

## **I. PURPOSE**

District policy requires that all programs, activities, and employment practices be free from discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. This policy is designed in keeping with these mandates to create a safe learning environment for all students and to ensure that every student has equal access to all school programs and activities.

This policy sets out guidelines for schools and district staff to address the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students and clarifies how state law should be implemented in situations where questions may arise about how to protect the legal rights or safety of such students. This policy does not anticipate every situation that might occur with respect to transgender or gender nonconforming students, and the needs of each transgender or gender nonconforming student must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, the goal is to ensure the safety, comfort, and healthy development of the transgender or gender nonconforming student while maximizing the student's social integration and minimizing stigmatization of the student.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

The definitions provided here are not intended to label students but rather are intended to assist in understanding this policy and the legal obligations of District staff. Students might or might not use these terms to describe themselves.

"Gender identity" is a person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, regardless of the sex they were assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity.

"Transgender" describes people whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth. This involves more than a casual declaration of gender identity or expression, but it does not necessarily require a medical diagnosis.

"Gender expression" refers to the way a person expresses gender, such as clothing, hairstyles, activities, or mannerisms.

"Gender nonconforming" describes people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations traditionally associated with their assigned sex at birth.

## **III. PROCEDURE**

**This procedure will be used to address needs raised by transgender students and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s):**

- A transgender student and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) should contact the student's counselor or building administrator. In the case of a student who has not yet enrolled in school, the appropriate building administrator should be contacted.
- A meeting should be scheduled to discuss the student's particular circumstances and needs. In addition to the student, parent(s)/guardian(s) and building administrator, participants may include the school counselor, school nurse,

- teachers and/or other school staff (including from the sending school), and possibly outside providers who can assist in developing a plan for that student.
- A written plan will be developed by the school, in consultation with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s) and others as appropriate, to address the student's particular needs. The school may request documentation from medical providers or other service providers as necessary to assist staff in developing a plan appropriate for the student.
  - If the parties cannot reach an agreement about the elements to be included in the plan, the building administrator and/or Superintendent shall be consulted as appropriate.

#### **IV. GUIDANCE**

##### **A. Privacy**

The Board recognizes a student's right to keep private one's transgender status or gender nonconforming presentation at school. Information about a student's transgender status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth also may constitute confidential information. School personnel should not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender status or gender nonconforming presentation to others, including parents and other school personnel, unless legally required to do so or unless the student has authorized such disclosure. Transgender and gender nonconforming students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share private information.

When contacting the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a transgender or gender nonconforming student, school personnel should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise.

##### **B. Official Records**

The District is required to maintain a mandatory permanent pupil record ("official record") that includes a student's legal name and legal gender. However, the District is not required to use a student's legal name and gender on other school records or documents. The District will change a student's official record to reflect a change in legal name or legal gender upon receipt of documentation that such change has been made pursuant to a court order. In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student's legal name or gender, such as for purposes of standardized testing, school staff and administrators shall adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

##### **C. Names/Pronouns**

A student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to the student's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and

the student need not change his or her official records. The intentional or persistent refusal to respect a student's gender identity (for example, intentionally referring to the student by a name or pronoun that does not correspond to the student's gender identity) is a violation of this policy.

#### **D. Gender-Segregated Activities**

To the extent possible, schools should reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by gender. In situations where students are segregated by gender, such as for health education classes, students should be included in the group that corresponds to their gender identity.

#### **E. Restroom Accessibility**

Students shall have access to the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity consistently asserted at school. Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided access to a single stall restroom, but no student shall be required to use such a restroom.

#### **F. Locker Room Accessibility**

The use of locker rooms by transgender students shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the goals of maximizing the student's social integration and equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes and sports, ensuring the student's safety and comfort, and minimizing stigmatization of the student. In most cases, transgender students should have access to the locker room that corresponds to their gender identity consistently asserted at school. Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided with a reasonable alternative changing area such as the use of a private area (e.g., a nearby restroom stall with a door, an area separated by a curtain, a P.E. instructor's office in the locker room, or a nearby health office restroom), or with a separate changing schedule (e.g., using the locker room that corresponds to their gender identity before or after other students). Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the student's ability to keep his or her transgender status confidential. In no case shall a transgender student be required to use a locker room that conflicts with the student's gender identity.

#### **G. Physical Education Classes and Intramural Sports**

Transgender and gender nonconforming students shall be permitted to participate in physical education classes and intramural sports in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

#### **H. Interscholastic Competitive Sports Teams**

Transgender and gender nonconforming students shall be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics in a manner consistent with their gender identity, and in concert with the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA).

**I. Dress Codes**

Transgender and gender nonconforming students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. In general, schools may not adopt dress codes that restrict students' clothing or appearance on the basis of gender.

**J. Discrimination/Harassment**

It is the responsibility of each school and the District to ensure that transgender and gender nonconforming students have a safe school environment. This includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment, or violence is given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived transgender status or gender nonconformity are to be handled in the same manner as other discrimination or harassment complaints.

**V. MEDIA****Media and Community Communication**

When communicating to the media or community about issues related to gender identity, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall be the single spokesperson to address the issue. Rather than directly commenting on the issue, other District and school staff shall direct parent(s)/guardian(s) and the media to the designated spokesperson. Protecting the privacy of transgender and gender nonconforming students must be a top priority for the spokesperson and all staff, and all medical information shall be kept strictly confidential. Violating confidentiality of this information is a violation of this policy and may be a violation of local, state or federal privacy laws.

Law Reference: Title XV, RSA 193-F-The Pupil Safety Prevention act of 2000; Title XXXI, RSA 354-A:1; Title IX; The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; The First Amendment; NHIAA, Article III, Section 5-Transgender Participation Policy; JBAA

Appendix Reference:

Date Adopted: October 5, 2016

Last Review/Revision Date: