

# **TOOLKIT: SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER AND NON- BINARY STUDENTS**

April 2022

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# INTRODUCTION

Historically, gender has been associated with one’s anatomical features at birth, categorizing people as either male or female. Researchers now understand gender as a spectrum that is not realized according to physical anatomy.<sup>1</sup> In fact, gender identity “refers to each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical, or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms.”<sup>2</sup>

Table 1: Understanding Gender Spectrum Terms

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Gender Identity 	One’s internal understanding of one’s own gender, or the gender with which the person identifies	Female/woman/girl Male/man/boy Other gender(s)*
Sex Assigned at Birth 	The sex assigned to a child at birth, which is most often based on the child’s external anatomy	Male Female Other/intersex
Gender Expression 	The way a person communicates gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body characteristics	Feminine Masculine Other
Sexual Orientation 	Who a person is attracted to and wants to have relationships with	Gay Lesbian Straight Bisexual Asexual Other orientation(s)

\*Note: Other gender identities include agender, non-binary, transgender, or any other gender identity that an individual aligns with.

Source: Multiple<sup>3</sup>

Gender-diverse is a term used to describe persons who identify with a gender or express their gender in a way that is opposed to what society perceives as the gender norm in that context. Specifically, gender diversity may include identifying outside of the male/female binary or identifying with a different sex than the one assigned at birth. Specific terms associated with gender diversity include transgender (trans) and non-binary.<sup>4</sup>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Figure 1: Gender-Diverse Terms

### Transgender

- Broadly used term for persons whose gender expression and identity are different from their sex assigned at birth. According to The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, 700,000 people in the United States identify as transgender.

### Non-Binary

- Individuals don't feel like one gender or the other. Gender for them is more "fluid" than we've traditionally thought it to be. Non-binary gender identity is simply one term that may be used to describe individuals who may experience a gender identity that is neither exclusively male or exclusively female or any identity outside of the gender binary. Non-binary individuals may also identify as gender-fluid, which is a person who does not necessarily identify themselves as having a fixed gender.

Source: Beech Acres Parenting Center<sup>5</sup>

Gender identity begins to form at an early age as children interact with their environment and are influenced by the gender roles around them. Many children begin demonstrating their gender identity as early as two or three years old through the selection of toys, colors, and clothes. As children reach the age of six or seven, they begin to understand gender as fixed (i.e., lasting forever) and start to exhibit behaviors that align with their gender identity or the identity that is expected of them.<sup>6</sup> Adults often dismiss gender diversity in children because of the misconception that identifying as gender-diverse is a phase. Consistent, or persistent messages from children that indicate they are gender-diverse suggest that children feel strongly about the gender identity they are trying to convey and should not be overlooked by adults.<sup>7</sup>

Transgender, non-binary, and other gender non-conforming individuals face societal pressures and stigma around their gender identity at a higher rate than those who identify with their sex assigned at birth or other sexual minority populations. Misgendering and "gender policing" (i.e., when normal gender expressions, such as behaviors or appearance, are imposed on someone) can contribute to the mental and emotional difficulties and trauma that many transgender and gender non-conforming individuals face from an early age and continue to face even as they become adults.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, demographic (e.g., age, income level) and psychosocial factors (e.g., victimization experiences, peer support) impact the levels of psychological distress experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming populations.<sup>9</sup> Transgender, non-binary, and other gender-nonconforming individuals also face additional societal challenges such as the following:<sup>10</sup>

- Violence, discrimination, and microaggressions (e.g., intense focus on bodies);
- Risk of losing peer group and social and family connections;
- Discrimination within LGBTQIA+ (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and additional gender identities or sexual orientations that are not included in the acronym) communities;
- Medical barriers (e.g., insurance coverage) associated with transitioning (i.e., hormones or surgery);
- Social conventions and participation (e.g., using gendered bathrooms, participating in sports separated by sex);
- Legal issues related to gender and name changes on documents and other LGBTQ rights; and
- Homelessness and unemployment.

Hanover Research (Hanover) recently conducted a social-emotional learning (SEL) survey for students and staff at a member district to gain feedback and perceptions on SEL support within the district. Results demonstrated that transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students often feel a lack of support at school. These students reported the highest levels of negative emotions related to safety, well-being, and other SEL components.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As visibility and awareness of transgender and other gender non-conforming individuals increases, the member district would like to address the SEL and intersectionality challenges of transgender and non-binary students by training social workers and counselors to provide support in students' learning environments.

To support the development of its staff's skills in addressing intersectionality and gender-related issues and topics, this toolkit provides strategies and resources to educate the school community and support transgender and non-binary students' social-emotional well-being.

## OVERVIEW

The toolkit:

- ✓ Provides strategies and resources for school staff to [educate school community](#) members (e.g., students, staff, families) about issues and topics relevant to transgender and non-binary students;
- ✓ Identifies [school-based social-emotional support structures](#) for transgender and non-binary students; and
- ✓ Outlines steps for school staff to ensure all school community members are familiar with [available community-based services and resources](#) for transgender and non-binary youth.

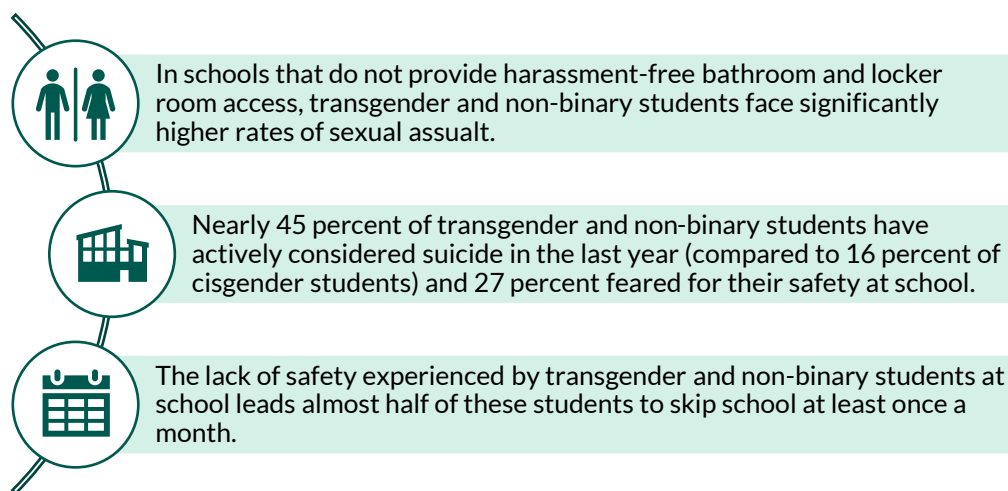
## AUDIENCE

This toolkit is intended to support individuals working in student support roles (i.e., counselors, social workers, and psychologists) with addressing issues and topics relevant to transgender and non-binary students and supporting the social-emotional well-being of all students.

