

## Virginia Public Schools Guidance Sheet

The purpose of this guidance sheet is to assist the Virginia School District in providing a safe, secure and dignified educational and work atmosphere for the students and staff under their supervision. This guidance will assist in preparation for future situations that may arise involving transgender and gender non-conforming students and staff. If issues arise that are not addressed within this guidance sheet or more information and support is desired, please contact the Superintendent for assistance. Virginia Public Schools has the following policies protect all students and staff from discrimination or harassment based on their gender, gender identity and sexual orientation: 102 Equal Educational Opportunity, 413 Harassment and Violence, and 514 Bullying Prohibition.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
<b>Safety and Bullying:</b> Transgender and gender nonconforming students are disproportionately targeted for teasing, bullying, harassment, and physical violence (1). These conditions can negatively affect their ability to concentrate on academic instruction and may lead them to skip class or even drop out of school altogether.	Address bullying and name-calling consistently and equitably. This includes name-calling and bullying based upon gender stereotypes. Address claims of discrimination or harassment based on the person's gender identity as you would all other types of claims.
<b>Names and Pronouns:</b> Frequently, transgender and gender non-conforming people are not addressed by the appropriate pronouns or names (2). Having one's gender identity recognized and validated is important.	Refer to all students and staff by their preferred name and gender pronouns whenever possible. A student's record may also be amended if they can supply documentation of a legal name change.
<b>Bathrooms:</b> Transgender and gender non-conforming people often struggle to find restroom facilities that are safe and correspond with their gender identity. <sup>2</sup> Having safe and respectful access to restroom facilities is important to the health and well-being of transgender and gender nonconforming people.	Provide students with access to restrooms that correspond to the gender identity the student consistently asserts at school and/or provide access to a reasonable alternate restroom (such as a single stall "unisex" or staff restroom, or access to the health office restroom).
<b>Locker Rooms:</b> Transgender and gender non-conforming students need suitable locker room accommodations for physical health classes and opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities. Students have the ability to change clothes in a comfortable, safe and welcoming environment.	Provide access to a reasonable alternate locker room facility rather than the gender specific locker room facility. For example, the person could be given access to a single stall "unisex" or staff restroom, use of the Physical Education Office facility, or a private room for changing purposes.
<b>Gendered Activities:</b> Gender is often used as a classification for dividing classes into parts or as a prerequisite for participation. Such activities can be difficult for transgender or gender non-conforming students. Especially if they are forced to participate in a group that does not correspond with their gender identity.	Avoid using gender as a characteristic for divisions whenever possible. When groups are separated by gender, allow students to self-select the group they would feel more comfortable in.
<b>Support Resources:</b> Transgender and gender nonconforming students may lack support from family and community and may be at risk of losing family support and housing if their identity is disclosed or confidentiality is not maintained. When a student chooses to come out to family, the family may also be in need of resource suggestions.	Provide support and access to resources for transgender and gender non-conforming students and their families. Many schools already have Gay/Straight Alliance Groups (GSAs) and GLBT Support Groups that may be beneficial. The Office of Equity can also assist schools in locating supportive/therapeutic community resources for students and their families.

(1) Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., & Diaz, E.M. (2009). Harsh realities: The experiences of transgender youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN. (2) American Psychological Association [APA]. (2006). Answers to your questions about transgender individuals and gender identity. Retrieved August 9, 2010, from <http://www.apa.org/topics/transgender.html>