



## **Updated DRAFT Guidelines for Support of Transgender Students in Schools (November 2020)**

\*\*\* Guidelines should remain an internal document to provide staff details and application of Policy/PIP. The document is dynamic that can be revised to meet current practices/legislation/science, etc..

The J-2 Transgender Policy Implementation Procedures (PIP) Guidelines have been updated to reflect public comments and feedback from school principals and staff as per School Board direction during PIP development (June 2019).

We have highlighted the key comment themes here for your convenience as reflected in the updated guidelines below:

- Students must be able to access single user restrooms that are conveniently located.
- Students must be permitted to wear outfits/uniforms that reflect their gender identity for all performances.
- VHSL and VASRA rules and regulations, not APS, determine participation in and eligibility for VHSL and VASRA events.
- Parents should be notified if there is a chance their child would be roomed with a transgender child so that they can request an accommodation.
- Instructions should be included for how registrars and/or parents can update name and pronouns by referring to the First Day packed field for Self-Designated Gender and/or for making changes in Synergy.
- Gender should be omitted from class lists, class schedules, report cards and other APS documents that are not official.

### **Supports for Students Who Transition During the School Year**

A student who transitions during the school year works with the Principal, School Counselor, trusted adults and others to ensure the transition plan is inclusive and appropriately managed to ensure student confidentiality and/or to assist the student and their family in managing communications within the student's classrooms and among teachers/staff. For example, specific staff members (i.e. librarians, nurses, PE staff, RTGs, etc. ) who work with all students in the school building should be kept informed about the gender transition in order to be supportive of the student.

### **Bathrooms and Locker Rooms**

#### **Bathrooms**

Students are permitted to use the same bathrooms as their peers, unless they request alternative accommodations. Transgender students should have access to the same bathrooms that matches their gender identity. All bathrooms should allow access to sanitary products and trash receptacles. Students must be able to access a single-user bathroom that is conveniently located. Please identify



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single-user bathrooms at your school by providing specific signage on doors showing bathrooms are available to students. Bathrooms will be accessible to students without special codes or keys. Please advise all students that these bathrooms are available for their use.

## **Locker Rooms**

Schools will maintain separate locker room facilities for male and female students. However, all students must have access to the locker room facility that corresponds to their gender identity. If there is a request for increased privacy, students will communicate with their school staff and *any* student will be offered access to a reasonable accommodation, such as:

- A separate changing schedule (the opportunity to change at a different time than other students)
- Use of a private area in the locker facility (e.g., a bathroom stall with a door or an area separated by a curtain)
- Assignment of student locker in close proximity to staff office.

## **Dress Codes**

Schools may enforce dress codes, but any dress code must be gender neutral. Students must have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the dress codes adopted by the school.

Gender neutral dress code guidelines apply to regular school days as well as any special events, such as all performance events (i.e., music, concerts) graduation ceremonies and prom. For example, schools may require formal attire for all students at a ceremony but may not specify that girls must wear dresses and boys must wear ties.

## **Extracurricular Activities or Athletic Events**

All students will have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity, regardless of the gender listed on a student's records or identification documents.

## **Clubs**

Per PIP 1-7.4.1.31, "Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities", clubs "will grow out of class activities and should be developed to foster the interests and discover the aptitudes of all pupils enrolled in the school."

"Each secondary school will conduct a club program which includes those activities that interest the students of that school, are appropriate for the age level concerned, can be supported by the staff resources of that school, and promise a significant educational return."

## **Athletics**

Athletic participation regulated by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) and the Virginia Scholastic Rowing Association (VASRA) as well middle school athletics, will follow rules outlined by that



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organization. Students will work with their athletic administrators to comply with these organizations' regulations.

## **Extended Instructional Field Trips**

In no case should a transgender, non-binary or gender nonconforming student be denied the right to participate in an overnight field trip because of the student's transgender or non-binary identity or gender nonconforming presentation. Students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity or in a manner that makes them feel safe, affirmed, and included.

Accommodations should be provided to non-binary students and students questioning their gender identity, regardless of whether the student is consistently asserting at school. The specific accommodations should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and in a manner consistent with the student's support plan (if a student support plan exists) and that allows the student to feel safe, affirmed, and included.

The principal or trusted adult staff member will work with the student to determine the accommodations that will be provided, including hotel and room-sharing arrangements, based on the particular circumstances of the trip. Sleeping arrangements will be discussed with staff, the student and family (if the family is supportive of the student). Upon request, the student will be provided with an alternative sleeping area.

A student's transgender status is confidential information and school staff members should not disclose a student's transgender status as it relates to a field trip without the consent of the student and/or the student's parent/guardian. APS honors advance requests for roommate preference without regard to the particular reason. For example, this would include a request by a student or a parent for assignment of a roommate of the same birth gender.

## **Names and Pronouns**

See definitions of gender pronouns in glossary

Students have the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to the student's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is **not** required, and the student does not need to change their official records.

Schools are required to maintain a permanent student record for each student which includes their legal name and gender of the student. For instance, schools are required to use the legal name and gender formal student's permanent record, such as for standardized tests or reports to the Virginia Department of Education.

In order to make a change in official records, a student's parent/legal guardian may make a request in writing to the school administrator for any updates to preferred name and/or gender. Once



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approved and the school registrar will capture the legal information and update first, middle and last name, and gender accordingly. It will take 24-48 hours to replicate in most APS systems. Some systems (though few) may require the legal information to be provided instead of the student's preferred name/gender.

Parents may also enter a student's preferred name in "Name Goes By" and preferred gender in "Identified Gender" as part of the annual online verification process through the Student Information System's Parent Portal. (Please note that Synergy cannot capture pronouns at this time, but will be included in the conversation for updates for next year). Students and staff may designate their preferred identity pronouns using a feature in our Learning Management System (Canvas) as well.