## EDUCATE THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Student support staff should take active steps to promote a school climate that is inclusive of and affirms students of all gender identities. This can be accomplished by advocating for policies and practices that support visibility and awareness around issues of gender such as understanding challenges faced by students expressing certain gender identities and decreasing biases in the community. Indeed, **support staff should work to educate their school communities to set a foundation for additional supports for non-binary and transgender students—as well as those students who may express other diverse identities.**<sup>11</sup> Staff can use a checklist to monitor the implementation of policies, practices, and community engagement steps and focus on advocating for those that are not yet addressed.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 2: Sample Information on Transgender and Non-Binary Student School Safety to Share



Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development<sup>13</sup>

Support staff should educate the school community on the intersectionality of identity and how that can increase the risk of bullying and harassment and negatively affect transgender and non-binary students' mental health and well-being. Transgender, non-binary, and other LGBTQIA+ students experience other social identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, religion) that can increase the risk of experiencing bullying and harassment, increasing the risk of depression, suicidal ideation, misuse of drugs and alcohol, engaging in unsafe sex practices, and struggling academically. School support staff must identify potential areas of gender-based harassment and provide resources to create a safe environment for all genders.<sup>14</sup>

School support staff must disseminate resources and information related to the various safety and accessibility challenges that transgender and non-binary students face, such as accessing school restrooms and locker rooms and feeling safe engaging with peers.<sup>15</sup> Staff can work with school leaders to provide professional development for all faculty on gender-related issues and topics and offer resources to anticipate the needs of gender-diverse youth and intervene in situations of bullying or exclusion. Depending on the intended audience, schools can facilitate gender diversity education through various forms, such as brochures, meetings, or interactive workshops.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 3: Examples of Gender-Based Harassment and Misconduct









- Refusing to address a student by a name and the pronouns consistent with their gender identity
- Disciplining or disparaging a transgender student because their mannerisms, hairstyle, or style of dress correspond to their gender identity or a non-transgender student because their mannerisms, hairstyle, or style of dress do not conform to stereotypes for their gender or are perceived as indicative of the other sex
- Blocking a student's entry to the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity because the student is transgender or gender-nonconforming
- Taunting a student because they participate in an athletic activity typically favored by a student of the other sex
- Revealing a student's transgender status to individuals who do not have a legitimate need for the information
- Use of gender specific slurs
- Physical assault of a student motivated by hostility toward them because of their gender, gender identity, or gender expression

Source: San Francisco Unified School District<sup>17</sup>

School support staff should encourage all staff to model inclusive language to ensure transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse youth feel acknowledged and welcomed in the learning environment.<sup>18</sup> Staff must first learn and understand the appropriate vocabulary to understand and validate students' gender identities.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, staff should understand the appropriate usage of frequently used terminology in the LGBTQIA+ community, such as cisgender, transgender, genderqueer (i.e., an individual whose gender identity is neither man nor woman, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders), and additional gender-related terms. To accomplish this, support staff can disseminate a reference sheet to the school community defining the common terms used in the LGBTQIA+ community.<sup>20</sup>

**School support staff must also model inclusive name and pronoun usage** to help all school faculty develop habits that allow students to share their preferred name and pronoun, such as asking for pronouns when first interacting with someone. Sharing pronouns as a default rather than as a correction can help to decentralize cisgender identity. In addition, school support staff may promote strategies such as student-staff check-ins regarding pronouns or student surveys that ask for preferred pronoun usage in different situations.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 4: Inclusive Language and Communication

 <b>NAME AND PRONOUN</b>	 <b>PRONOUNS</b>	 <b>ROLL CALL AND ROSTER</b>	 <b>PREVIOUS NAMES</b>
<p>Allow students to choose what name they use and avoid making assumptions based on what is on the class roster or the student’s appearance. A great way to accomplish this is to include name and pronouns on your student interest sheet or have students introduce themselves with their chosen name and pronouns on the first day of classes.</p>	<p>If you aren’t sure of a person’s pronoun, ask, or refer to them by their name only—do not assume. One way to be respectful is to share your own first. “I use the pronouns he/him/ his. I want to make sure I address you correctly. What pronouns do you use?” Another way is to ask, “How would you like to be addressed?”</p>	<p>Avoid calling the roll or otherwise reading the roster aloud, until you have given students a chance to state what they prefer to be called in case the roster lists a prior name. It is important to print a photo roster because this will give you access to any chosen name that a student uses.</p>	<p>If a student has a previous name and/or pronoun that you are aware of because you knew them before they changed it, or because it is on the roster, do not use it or reveal it to others. This can draw unnecessary attention to their trans identity and be harmful to trans members in the community.</p>
 <b>MODEL BEHAVIOR</b>	 <b>ADDRESS MISTAKES</b>	 <b>CORRECT OTHERS</b>	 <b>RESPECT BOUNDARIES</b>
<p>When facilitating a group discussion, ask people to identify their pronouns when they go around and do introductions. Model this by saying, “In our introductions, please state your name and pronouns. I’ll start: my name is Simon and I use they/them pronouns.”</p>	<p>If you make a mistake about someone’s pronoun, correct yourself. Going on as if it did not happen is less respectful than correcting the mistake. This also saves the person who was misidentified from having to correct an incorrect pronoun before it is planted in the minds of anyone who heard you.</p>	<p>When someone else makes a mistake, correct them. Allowing the mistake to go uncorrected ensures future uncomfortable interactions for the person who is being misidentified. For example, if a colleague uses the incorrect pronoun for a student, simply respond by saying “I believe Gina uses she and her pronouns.”</p>	<p>Avoid asking personal questions of transgender people that you would not ask of others such as questions related to their body or medical care, their prior name, why or how they know they are trans, their sexual orientation or practices, or their family’s reaction to their gender identity unless they invite you to do so or voluntarily share the information.</p>

Source: The Gender and Sexuality Center<sup>22</sup>

Table 2: Common Pronouns

SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE	POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	REFLEXIVE
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
Ze	Zim	Zir	Zirs	Zirself
Xe	Xem	Xyr	Xyrs	Xemself
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
Sie/zie	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
Zie	Zir	Zir	Zirs	Zirself
Ey	Em	Eir	Eirs	Eirself
Per	Per	Pers	Pers	Perself
He	Him	His	His	Himself

Source: The Gender and Sexuality Center<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, developing inclusive language requires staff to avoid binary phrases when interacting with students, families, and colleagues. For example, support staff can use “everyone” or “people of all genders” rather than “men and women.” Mistakes are common and it may take time to adjust to different language terms; however, staff should ensure they follow through with inclusive language and be ready to correct themselves.<sup>24</sup>

**School support staff should model gender-affirming behavior for students of all identities, not just transgender and non-binary.** For example, if a student mocks their peer’s appearance or behavior that does not align with traditional gender roles, staff should remind the students that “there are no ‘boy things’ or ‘girl things,’ only what feels comfortable to each person.”<sup>25</sup> Support staff can model this for other school faculty members and students to promote a gender-inclusive learning environment. School support staff can also advocate for school leaders to hire transgender, non-binary, and other gender-diverse staff to provide positive models to all children.<sup>26</sup>

