



## Transgender Student

The William Floyd Union Free School District supports the growing number of students in our District who identify as transgender. All students need a safe and supportive educational environment to progress academically and developmentally. New York State law prohibits discrimination against students based on their gender, gender identity and gender expression. In accordance with applicable law and regulations, the District is committed to fostering a safe learning environment for all students free from discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender, gender identity, gender nonconformity, and gender expression. Administrators and staff play an important role in sustaining that environment.

The District is committed to working with transgender students and their families in an effort to ensure that all students have equal access to the programs, facilities and activities offered by the District. This guidance is intended to assist our administrators in understanding the issues faced by transgender students and the ways in which the District may respond to frequently asked questions from these students or their families. This guidance is also intended to facilitate compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws. This is an evolving area for all school districts nationwide, and the issues addressed in this guidance will likely evolve with time. Each student and the schools within the District face unique circumstances and needs so it is very important that building administrators 1) discuss these issues with students and their families, 2) draw on the expertise of their colleagues, and 3) confer with others regarding the legal obligations and rights of the District and its students, when appropriate. The District will assess and address the specific needs of each student on a case-by-case basis.

**Definitions:** Many District administrators may not be familiar with the terminology used when discussing transgender issues. These brief definitions may be helpful in handling questions or requests from transgender students.

1. "Assigned sex at birth" is the sex designation, "male" or "female," assigned to a person when they are born.
2. "Gender identity" is a person's deeply held and internalized sense of being male or female, regardless of their assigned sex at birth.
3. "Transgender" is a term which describes people whose gender identity or gender expression is different from their assigned sex at birth. A transgender boy, for example, is a youth who identifies as male but was assigned the sex of female at birth.
4. "Gender expression" refers to the way a person expresses gender to others in ways that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as through clothing, hairstyles, activities or mannerisms.
5. "Gender nonconforming" is a term used to describe people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations or norms for a person of that sex assigned at birth.

**1) What should I do if a transgender student asks me for an accommodation?**

There are various accommodations that transgender students might request from the District. Certain of those requests might be feasible, while others might not be. This guidance is intended to provide a basic understanding as to some of the most common issues facing transgender students in public schools. Any administrator or District employee approached by a transgender student regarding accommodations must contact me. Similarly, administrators must direct inquiries from families, the media or the general school community regarding issues related to transgender students to my office.

**2) Is a student's transgender status considered confidential or private?**

Transgender students, like all students, have a right to privacy. This includes the right to keep private one's transgender status, legal name, or assigned sex at birth. Transgender and gender nonconforming students have the right to discuss and reveal their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much of their private information to share with others. The District should otherwise treat this information as confidential and only the people who absolutely must know should be privy to this information. However, it may be appropriate for the student's teachers and/or counselor to be informed. The school cannot guarantee that the student's biological sex will never be revealed, but we should work closely with the student and, where appropriate, his/her family in devising a plan that works for both the student and the school. Privacy considerations may also vary with the age and maturity of the student. In general, it may be easier for a high school student to keep their transgender status confidential than it would be for a kindergarten student. In some cases,

transgender students may feel more supported and safe if other students are aware that they are transgender. In these cases, you should work closely with the student, family and the school counselor on a plan to inform and educate the student's peers. It may also be appropriate to engage external resources, such as TransActive, to assist with educational efforts. It is highly recommended that you work with those you report to and others within the District to ensure you have strong resources and support in navigating these issues.

In some circumstances, our transgender students do not want their parents to know about their transgender status, or that they are expressing their affirmed gender at school. These are challenging situations, since we must balance our goal of supporting the student with the requirement that we keep parents informed of key information about their child. The District will handle these issues on a case-by-case basis taking into account the child's age and individual circumstances. In these cases, building administrators must work with their direct reports and my office prior to having any communication with the transgender student's parents about the student's gender nonconformity or transgender status and/or making any changes with respect to the way in which written communications refer to the student (e.g., whether by the use of the term "he" or "she").

### **3) What if a transgender student wants to change his/her name and/or gender on school records?**

As required by law, the District will maintain the confidentiality of student records. The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and District policy protect the privacy of student educational records and places restrictions on the release of students' personally identifiable information. If a transgender student has legally changed his/her name and/or gender through a court order or other legal means, the District will, upon request and proof of the legal change, revise its student records to reflect that change. To the extent required by law or where in the best interests of the student, the District will maintain those records containing the student's assigned birth name in a separate, confidential file.

If a transgender student has not legally changed his/her name but wishes to be referred to by a different name that corresponds to his/her gender identity, the District may change unofficial records to reflect the desired change. The student's official student records, records pertaining to state standardized tests, other documents reported to the NY State Education Department, and any student medical records necessary to ensure appropriate medical care and to enable the school nurse to coordinate care for the student with other health care professionals will use the student's legal name and gender.

