://www.hccptaptsa.org/">https://www.hccptaptsa.org/</a> LGBTQ Sub-Committee E-mail: <a href="mailto:LGBTQ@hccptaptsa.org">LGBTQ@hccptaptsa.org</a>
Metro Inclusive Health	<a href="https://www.metrotampabay.org/">https://www.metrotampabay.org/</a> <a href="https://www.metrotampabay.org/events/youth-peer-support/">https://www.metrotampabay.org/events/youth-peer-support/</a>
Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office LGBTQ	<a href="https://teamhcsso.com/Section/afec88ec-7914-4fb5-8892-f33bc38a5843/LGBTQ-Liaison">https://teamhcsso.com/Section/afec88ec-7914-4fb5-8892-f33bc38a5843/LGBTQ-Liaison</a>
Institute for LGBT Health and Wellbeing:	<a href="https://www.instituteforlgbthealth.org/">https://www.instituteforlgbthealth.org/</a>
Parents, Families, and Friends of LGBTQ+ (PFLAG)	Riverview: <a href="https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-riverview">https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-riverview</a> Tampa: <a href="https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-tampa">https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-tampa</a>
Tampa Bay LGBT Chamber of Commerce	<a href="https://www.tampabaylgbtchamber.org/">https://www.tampabaylgbtchamber.org/</a>
USF Health Ybor Youth Clinic	<a href="https://health.usf.edu/care/pediatrics/services-specialties/ad-med/ybor-youth-clinic">https://health.usf.edu/care/pediatrics/services-specialties/ad-med/ybor-youth-clinic</a>

### State & National Student & Educator Resources

Equality Florida	<a href="https://eqfl.org/">https://eqfl.org/</a> Safe and Healthy Schools Project: <a href="https://eqfl.org/Safe_Schools">https://eqfl.org/Safe_Schools</a>
Parents, Families, and Friends of LGBTQ+ (PFLAG)	<a href="https://pflag.org/">https://pflag.org/</a>
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)	<a href="https://www.adl.org/">https://www.adl.org/</a> LGBTQ Rights: <a href="https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/discrimination/lgbtq-rights">https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/discrimination/lgbtq-rights</a>



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Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/">https://www.cdc.gov/</a> LGBT Youth Resources: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm">https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm</a> Supporting LGBTQ Youth: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/safe-supportive-environments/lgbtq_youth.htm">https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/safe-supportive-environments/lgbtq_youth.htm</a>
Family Acceptance Project	<a href="https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications">https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications</a>
Gender Spectrum	<a href="https://genderspectrum.org/">https://genderspectrum.org/</a> <a href="https://genderspectrum.org/audiences/educators-and-education-professionals">https://genderspectrum.org/audiences/educators-and-education-professionals</a>
GLSEN Education Network	<a href="https://www.glsen.org/">https://www.glsen.org/</a>
Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance)	<a href="https://www.learningforjustice.org/">https://www.learningforjustice.org/</a> Gender and Sexual Identity: <a href="https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/gender-sexual-identity">https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/gender-sexual-identity</a>
LGBT National Help Center	<a href="http://www.glnh.org/">http://www.glnh.org/</a>
Safe Zone Project	<a href="https://thesafezoneproject.com/">https://thesafezoneproject.com/</a>
Stonewall National Museum and Archives	<a href="https://stonewall-museum.org/">https://stonewall-museum.org/</a>
Trans Lifeline	<a href="https://translifeline.org/">https://translifeline.org/</a>
Trans Student Educational Resources	<a href="https://transstudent.org/">https://transstudent.org/</a> Scholarship: <a href="https://transstudent.org/scholarships/">https://transstudent.org/scholarships/</a>
The Trevor Helpline (24/7)	<a href="https://www.thetrevorproject.org/">https://www.thetrevorproject.org/</a>
Welcoming Schools	<a href="https://welcomingschools.org/">https://welcomingschools.org/</a>

*\*note: HCPS does not endorse any particular resource listed.*





**For more information or if you have questions regarding this guide please contact:**  
Dr. Monica Verra-Tirado, Chief of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, 813-273-7125  
Jeff Gibson, District Counsel, 813-273-4200 x 4216