Table 3: Examples for Staff to Address Student Questions About Gender

QUESTION/STATEMENT	RESPONSES
“Why does Martin like pink?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Here at (name of school), we all get to like what we like. What is your favorite color? Why do you like that color?”</li> <li>▪ “There are so many beautiful colors, we can all like different ones.”</li> </ul>
“Juan plays with dolls. That’s weird.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “It is true that some boys don’t like to play with dolls, but some boys do! Just like some of you like to draw and some of you don’t. Some of you like to play kickball and others don’t. No one should have to pick and choose what they do just because of their gender.”</li> <li>▪ “Sometimes this is confusing. We get messages about some toys being for boys and some toys being for girls. They are just for kids!”</li> </ul>
“But he’s a boy, why does he dress like a girl?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “There are lots of different ways that boys can dress and lots of different ways that girls can dress. There are lots of ways that people of any gender can dress.”</li> <li>▪ “Those are the kinds of clothes that he likes to wear. What kinds of clothes do you like to wear?”</li> </ul>
“Why is her hair so short? She looks like a boy.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “People of all genders can have long hair, medium hair, or short hair. And some people do not have any hair.”</li> <li>▪ “You cannot tell someone’s gender from how they have their hair.”</li> <li>▪ “That’s just how she likes it. How would you like your hair to be?”</li> </ul>

Source: Welcoming Schools and Human Rights Campaign Foundation<sup>27</sup>

In addition, **school support staff should advocate for a gender-inclusive curriculum to increase awareness of gender diversity for students and staff.** Such curricula should cover transgender topics and history, and

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students should learn about the lives and contributions of gender non-conforming groups and individuals. Additionally, school support staff can identify transgender and non-binary guest speakers to invite to the school to educate students, staff, and other school community members on their experiences in education or the workplace. Guest speakers offer all students a unique perspective and learning experience that increases compassion for others that have different identities and life experiences.<sup>28</sup> School personnel can disseminate a Q&A reference sheet outlining answers to common questions about transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse youth or the district’s approach to teaching gender diversity.<sup>29</sup>

Table 4: Gender Diversity Lesson Plan Resources

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network</a> <sup>30</sup>	Identity lesson for Grades 3-5 Students explore their own unique identities and learn about major identifiers
<a href="#">Human Rights Campaign Foundation Welcoming Schools</a> <sup>31</sup>	Lesson plans to create gender-expansive classrooms and support transgender and non-binary students Options for Grades Pre-K-6
<a href="#">Human Rights Campaign Foundation Welcoming Schools</a> <sup>32</sup>	Lessons on gender, family, LGBTQ+ inclusive, and bullying Options for Grades PreK-6
<a href="#">Learning for Justice</a> <sup>33</sup>	Lessons options for Grades K-2 and 3-5 on Gender and Sexual Identity (e.g., exploring Gender Stereotypes Through Role Plays) and Bullying and Bias (e.g., Gender Bias and Homophobia in Sports) (filter by grade level and topic to find lessons)

Source: Multiple cited in the figure

To assist school support staff with educating the school community, several tools have been compiled. The first, the [Reference Sheet for Gender and Sexuality Terminology](#) (pp. 11-12), lists common terms and definitions associated with gender and sexuality. This sheet is meant to be given to school community members so that everyone will be able to use these terms appropriately. The second tool, [Q&A for Gender Diversity in Schools](#) (p. 13), answers general questions about gender diversity among children or in district curricula and gender-based support structures. If additional questions arise, support staff should add them to this list to ensure that all staff who will be answering these questions provide the same responses. The third tool, [Discussion Protocol on Gender Concepts](#) (p.14), gives prompts and follow up questions support staff can present to school community members to generate discussions on various gender topics. The next tool, [Lesson Plan: That’s A Gender Stereotype \(Elementary\)](#) (p. 15), is a lesson that help students in Grades 1-3 understand gender stereotypes and diversity and create a welcoming learning space for all identities. The final too, a [Checklist for Developing a Gender Inclusive School](#) (pp. 16-17), enables school staff to internally monitor the implementation of gender-inclusive school policies and practices and community engagement.



## REFERENCE SHEET FOR GENDER AND SEXUALITY TERMINOLOGY

**Directions:** School staff will disseminate and discuss these terms (listed alphabetically) and definitions related to gender diversity. Staff can share their understanding of terms and topics and identify additional terms to include on a comprehensive reference sheet for the staff or other school community members.

### Common Terminology Related to Gender and Sexuality

TERM	DEFINITION
AFAB	Acronym meaning Assigned Female at Birth. AFAB people may or may not identify as female some or all the time. AFAB is a useful term for educating about issues that may happen to these bodies without connecting to womanhood or femaleness.
Affirmed Gender	An individual's true gender, as opposed to their gender assigned at birth.
Agender	A person who does not identify with or experience any gender. Agender is different from nonbinary because many nonbinary people do experience gender.
Ally	A term relating generally to individuals who support marginalized groups. In the LGBTQIA+ community, this term is used to describe someone who is supportive of LGBTQIA+ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate.
AMAB	Acronym meaning Assigned Male at Birth. AMAB people may or may not identify as male some or all the time. AMAB is a useful term for educating about issues that may happen to these bodies without connecting to manhood or maleness.
Androgynous	Having physical elements of both femininity and masculinity, whether expressed through sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.
Asexual	Sometimes abbreviated to ace, the term refers to an individual who does not experience sexual attraction. Each asexual person experiences relationships, attraction, and arousal differently. Asexuality is a sexual orientation that does not necessarily entail specific chosen behaviors (e.g., abstinence).
Bigender	While gender is not widely understood to be a spectrum and not a binary, this term is used to identify a person whose gender identity encompasses two genders, (often man and woman, but not exclusively) or is moving between two genders. More commonly used terms include genderfluid or genderqueer, which better reflect the spectrum of all genders.
Bisexual	Commonly referred to as bi or bi+. Refers to a person who acknowledges in themselves the potential to be attracted to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or in the same degree.
Cisgender	A term used to describe people whose gender identity or expression aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
Drag	The theatrical performance of one or multiple genders (often including makeup, costume, dance, lip-synching, and temporary body modifications). Performers who present in a feminine manner are called Drag Queens, while performers who present in a masculine manner are called Drag Kings.
Gay	A term used to describe people who are emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.
Gender dysphoria	The distress caused when a person's assigned sex at birth and assumed gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.
Gender expansive	An umbrella term sometimes used to describe people who expand notions of gender expression and identity beyond perceived or expected societal gender norms.