See **Synergy Guidelines for Name and Gender Updates**

[https://apsva-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/bob\\_weaver\\_apsva\\_us/EU0TZa20VGIaGc\\_VfX\\_-01oBcPHS2InyNZ6ME0HXiS8N4Q?e=OeIJCc](https://apsva-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/bob_weaver_apsva_us/EU0TZa20VGIaGc_VfX_-01oBcPHS2InyNZ6ME0HXiS8N4Q?e=OeIJCc)

Transgender and gender---nonconforming students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity openly and decide when to share information, with whom, and how much to share. When contacting the parent or guardian of a transgender or gender---nonconforming student, school staff will use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's sex assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise.

\*When students are applying for college, ensure students are aware that their legal name will be on official legal documents like transcripts.

\*Selective Service bases the registration requirement on gender assigned at birth and not on gender identity or on gender reassignment. Individuals who are born male and changed their gender to female are still required to register. Individuals who are born female and changed their gender to male are not required to register.

## **Instruction**

No specific lessons or standards related to gender identity or transgender exist within the Virginia Standards of Learning and the APS FLE or Health curriculum.

Staff has access to and will utilize instructional materials that represent diverse students, including transgender students. Content offices will provide guidance related to best practices in the presentation and use of resources. Each school's library collection has been curated to reflect all students and the broader community; these guidelines do not impact access to the library materials. Lessons taught by counselors use broad language that appreciates differences in general and utilizes books that broadly address gender identity issues.

## **Educational and Classroom Records**

Please note that the name in the database is part of an official educational record and is therefore



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covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), meaning that if a parent or guardian requests access to see their student's records, they will have access to the student's preferred name.

If a student transitioning at school is not ready to share with their family about their transgender status, this will be respected. In this scenario, school staff will make a change socially, calling the students by the preferred name, while their official record in the Student Information System remains the same.

Generally, if a student wishes for their name to be changed at school, despite whether or not a student's parent/guardian has brought in a legal name change, all unofficial records should reflect their preferred name as systems will allow. Examples of unofficial school documents include yearbooks, team and class rosters, and newspapers/newsletters.

## **Response to refusal to comply with above guidelines**

Standard 6 of the APS Teacher Evaluation Process requires that teachers collaborate and communicate effectively within the school community to promote students' well-being and success. Complying with directives within these guidelines is evidence of promoting students' well-being and success.

Per the APS Handbook, students "should understand the importance of learning and the need for mutual respect in their learning environment. For those specific students whose behavior interferes with a positive learning environment or who experience difficulty following clear expectations, disciplinary actions may be necessary."

## **Reference:**

Link to Policy: [J-2 Student Equal Educational Opportunities-Nondiscrimination](#)

Link to PIP: [J-2 PIP Transgender Students in Schools](#)



## Glossary of Terms

The definitions provided here are not exhaustive or intended to label students but rather to assist in understanding these guidelines and the legal obligations of Arlington Public School's staff and students. Students might or might not use these terms to describe themselves.

**Sex assigned at birth:** A label a person is given at birth, often based on a medical professional's identification.

**Gender Identity:** The deeply held sense that individuals have of their gender, regardless of the sex they were assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity. Common examples may include "male/man/boy," "female/woman/girl," "non-binary," "agender," "trans/transgender," "gender expansive," "gender nonconforming," any combination of these terms or something else. interpretation of the newborn's physical characteristics. Common examples may be "male", "female", or "intersex". This is typically the sex reflected on one's original birth certificate. one's sense of self as male, female, or an alternative gender that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth

**Gender Expression:** An individual's characteristics and behaviors such as appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions that are perceived as masculine or feminine.

**Non-binary:** A term used to describe people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify as a gender other than male or female, as more than one gender, or as no gender.

**Intersex:** A general term for a person born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions of either male or female. People who are intersex are usually assigned male or female sexes at birth. Some, but by no means all, students who are intersex may identify their gender or express their gender in ways that are captured by these Guidelines' definitions of Transgender or Gender Nonconforming.

**Questioning:** Being unsure of and/or exploring your gender identity, your sexual orientation, or both. Many people go through stages of questioning as they learn new words that fit them better or as their feelings change over time.

**Gender Pronouns:** Transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming students may wish to use a different set of gender pronouns than the pronouns associated with their sex assigned at birth. The set of pronouns that an individual would like others to use when referring to that individual. Common examples include, "she/her/hers," "he/him/his," "they/them/theirs," and "ze/zir/zirs." These are sometimes called "affirmed gender pronouns" or "preferred gender pronouns." Staff



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should always use the gender pronouns which affirm a student's gender identity.

**Transition:** The process for individuals to begin living as their affirmed gender identity. Transitioning may be social (changing gender expression, accessing facilities, using a different name/pronouns), medical (hormones and/or surgeries), and/or legal (changing name/gender marker on identity documents). Transitions are different for every individual and it is increasingly common for gender transition to be fluid, meaning that gender expression may vary from day to day.

**Sexual Orientation:** an enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction that one feels toward other people

**Transgender:** an umbrella term used to describe individuals whose gender identity, expression, or behavior does not conform with that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Please note that transgender is an adjective not a noun.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** (also known as Gender Expansive, Gender Variant, or Gender Creative): A term that refers to individuals whose gender expression does not follow traditional or societal expectations or stereotypes based on their sex assigned at birth. Keep in mind that these expectations can vary across cultures and have changed over time. A person who does not adhere to societal pressures to conform to gender norms and roles.