In circumstances where the student has chosen to keep their transgender status confidential from their parents, the school cannot change the school's records. However, school staff should use the name requested by the student when addressing or referring to him/her in class or at school. All student record change requests should be directed to Central Registration.

#### **4) What bathroom should a transgender student use?**

This issue requires us to consider the need to support our transgender student while also doing our best to ensure the safety and comfort of all students. If the transgender student feels that there is a need or desire for increased privacy and safety, regardless of the underlying purpose or cause, the student may, upon request, be provided access to a reasonable alternative restroom such as a single stall "unisex" restroom or the health office restroom. Administrators should work to overcome any barriers to the use of an alternative bathroom. Any such alternatives should not be forced upon a student or presented as the only option.

Transgender support organizations consistently recommend that transgender students be allowed to use the bathroom that corresponds to the student's identified gender (as opposed to their biological sex). If the student requests to use the bathroom of his or her identified gender rather than an alternative, "unisex" restroom, the school will generally accommodate such a request. The District will take steps to meet the needs of any student, including the transgender student, requesting accommodations or increased privacy within that bathroom.

In no case shall a transgender student be required to use a bathroom that conflicts with the student's gender identity.

#### **5) What locker room should a transgender student use for physical education?**

Physical education is a required part of the District's curriculum. 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, minimizing stigmatization of the student and balancing the privacy interests of all students. Transgender students may not wish to use the locker room that corresponds to their gender assigned at birth and may seek an alternative changing area that provides for increased privacy, 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 and should be comparable with regard to the facilities and amenities provided to other students.

Alternatively, transgender students may request to have access to the locker room that corresponds to their gender identity. The District will strive to grant such a request, while protecting the privacy rights of all students. Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should, upon request, be provided with a reasonable alternative changing area in the locker room, such as an area separated by a privacy curtain.

In no case shall a transgender student be required to use a locker room that conflicts with the student's gender identity.

**6) What name/pronoun should be used when referring to a transgender student?**

Transgender students often choose to change the name assigned to them at birth to a name that is associated with their gender identity. When talking both to and about transgender students, these students should be addressed by school employees by the name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity. Students are not required to obtain a court ordered name and/or gender change as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. For example, if a student was identified as a female at birth but is now identifying and self-presenting as a male, school staff should refer to the student as "him" and/or by the "male" name with which the student consistently asserts at school. If the student's legal name is Jane, but the preferred first name is "John," the school should utilize the name John when referring to the student. Administrators will need to discuss a plan with the transgender student, and possibly the parent, as to how and when to initiate use of the chosen name and pronoun at school. If the student has previously been known at school or in school records by his/her sex assigned at birth, the principal or other building administrator should direct school personnel to use the student's chosen name. If you are unsure about a student's preferred name or pronoun, it is appropriate to privately and tactfully ask the student what they prefer to be called. No school employee should engage in intentional refusal to respect a student's gender identity by consistently referring to the student by a name or pronoun that does not correspond to the student's affirmed gender identity.

**7) Should the District make accommodations to its dress code and/or team uniforms for transgendered students**

Transgender and gender nonconforming students may dress in accordance with their gender identity/expression, within the guidelines of the District's dress code. The District will not restrict students' clothing or appearance on the basis of gender. The dress code must be gender neutral and the District must not enforce its dress code more strictly against transgender or gender nonconforming students than other students.

**8) How should we handle transgender students going on overnight school trips?**

This is another issue that must be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Administrators will need to work with the student, the family, and the Superintendent's office in devising a plan based on the particular circumstances of the trip. In no case should a transgender student be denied the opportunity to participate in an overnight field trip because of the student's transgender status.

**9) Can transgender students play sports on teams of their identified gender?**

In most cases, students will be allowed to participate in intramural activities consistent with their gender identity. Upon request that a transgender student would like to participate in the District's interscholastic athletic programs consistent with their gender identity, the District will consider their eligibility in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. These requests will require the involvement of the Athletics Director and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**10) Do transgender students choose to be transgender?**

Science increasingly shows that gender identity develops in the brain and is most likely determined before a person is born. It is a misunderstanding that children 'choose' their gender identity. William Floyd supports transgender students in their expression of their gender identity.

**11) Who can I go to with more questions?**

There are many people and departments at William Floyd that can help with questions you may have regarding support for our transgender students and families. We suggest that you start with your direct supervisor. In addition, the contacts in the following departments can provide additional support:

**District Office:**

Kathleen Keane, Assistant Superintendent  
Stacey Scalise, Assistant Superintendent

**Principals:**

Barbara Butler, William Floyd High School, 631-874-1660  
Michele Gode, William Paca Middle School, 631-874-1463  
Carolyn Schick, William Floyd Middle School, 631-874-5501  
Monica Corona, Woodhull Elementary School, 631-874-1800  
Keith Fasciana, William Floyd Elementary School, 631-874-1280  
Jim Westcott, John S. Hobart Elementary School, 631-874-1273  
Eileen Filippone, Moriches Elementary School, 631-874-1818  
Toni Komorowski, Tangier Smith Elementary School, 631-874-1370

**Guidance Counselors – High School:**

Ashley Siebert (A-CLAM Grades 10-12), 631-874-1445  
Jonathan Welsh (CLAN-GE Grades 10-12), 631-874-1236  
Stephanie Nardone (GF-LE Grades 10-12), 631-874-1842  
Kerry Brewer (LF-PAM Grades 10-12), 631-874-1685  
Nancy DeVito (PAN-SL Grades 10-12), 631-874-1841  
Dana Garner (SM-Z Grades 10-12), 631-874-1131  
ToniRose Taddeo (A-LAZ Grade 9), 631-874-1454  
Caroline Reed (LB-Z Grade 9), 631-874-1129  
Laura Nunziata (Spec. Ed & Alt HS), 631-874-1128

**Guidance Counselors – Paca Middle School:**

Paul Longo (A-K all grades), 631-874-1470  
Laurie O'Donoghue (L-M all grades), 631-874-1481

**Guidance Counselors – Floyd Middle School:**

Amanda Dubinsky (A-K all grades), 631-874-5513  
Eugene Gersbeck (L-Z all grades), 631-874-5511

**Social Workers – High School:**

Jackie Searing, 631-874-1952  
Darlene DeFeo, 631-874-1640  
Emilie Larson, 631-874-1889  
Kat Jumper, 631-874-1688  
Aisha Breland, 631-874-1629

**Social Workers – Elementary Schools:**

Mary Kolesar, 631-874-1940 (Woodhull)  
Jeanne Stern, 631-874-1762 (Floyd El)  
Katrina Reilly, 631-874-1230 (Hobart)  
Melissa Knoetgen, 631-874-1934 (Moriches)  
Jodi Lieberman, 631-874-1705 (Tangier Smith)

**Social Workers – Paca Middle School:**

Rebecca Kristiansen, 631-874-1456  
David Bracero, 631-874-1453

**Social Workers – Floyd Middle School:**

Paula Raniolo, 631-874-5535  
Brittany Puccio, 631-874-5567

**Psychologists – High School:**

Dr. Melania Voutsinas, 631-874-1506  
Jeanette DeRosa, 631-874-1977  
Tom Patrizio, 631-874-1244  
Victoria DeRosa, 631-874-1690  
Remuka McCreight, 631-874-1691

**Psychologists – Paca Middle School:**

Lisa Cameron, 631-874-1458

**Psychologists – Floyd Middle School:**

Jeanine DeVito, 631-874-5512

**Psychologists – Elementary Schools:**

Bob DeSantis, 631-874-1630 (Woodhull)  
Lorie Zelin, 631-874-1255 (Floyd El.)  
Joshua Zelin, 631-874-1243 (Hobart)  
Richard Kimmerling, 631-874-1816 (Moriches)  
Jodi Lieberman, 631-874-1705 (Tangier Smith)





# Transgender Students

**What should I do if a transgender student asks me for an accommodation?**

- Any employee approached by a transgender student regarding accommodations must contact the Building Administrator who will call the Superintendent's office.
- Similarly, administrators must direct inquiries from families, the media or the general school community regarding issues related to transgender students to my office.



## What if a transgender student wants to change his/her name and/or gender on school records?

- If a transgender student has legally changed his/her name and/or gender through a court order or other legal means, the District will, upon request and proof of the legal change, revise its student records to reflect that change.
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- School staff should use the name requested by the student when addressing or referring to him/her in class or at school.



## **What name/pronoun should be used when referring to a transgender student?**

### **Best Practices**

- Do not put rosters on the whiteboard with legal names, violates their right to privacy and could lead to other students making fun or harassing them.
- Use gender neutral pronouns. If a mistake is made that is one thing but refusing is another.
- With the students permission, inform subs of the proper names of all students in your class.

## **What locker room should a transgender student use for physical education?**

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- Alternatively, transgender students may request to have access to the locker room that corresponds to their gender identity. The District will strive to grant such a request, while protecting the privacy rights of all students.
- In no case shall a transgender student be required to use a locker room that conflicts with the student's gender identity.

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- Administrators will need to work with the student, the family, and the Superintendent's office in devising a plan based on the particular circumstances of the trip.
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