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TERM	DEFINITION
Genderfluid	Describes a person who does not consistently adhere to one fixed gender and who may move among genders.
Gender-neutral	Not gendered. Can refer to language (e.g., pronouns), spaces, (e.g., bathrooms), or other aspects of society (e.g., colors, occupations). Gender-neutral is not a term to describe people.
Gender variant, gender diverse, or genderqueer	Terms people use to describe their own nonstandard gender identity or expression.
Heteronormativity	The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. This includes the often implicitly held idea that heterosexuality is the norm and that other sexualities are “different” or “abnormal.”
Intersectionality	This term refers to the overlap of social categorizations or identities such as race and ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, geography, and class, which exist in an individual or group of people that can contribute to discrimination or disadvantage.
Intersex	Intersex is the current term used to refer to people who are biologically between the medically expected definitions of male and female. This can be through variations in hormones, chromosomes, internal or external genitalia, or any combination of any or all primary and/or secondary sex characteristics. While many intersex people are noticed as intersex at birth, many are not. As intersex is about biological sex, it is distinct from gender identity and sexual orientation.
Lesbian	Refers to a woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to other women.
Non-binary	Refers to people who do not subscribe to the gender binary. They might exist between or beyond the man-woman binary. Some use the term exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like genderqueer, genderfluid, gender non-conforming, gender diverse, or gender expansive. It can also be combined with other descriptors (e.g., nonbinary woman).
Queer	A term used by some LGBTQIA+ people to describe themselves and their community. The term is also considered by some to be inclusive of the entire community, and by others who find it to be an appropriate term to describe their more fluid identities.
Transgender	An umbrella term describing a broad range of people who experience and/or express their gender differently from what most people expect. It includes people who describe themselves as transsexual, cross-dressers, or otherwise gender nonconforming.
Transphobia	Animosity, hatred, or dislike of transgender and gender-expansive people that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias. Transphobia often stems from a lack of knowledge about transgender people and the issues they face and can be alleviated with education and support.
Transexual	An outdated medical term used to describe people whose gender identity and birth-assigned sex do not match. Many people prefer the term “transgender” to describe themselves.
Transition	A process through which some transgender people begin to live as the gender with which they identify, rather than the one assigned at birth. This may or may not include hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery, and other medical components.
Two-spirit	A term used within some American Indian and Alaska Native communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and female essence or spirit.

Source: PFLAG and Human Rights Campaign Foundation<sup>34</sup>



## Q&A FOR GENDER DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS

**Directions:** This Q&A reference sheet answers general questions about gender diversity in children or district curricula and gender-based support structures. Having standard answers to commonly asked questions allows support staff to ensure all community members are getting the same answer, no matter whom they ask. School support staff can adapt this Q&A sheet to include additional questions relevant to the district context and disseminate it to school community members, such as other staff and families.

	<p><b>Why should my child learn about gender at school?</b></p>
	<p>School is a place where children are taught to respect one another and to learn to work together regardless of their differences. Learning about gender diversity is part of that work. Creating a more tolerant, inclusive, and accepting school environment teaches all children to recognize and resist stereotypes. We teach children to stand up for others, resist bullying, and work together.</p> <p>Many children whose gender is seen as different than what is expected of them can face very difficult circumstances. Too often, teasing, bullying, and violence are common experiences for a gender-expansive child. Various federal, state, and municipal laws protect students from discrimination because of their gender. Proactive education and training to help students understand gender diversity more fully helps school districts meet those legal obligations while working to create a safer, more supportive learning environment for all students.</p>
	<p><b>Isn't my child too young to be learning about gender?</b></p>
	<p>Children are already learning about gender through messages that are ever present. For example, children receive clear messages about the “rules” for boys and girls, as well as the consequences for violating them. By learning about the diversity of gender, children can explore a greater range of interests, ideas, and activities. Hence, the pressure of “doing gender correctly” is reduced, creating more space for children to discover new talents and interests.</p>
	<p><b>Won't discussing gender encourage my child to be transgender?</b></p>
	<p>Being transgender is not something that a person chooses. Studies show that although parents cannot make their child gay or transgender, they can deeply influence how their children feel about themselves. Parental pressure to enforce gender conformity can damage a child's self-esteem and is a high predictor of negative health outcomes and risk-taking behaviors for youth. Transgender youth currently have an extremely high attempted suicide rate, with some estimates being as high as 50 percent. Discussing gender will have the effect of removing much of the pressure students face to fit into narrowly defined expectations that few, if any, can meet.</p>
	<p><b>If transgender people are so “normal”, why are some families so private about it?</b></p>
	<p>A family with a transgender child will decide together how much they wish to share with others. Many transgender children prefer to live their lives as the gender that reflects their internal gender identity without using the word “transgender.” For example, the child would identify themselves a girl or boy as opposed to a transgender boy or girl.</p> <p>Some children and families are open and share this with everyone in their lives. Others choose to maintain a sense of complete privacy, while still others find a blend of these two approaches. In most families, this decision will be determined jointly by the child and guardians, often in collaboration with medical, mental health, or other professionals experienced in this area.</p>

Source: American Civil Liberties Union, Gender Spectrum, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, National Center for Lesbian Rights, and National Education Association <sup>35</sup>



## DISCUSSION PROTOCOL ON GENDER CONCEPTS

**Directions:** School staff use the following discussion prompts to further understand gender concepts by discussing them among colleagues or with students.

TOPICS	PROMPT AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Gender Identity	<p><b>Prompt:</b> Take a moment to think about your gender identity.</p> <p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you identify today? Is this the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?</li> </ul>
Gender Expression	<p><b>Prompt:</b> Gender expression can be fun when we give people the space to explore what feels good to them. There are so many ways to show off our gender and ourselves.</p> <p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are some ways you are expressing or showing your gender today? How might this change on a different day?</li> </ul>
Gender Stereotypes	<p><b>Prompt:</b> There are gender stereotypes that try to tell us that people who identify as girls or boys should act and dress a certain way. For example, “girls like pink” or “boys don’t cry.” These stereotypes can make people feel bad for the things they like to do and for being who they are. Even though nonbinary people aren’t boys or girls, they may still be teased for breaking stereotypes associated with their sex assigned at birth or the gender they are perceived as being.</p> <p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are some ways that you break gender stereotypes?</li> <li>▪ How could you encourage your friends/colleagues to express their gender in a way that feels right to them?</li> </ul>
Cisgender Privilege	<p><b>Prompt:</b> The more all these identities are aligned, the more cisgender privilege you benefit from. For example, if you identify as a boy who was assigned male at birth, and your gender expression stays in what is considered “masculine” in your culture, and you stay around people who perceive and read your expression as masculine, then your gender is not questioned. You might even get to move through the world without thinking about gender, being misgendered, or feeling limited by gender stereotypes.</p> <p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What ways do you experience cisgender privilege?</li> <li>▪ What changes can you make to cultivate a classroom that is more inclusive of transgender people?</li> </ul>

Source: Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network<sup>36</sup>



## LESSON PLAN: THAT'S A GENDER STEREOTYPE (ELEMENTARY)

**Directions:** School staff and educators use the following lesson plan to educate students about gender stereotypes and gender diversity and create a welcoming learning space for all identities.

### Learning Objective:

Students will define stereotypes and explore how they relate to gender. Students will list examples of gender stereotypes and discuss their limitations. Students reflect on their own gender in relation to stereotypes.

### Overview:

This lesson will explain to elementary students (Grades 1-3) what a stereotype is. By playing the “Stereotype Game”, students will get to participate in challenging gender stereotypes, and the many ways that we can fit or break them. They will list some common gender stereotypes for girls and boys and learn how all children can decide for themselves what they like and what they want to be when they grow up.

### Materials:

Chart paper, markers, paper, pencils, and prepared questions for the Stereotype Game.

### Time:

About 40 minutes

### Activities:

1. Opening or Pre-work: Students should reflect on their own likes by listing their favorite activities, colors, and what they hope to be when they grow up.
2. Whole Group Discussion: Introduce and define “stereotype by first writing it on the board and asking students if they have heard this word before. Ask for examples and write the definition.
3. As a class or in groups: students generate examples of stereotypes for girls, boys, and children, including activities, colors, and professions. Including stereotypes for all “children” will leave space for non-binary people. Make a class list from student responses using chart paper. Ask students, “Are there any stereotypes that you fit?” are there any stereotypes that do not fit you? Do these stereotypes have to be true for all girls, all boys, or all children?”
4. As a class, play the game “That’s a Stereotype!” Tell students, “I’m going to read a sentence. If the sentence is a stereotype, or a simple idea that’s not true for everyone in a group, stand up and cross your arms, and say, “That’s a stereotype!” If it is not, then stay in your seats.”

*Example sentences for the game:*

- All of you are in \_\_\_ grade.
  - Some \_\_\_ graders like recess.
  - All girls like to wear dresses.
  - Some girls like to draw.
  - All boys like to play with trucks.
  - Nurses are all girls.
  - Some boys like the color pink.
5. Conclusion: Ask students to look again at the lists of stereotypes for boys and girls. Encourage them to think about how they identify today and to list any ways that they don’t fit or “break” stereotypes for girls, boys, or children. Facilitate a conversation with your students about their reflections, asking, “Is it okay when stereotypes don’t fit us? How does it feel when stereotypes don’t fit? Why should we think about gender stereotypes, or stereotypes telling us about things for ‘boys’ or ‘girls’?”

Source: Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network<sup>37</sup>



## CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING A GENDER INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

**Directions:** School staff use this checklist internally to monitor the implementation of gender-inclusive school policies and practices and community engagement. Support staff should advocate for increasing the structural, relational, and instructional approaches outlined on this checklist.

STRUCTURAL APPROACHES	Professional Development for Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Educate staff to understand the complexities of gender as well as specific methods to stop gender-based harassment, bullying, and hurtful teasing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide training for all school personnel—from teachers, aides, and counselors to administrative staff, bus drivers, recess aides, and cafeteria workers.</li> </ul>
	Policies/Administrative Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure anti-bullying policies are enumerated and specifically name groups that are more frequently targeted for harassment. Make sure these policies include actual or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide access to gender-neutral restrooms/facilities with options for privacy that do not stigmatize any students.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow children to use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have policies in place regarding gender inclusion.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have policies and procedures in place regarding challenges to books or curricula.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reframe dress codes to describe what the school considers appropriate clothing without assigning clothing options to genders.</li> </ul>
	Student Records and Student Information Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review parent/guardian forms allowing them to specify their relationship to the child regardless of gender.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow families to specify a child’s gender marker, preferred name, and pronoun.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review forms used in your school that include children’s names or pronouns such as attendance records or class lists to ensure accurate names and gender are used.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure privacy for transgender students. Clarify who has access to records.</li> </ul>
RELATIONAL APPROACHES	Inclusive Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop classroom messages that emphasize “All children can...”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive phrases to address your class – students, children, or scholars.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Group students in ways that do not rely on gender – table groups, letters in their names, colors of their clothes...</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be a role model! Give examples of how you or people you know like to do things outside of gender stereotypes. Model gender diversity in your own manner of expression.</li> </ul>
	Individualized Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Let students know that you see their strengths and that you can appreciate their unique qualities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage students to find activities that they enjoy and that respect their interests. This helps children develop social connections.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Honor the name and the pronouns that a student uses.</li> </ul>
	Stopping Gender-Based Bullying and Teasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interrupt student comments based on gender stereotypes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stop hurtful teasing and bullying based on gender put-downs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure there is appropriate supervision of hallways, playgrounds, and cafeterias to increase a sense of safety.</li> </ul>
	Ensuring Good Communication with Parents and Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be ready to support families with gender-expansive children. Help parents/guardians see their child’s strengths – academic, artistic, athletic, dramatic, or interpersonal.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold an evening event for parents and caregivers in your school community to help people understand the importance and complexity of gender for children.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> With families, share ways to talk about gender that are affirming, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate.</li> </ul>

## EDUCATE THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES	<b>Lesson Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use lesson plans that help students see, appreciate, and understand one another as individuals.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use lesson plans that help children identify gender stereotyping and limits such as examining popular culture, advertising, picture books, or toys for children.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss and practice ways students can stop gender stereotyping and put-downs in school.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Teach ways for students to be an ally and stick up for one another.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate gender topics into the curriculum through story problems, writing prompts, readings, art assignments, or music.</li></ul>
	<b>Classroom Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Read books that encourage discussion of gender assumptions, and that challenge gender stereotypes and limits</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide role models through books—biographies or fictional—that show a wide range of occupations and achievements for all genders.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Invite guest speakers who expand the vision of ways to achieve and thrive that are gender expansive.</li></ul>







Source: Welcoming Schools and Human Rights Campaign Foundation<sup>38</sup>

## CREATE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STRUCTURES

School support staff should help create safe spaces for transgender, non-binary and other members of the LGBTQIA+ community to discuss issues they are experiencing at school. Students should feel comfortable addressing any barriers to learning or safety and accessibility experienced in their environment. Safe spaces may consist of counselors’ offices or designated classrooms where youth can receive support from staff.<sup>39</sup> Safe spaces must provide an opportunity for students to discuss and address topics such as access to restroom and locker facilities, athletic participation, dress code, or the documentation of student information.<sup>40</sup>

Counselors, social workers, and psychologists can also set up regular check-ins with students who require consistent support.<sup>41</sup> Following check-ins, staff can use an internal checklist to informally monitor what supports are provided to each gender-diverse student and additional actions that the school staff can take to increase family and school support structures.<sup>42</sup>




Figure 5: Components of Gender-Inclusive Schools

 <p><b>ATHLETICS/PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b></p>	 <p><b>SCHOOL FACILITIES</b></p>	 <p><b>STUDENT NAME CHANGE/DOCUMENTATION</b></p>
<p>Students should not be grouped by gender. If an athletic activity is separated by gender, students should be able to participate on a team aligned with their gender identity.</p>	<p>Students should have access to the restroom or locker room that corresponds to their gender identity. Schools should also have at least one all-gender restroom or changing area available to all students. Transgender and non-binary students should not be required to use this facility.</p>	<p>Staff should support students in identifying the resources and personnel to assist them in changing documentation for name or gender changes. This may include changes across student identification (ID) cards, email addresses, transcripts, standardized tests, and other school forms.</p>
 <p><b>DRESS CODE/CLOTHING</b></p>	 <p><b>FIELD TRIPS</b></p>	 <p><b>SCHOOL ACTIVITIES</b></p>
<p>Dress code policies for the classroom or physical education class should not be gendered (e.g., girls must wear x and boys must wear x). Staff should also advocate for objective enforcement of dress code policies, as certain genders are often targeted due to biases.</p>	<p>Staff should consider gender divisions and accessible facilities when taking students on day field trips. If students can attend overnight field trips, staff should ensure that all genders have privacy and personal space. Staff can ask transgender or non-binary students for their preferred accommodations.</p>	<p>School activities and traditions should model inclusive messaging and encourage the participation of gender-diverse youth. School staff can advocate for updating activities and establishing new school traditions that actively encourage participation from all genders.</p>

Source: Madison Metropolitan School District<sup>43</sup>

## CREATE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS

Figure 6: Considerations for Creating a Safe Space

	<p><b>When a transgender or non-binary student enters the room, what nonverbal clues do they receive that let them know they are safe?</b></p> <p>This could include the environment or non-verbal gestures (i.e., posture and demeanor).</p>
	<p><b>How does your environment signal safety and belonging for all genders?</b></p> <p>Signals can be big or small: pronoun pins on a lanyard, display of LGBTQIA+ children's literature, posters of gender diverse historical figures.</p>
	<p><b>How do you model the behavior you expect of your students to create a welcoming space?</b></p> <p>Support or discomfort about transgender people is communicated just as clearly through silence as it is through words of affirmation. Staff must use the student's chosen or affirmed name and pronouns consistently.</p>

Source: Teach For America<sup>44</sup>

**School support staff should also facilitate the creation of gender support plans and assist in carrying them out.** For example, transgender students may come to support staff in the designated safe spaces and staff can initiate this process based on the student's needs. Gender support plans provide documentation outlining a shared understanding of how the school will support and account for a student's authentic gender. Support staff, students, and families can complete the documentation and planning together, although the student should be able to identify who they are comfortable involving in the process.<sup>45</sup> Gender support plans include the following components:<sup>46</sup>

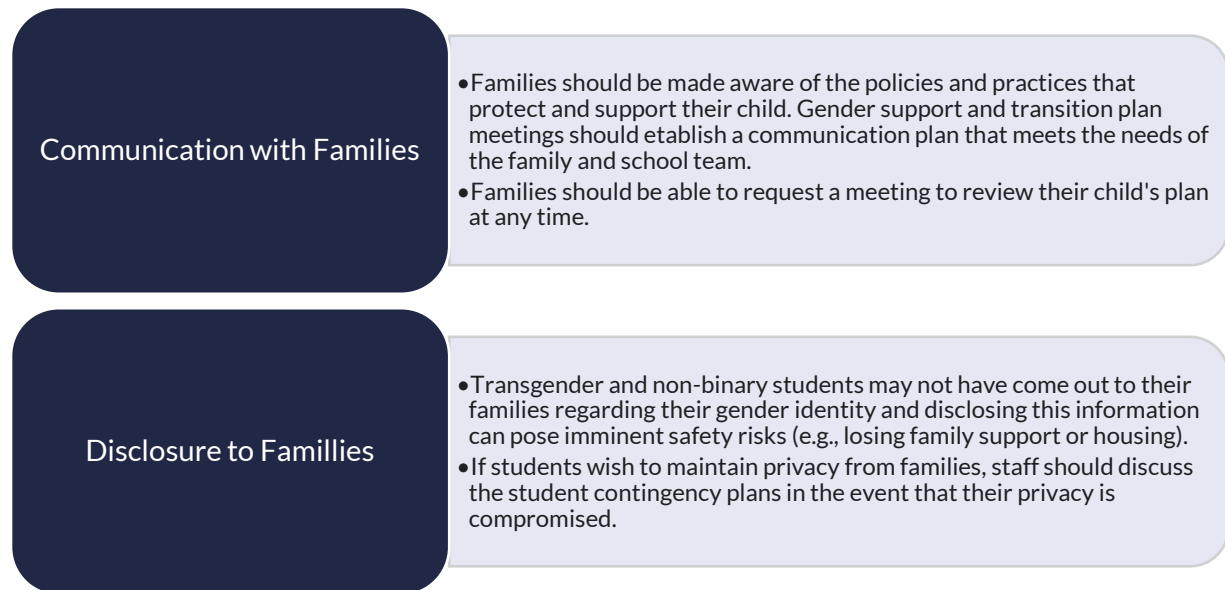
- Student's gender identity, name, and pronouns;
- Level of privacy desired;
- Staff communication and communication to peers;
- Key contacts at home and at school;
- Curriculum considerations;
- Access to restrooms, locker rooms, and other school activities and facilities;
- District policies and guidance that support transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive youth; and
- Staff professional development.

A [Gender Support Plan Template](#) can be found on pp. 21-23 of this toolkit to help guide support staff through the process. The [Gender Support Checklist](#) on p. 24 will help support staff monitor the implementation of family and school supports for each gender-diverse student.

In addition to gender support plans, school staff should leverage gender transition plans to formally support a student's transition of gender and identify specific actions for the students, family, and school to carry out. Gender transition plans can outline staff training, transition announcements and communication plans based on the student's specific situation and needs. For both gender support plans and transition plans, school staff must consider and develop communication and disclosure processes with families.<sup>47</sup> A [Gender Transition Plan Template](#) can be found on pp. 25-27 of this toolkit to help support staff coordinate and monitor social-emotional and logistical components of a student's formal gender transition.

## CREATE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS

Figure 7: Family Communication for Gender Support and Transition Plans






Source: Madison Metropolitan School District<sup>48</sup>

School support staff can organize “gender support teams” consisting of counselors, social workers, psychologists, teachers, families, therapists, and supportive peer allies designated to carry out the student’s gender support or transition plan. The gender support teams should review plans regularly (e.g., annually, quarterly) and update them as necessary. Gender support and transition plans should not be included in students’ permanent records but may be placed in temporary records.<sup>49</sup>

**School support staff can facilitate and encourage school clubs and groups that are gender-affirming and provide opportunities for peer support (e.g., gay-straight alliances, or gender and sexuality alliances).**<sup>50</sup> These clubs can help students meet and connect with other transgender and non-binary students and provide safe spaces to talk about issues they face in school and in the wider community.<sup>51</sup> Staff can also model inclusive messaging when promoting clubs and extracurricular activities that are not already gender-affirming. Support staff should work with club leaders to review materials and policies to ensure they are inclusive of gender-diverse youth.<sup>52</sup>

Figure 8: Examples of Inclusive Messaging for Student Activities

	Encourage all genders to participate in ultimate frisbee
	Hand out the karate club flyer to all students, not just the boys (even if the host organization asks you to send flyers out to “boys”)
	A poster that is representative of diverse students to promote math club

Source: Madison Metropolitan School District<sup>53</sup>



**GENDER SUPPORT PLAN TEMPLATE**

**Directions:** School support staff (i.e., counselors, social workers, psychologists) use this template to identify and monitor specific procedures to support gender diverse students.

**Basic Student Information:**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student's Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student's Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Assigned Sex at Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sibling(s)/Grade(s) and School(s): \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting participants: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Involvement:**

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are guardian(s) of this student aware of their child's gender identity? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
 Are guardian(s) of this student supportive of their child's gender identity? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
 If not, what considerations must be accounted for in implementing this plan?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Confidentiality, Privacy, and Disclosure:**

How public or private will information about this student's gender be? (check all that apply)  
 District staff will be aware (i.e., superintendent, student support services, district psychologist)  
 Specify the adult staff members: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Site-level leadership/administration will know (i.e., principal, head of school, counselor)  
 Specify the adult staff members: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teachers and/or other school staff will know  
 Specify the adult staff members: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student will not be openly "out" but some students are aware of the student's gender  
 Specify the students: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student is open with others (i.e., adults and peers) about gender  
 Other: Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
 If the student has asserted a degree of privacy, what are the expectations of the institution if that privacy is compromised? How will a teacher/staff member respond to questions about the student's gender from:  
 Other students? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Staff members? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents/community? \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Safety:**

Who will be the student's "go-to adult" on campus? \_\_\_\_\_  
 If this person is not available, what should the student do? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What will be the process, if any, for periodically checking in with the student and/or family?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 What are the expectations in the event the student is feeling unsafe and how will student signal the need for help:  
 During class: \_\_\_\_\_  
 During recess/outside: \_\_\_\_\_

## CREATE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS

In the hallways: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other safety concerns/Questions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Names, Pronouns, and Student Records:**

Name/gender marker entered into the student information system: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name to be used when referring to the student \_\_\_\_\_ Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_  
Can the student's preferred name and gender marker be reflected in the student information system? \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_  
If not, what adjustments can be made to protect this student's privacy? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who will be the point person for ensuring these adjustments are made and communicated as needed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How will instances be handled in which the incorrect name or pronoun is used? \_\_\_\_\_  
How will the student's privacy be accounted for and maintained in the following situations or contexts:  
During registrations: \_\_\_\_\_  
Completing enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_  
With substitute teachers: \_\_\_\_\_  
Standardized tests: \_\_\_\_\_  
School photos: \_\_\_\_\_  
IEPs/Other services: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student cumulative file: \_\_\_\_\_  
Afterschool programs: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lunch lines: \_\_\_\_\_  
Taking attendance: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher grade books: \_\_\_\_\_  
Official school-home communication: \_\_\_\_\_  
Unofficial school-home communication (PTA/other): \_\_\_\_\_  
Outside district personnel or providers: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summons to the office: \_\_\_\_\_  
Yearbook: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student ID/library cards: \_\_\_\_\_  
Posted lists: \_\_\_\_\_  
Distribution of texts or other school supplies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assignment of IT accounts: \_\_\_\_\_  
PA announcements: \_\_\_\_\_  
What are some other ways the school needs to anticipate information about this student's preferred name and gender marker potentially being compromised? How will these be handled? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Use of Facilities:**

Student will use the following restroom(s) on campus: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student will change clothes in the following place(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
If the student has questions/concerns about facilities, who will be the contact person? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are the expectations regarding the use of facilities for any class trips? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are the expectations regarding rooming for any overnight trips? \_\_\_\_\_  
Are there any questions or concerns about the student's access to facilities? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CREATE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS

### **Extracurricular Activities:**

Does the student participate in an afterschool program? \_\_\_\_\_

What steps will be necessary for supporting the student there? \_\_\_\_\_

In what extracurricular programs or activities will the student be participating (i.e., sports, theater, clubs)? \_\_\_\_\_

What steps will be necessary to support the student there? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Other Considerations:**

Are there any specific social dynamics with other students, families, or staff members that need to be discussed or accounted for? \_\_\_\_\_

If the student has siblings at school, what factors should be considered regarding siblings' needs? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the school have a dress code? \_\_\_\_\_ How will this be handled? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there lessons, units, content, or other activities coming up to consider (e.g., growth and development, social justice units, name projects, dance instruction, Pride events, school dances)? \_\_\_\_\_

What training will the school engage in to build capacity for working with gender-expansive students? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any other questions, concerns, or issues to discuss? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Support Plan Review and Revision:**

How will this plan be monitored over time? \_\_\_\_\_

What will be the process should the student, family, or school wish to revisit any aspects of the plan (or seek additions to the plan)? \_\_\_\_\_

What are follow-up action items emerging from this meeting and who is responsible for them?

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline




Date and time of next meeting or check-in: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Multiple<sup>54</sup>



## GENDER SUPPORT CHECKLIST

**Directions:** School support staff or staff on gender support teams use this checklist to internally monitor the implementation of family and school supports for each gender-diverse student.

<p><b>FAMILY SUPPORT</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does this student have affirming family members?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the student currently affirmed by some adults in their home life, if not all?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do appropriate staff know how to communicate with the family while protecting the student's well-being? (Every situation is unique.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Has the school connected the family to local resources such as transgender or non-binary parent support groups? (Do this only if this is safe for the student. Always ask the student about family dynamics.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCHOOL SUPPORT</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Has the school designated one or two primary support people for the student who will check in with them at least once a week?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Has there been professional development planned for the staff without violating the student's privacy?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are the staff aware of policies and procedures to support transgender and non-binary students?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are staff aware of anti-bullying and harassment policies?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Who would follow through and develop a plan if bullying or harassment occurred?</li> </ul>
<p><b>GENDERED FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Which restroom(s) will the student use?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the student need support around where to change clothes for physical education? What locker room will the student use?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will a staff member coordinate support for field trips and/or overnight school trips?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will a staff member support the student in being fully included in gendered sports aligned with their gender identity?</li> </ul>

Source: Welcoming Schools Human Rights Campaign Foundation<sup>55</sup>



## GENDER TRANSITION PLAN TEMPLATE

**Directions:** School support staff fill out this template as part of the planning process for coordinating and monitoring social-emotional and logistical components of a student’s formal gender transition.

**Basic Student Information:**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student’s Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student’s Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_ Assigned Sex at Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sibling(s)/Grade(s) and School(s): \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting participants: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the nature of the student’s transition (male-to-female, female-to-male, a shift in gender expression, other)?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

How urgent is the student’s need to transition? Is the child currently experiencing distress regarding their gender?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Involvement:**

Parent/Guardian Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are guardian(s) of this student aware of their child’s gender transition? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
 Are guardian(s) of this student supportive of their child’s gender transition? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
 If not, what considerations must be accounted for in implementing this plan? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Transition Details:**

What is the specific information that will be conveyed to other students (be specific)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 What requests will be made? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 With whom and when will this information be shared?  
 With peers in the transitioning student’s class only Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 With peers in the student’s grade level Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 With some/all students at school (specify): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who will lead the lessons/activities framing the student’s announcement? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What will the lesson/activities be? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Will the student be present for the lesson/sharing of info about the transition? \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, what, if any, role does the student want to play in the process? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Once the information is shared, what parameters/expectations will be set regarding approaching the student?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other notes, considerations, or questions: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## CREATE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS

### **Key Decisions Prior to the Student's Transition:**

#### **Communications with Other Families**

Will any sort of information be shared with other families about the student's transition? \_\_\_\_\_

With whom: \_\_\_\_\_ Families in child's grade \_\_\_\_\_ Whole school \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Who will be responsible for creating this? \_\_\_\_\_ When will it be sent? \_\_\_\_\_

How will it be distributed? \_\_\_\_\_

What specific information will be shared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Training for School Staff**

Will there be specific training about this student's transition with school staff? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will be conducting the training? \_\_\_\_\_ What will be the content of the training? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Parent Information Night About Gender Diversity**

Will there be any specific training for school community members? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will conduct it? \_\_\_\_\_ Will it reference the student's transition? \_\_\_\_\_

What will be the content of the training? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Class Meeting with Parents**

Will there be any meeting with the families of the transition student's peers? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will lead the meeting? \_\_\_\_\_ Who will be attending the meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

What will be the purpose for this meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Identifying and Enlisting Parent Allies**

Are there any parents/adults in the community you would like to enlist in support of the child's transition? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

When will you speak with them? \_\_\_\_\_ What will be your request? \_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Identifying and Enlisting Peer Allies**

Are there other students in the community you would like to enlist in support of the child's transition? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

When will you speak with them? \_\_\_\_\_ What will be your request? \_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Siblings**

Does the student have any siblings at the school? \_\_\_\_\_ What needs to be considered for them?

Training in their classroom(s)? \_\_\_\_\_ Emotional Support? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## CREATE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS

**Timeline:**

Which of the following will take place in relation to this student's gender transition? When will it occur, and who will be responsible for making it happen?

Activity	<u>Date</u>	<u>Lead</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Initial planning meeting	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lessons/activities with other students	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications with other families	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Training for school staff	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent information night about gender diversity	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Class meeting with parents	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifying and enlisting parent allies	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifying and enlisting peer allies	_____	_____

What are the specific follow-up action items emerging from this meeting, and who is responsible for them?

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline

Source: American Civil Liberties Union, Gender Spectrum, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, National Center for Lesbian Rights, and National Education Association<sup>56</sup>

## COMPILE PUBLIC RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

School support staff should compile resources for students, family members, and other allies to learn more about gender diversity and find support outside of the school context. Many families and community members struggle to understand what diverse gender identities mean for children and their allies.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, many children who are considering transitioning or exploring their gender identity require additional information to continue exploring and gain a support system. In addition, families and students can learn about the legal implications of transitioning and gender-based rights within schools and the community. When students and allies know the laws in their state of residence, they can advocate to be treated equally and uphold their rights at school.<sup>58</sup>

Resources to support families can help adults understand the impacts of family rejection or acceptance on a child's well-being and increase opportunities to "find practical steps for advancing acceptance."<sup>59</sup> Each family situation is unique, and students come from diverse family backgrounds; therefore, support staff must provide resources for specific family audiences (e.g., Latinx families, families of faith).<sup>60</sup> Staff should not place blame on families' cultural backgrounds for their lack of support. Instead, support staff can provide resources that meet families where they are in the process of acceptance and understanding gender diversity. School support staff should offer resources in the family's native language and seek guidance from gender-diverse educators or staff from a similar background as the family.<sup>61</sup>

Many families of transgender and non-binary children and the children themselves are vulnerable to internalizing negative portrayals of transgender and non-binary people in the media. Indeed, some families that fear for their child's safety may appear to be showing signs of rejection or mistreatment. Support staff can provide resources to help families deal with these fears and take steps to get support for themselves and their children. Students should also have access to resources to find support groups and identify with positive portrayals of gender-diverse peers and adults.<sup>62</sup>

School support staff can direct students to resources based on the topic of interest or issue they are facing. For example, some students may be experiencing physical or mental health challenges whereas other students seek to develop a peer support network within the LGBTQIA+ community.<sup>63</sup> School psychologists and counselors, and other support personnel should maintain and update a list of local organizations offering LGBTQIA+ services. **Staff should direct students and families to these specific community-based providers that can offer more specialized support beyond those available at school** (e.g., pediatric health groups, local chapters of national advocacy organizations).<sup>64</sup>

To assist in helping school support staff direct students and their families to appropriate resources outside of the school, the [Repository of National Resource](#) sheet, p. 29, provides links, intended audiences, and topics for relevant sources. Support staff should add to this list as they discover more that would be appropriate for their population.

### Learn More

Watch the following videos to learn more about the challenges of gender-diverse individuals and ways to support them:

- ["How to Be a Better Trans Ally"](#) – Tyler Oakley
- ["Challenges faced by transgender, non-binary, or genderqueer people today"](#) – Pride in London
- ["What health and mental health challenges do LGBT+ people face today?"](#) – Pride in London



## REPOSITORY OF NATIONAL RESOURCES

**Directions:** School support staff should refer students, families, school personnel, and community members to various resources on gender diversity and support. Staff should maintain a comprehensive list of resources for various school community members across different gender and sexuality topics to easily identify relevant resources for each individual or group seeking support.

RESOURCE	AUDIENCE	TOPICS
<a href="#">Movement Advancement Project Family Support Resources</a> <sup>65</sup>	Families of transgender and gender diverse children, including specific resources for Asian and Pacific Islander, Black and African-American, Latinx, and families of faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transgender youth and challenges they face</li> <li>Importance of family acceptance</li> <li>Steps to support transgender youth</li> <li>Resources for specific audiences/demographics</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Center for Disease Control and Prevention: LGBT Youth Resources</a> <sup>66</sup>	Gender diverse youth, peers, educators, school administrators, and family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and life outcomes of LGBT individuals</li> <li>Bullying and aggressions prevention and support</li> <li>Family acceptance and rejection</li> </ul>
<a href="#">National Center for Transgender Equality: School Action Center</a> <sup>67</sup>	School leaders and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policies and practices to support transgender students</li> <li>State and federal guidance</li> <li>List of organizations supporting transgender students</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation LGBTQ Resource List</a> <sup>68</sup>	All school community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource lists/links to organizations and websites with LGBTQ information</li> <li>Resources are divided across topics: general, political, bisexual, youth, military, transgender, aging, and legal</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Gender Spectrum</a> <sup>69</sup>	Families, youth, educators, social service professionals, medical and mental health professionals, youth development, sports, and camp leaders, and faith communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informational resources for all audiences</li> <li>Online groups, programs, and consulting for support</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Stop Bullying Laws and Policies for LGBTQI+ Youth</a> <sup>70</sup>	Students, families, school officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlines the federal civil rights laws for harassment of LGBTQI+ youth</li> <li>Steps for schools to take to address harassment</li> </ul>

Source: Multiple sources cited in the figure

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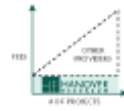
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