



# *BENDING THE MOLD*

*AN ACTION KIT FOR TRANSGENDER STUDENTS*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	1
How Does Your School Measure Up? . . . . .	4
How to Be a Transgender Ally . . . . .	5
Your Social Change Toolkit . . . . .	6
Preventing Violence and Bullying . . . . .	8
Securing Freedom of Gender Expression . . . . .	10
Promoting Transgender-Inclusive Policies . . . . .	12
Building Community and Fighting Invisibility . . . . .	14
Protecting Confidentiality . . . . .	16
Making Bathrooms & Locker Rooms Accessible . . . . .	18
Fighting for Equality in Sports Teams . . . . .	20
Accessing Health Care . . . . .	22
Glossary . . . . .	24
Resources . . . . .	26
Appendix: Sample Model School Policy . . . . .	30

A joint publication by Lambda Legal and the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)

Dedicated to Lawrence King, 1993-2008, whose memory inspires us to keep building a world in which gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming youth can live freely and without fear.

# BENDING THE MOLD

## AN ACTION KIT FOR TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

Transgender and gender-nonconforming students come out every day all over the country, and they deserve to be treated with respect and fairness. Some schools are already supportive of gay, lesbian and bisexual students, but need more education around transgender issues. Other schools discourage diversity in both sexual orientation and gender identity, and suppress or punish certain forms of gender expression. But transgender people of all ages are steadily organizing, advocating and winning legal battles, and those victories are strengthening our successes in the classroom. Transgender and gender-nonconforming youth are a key part of the transgender rights movement, and momentum is building. Our voices can be heard everywhere.

At the same time, violence against transgender and gender-nonconforming

students is an ever-present danger. The February 12, 2008 shooting of Lawrence King, a gender-nonconforming junior high school student in Oxnard, California, was a tragic reminder of the hate and fear that still haunt us.

Whether you're transgender or gender-nonconforming, questioning or an ally, this kit is designed to help you make your school a safer place. We've included ideas and information to help you advocate for change. There's also an extensive list of resources to help you connect with the transgender community and find support.

Our rights are most valuable when we know about them and use them. Use the information in this kit to get started, and reach out to each other — and Lambda Legal — for help. The world is changing, one voice at a time.

A May 2007 Gallup poll found that 68 percent of people are in favor of expanding federal hate crimes laws to cover sexual orientation, gender and gender identity.

*In Focus: Hate Crimes, Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)*

The total number of victims reporting anti-LGBTQ violence in 2007 was 2,430. Two hundred and eighty-eight (16%) of the total incidents reported in 2007 were, in whole or in part, transgender-specific.

*Anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Violence in 2007, A Report of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, [www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org)*



## SOME POTENTIAL SOURCES OF LEGAL PROTECTION

State or local statutes in your jurisdiction may ban educational discrimination or bullying on the basis of gender identity. Other state or local protections may outlaw discrimination on the basis of sex or perceived sexual orientation, prohibit discrimination in places of public accommodation (like schools in some instances and other places like restaurants or shopping centers) or protect privacy.

Federal statutes, including the Equal Access Act or Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 (which bans sex discrimination in education), may provide protections.

The U.S. Constitution offers a host of protections, including the right to equal

protection of the laws, the right to free expression and the right to due process. Your state constitution may have similar or stronger provisions. Schools and other government bodies must present valid reasons for treating one group differently from another before they can infringe on these important rights.

Instead of resorting to lawsuits, which can take years, most transgender students resolve school problems through negotiation. There is no one-size-fits-all formula for addressing any given scenario involving discrimination, and there is no way to know what legal remedies might be available without consulting the laws in your jurisdiction. See page 13 for more information on where to start looking.

# BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Although this toolkit focuses on the problems transgender and gender-nonconforming youth face in schools, a host of other challenges exist outside the classroom. Too often, transgender youth are kicked out of their homes after they come out to their family, or endure mental or physical abuse that may lead them to run away from home. Homeless transgender youth may discover that shelters don't respect their gender identity. Mistreatment in foster care placements and juvenile justice facilities is common. Problems with police harassment; discrimination in employment, housing and public benefits; and trouble obtaining identity documents bearing the correct information may create yet more hardships. Transgender youth facing these and related problems are encouraged to consult the Resources list at the end of this toolkit and to contact Lambda Legal for assistance.



# HOW DOES YOUR SCHOOL MEASURE UP?

The following questions will help you measure how effectively your school supports transgender youth. If you are not sure of the answers, check with teachers, your principal or your school board. If your school doesn't measure up, you may wish to contact Lambda Legal, NYAC or one of the other organizations listed in Resources on page 26.



Has your school published guidelines to promote the respectful treatment of transgender students?

Are gender identity and expression included in your school's nondiscrimination policy?

Do faculty and staff members respect and honor students' gender identity and expression?

Are teachers, counselors and staff trained on transgender issues?

Does your school hold assemblies and/or invite guest speakers to discuss transgender issues?

If there is a school dress code, does it respect gender identity?

Do school records, identification cards, class rosters and transcripts reflect transgender students' gender identity and preferred name?

Do counselors provide helpful resources and referrals?

Are students allowed to express their gender at events like school dances, field trips and graduation?

Do students experience prejudice or intimidation due to their gender identity?

Do students know what to do and who to talk to if they're intimidated, threatened or harassed because of their gender identity or expression?

Are restroom facilities safe and accessible for transgender students?

# HOW TO BE A TRANSGENDER ALLY

## DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Don't assume that you can tell what gender a person is, what restroom someone belongs in or what pronoun someone prefers just by looking. If you're not sure, consider asking: "Do you mind if I ask which pronoun you prefer?"

## CREATE A SAFE AND OPEN ENVIRONMENT

Work toward creating an affirming environment where individual gender expression is supported and where there is room for dialogue and discussion. Challenge homophobic and transphobic remarks and jokes. Use inclusive, non-gender-specific language. Support others who challenge inappropriate behavior. "What are you?" or "What genitals do you have?" are never appropriate questions to ask.

## EXAMINE YOUR OWN PRIVILEGE AND BIASES

We live in a society with rigid gender roles, where we're often rewarded for falling squarely in one category or another — male or female, masculine or feminine. We call this a binary system, where any in-between or crossover is either ignored or discouraged, and people who do not fit clearly in one of these categories face discrimination. A person who *does* fit within this binary can rely on their privilege — the privilege of being in a dominant group that is more accepted than the minority — to stifle difference or to ignore hardships the minority group faces. To be a true ally, it helps to notice your comfort level with different types of gender expression and see how this affects your interactions with others. Educate yourself about dismantling privilege and challenging prejudice.

## UNDERSTAND WHAT GENDER IDENTITY MEANS

Each person's gender identity is authentic for that person. Some people have gender identities and expressions that challenge the binary of female and male. Don't be afraid to ask respectful questions of a trusted transgender friend or family member, but remember that transgender people — even your friends and family — are not solely responsible for educating you. Finally, don't forget that gender identity and expression are only two aspects of a whole person.

## WALK THE WALK

Support your friend or family member's gender identity and expression. Volunteer for a transgender rights organization or community group. Admit when you're wrong and don't get defensive. Listen and learn.

# YOUR SOCIAL CHANGE TOOLKIT

## KEEP IN MIND:

Only you can decide how visible and vocal you wish to be. Speaking out about respect for transgender and gender-nonconforming students can lead to increased harassment or discrimination. It can also lead to a greater sense of empowerment and self-respect, and it may lead to changes that make your community safer for you and others. Each person must evaluate the potential risks and rewards in deciding which actions to take.

Start a conversation with parents and teachers about transgender issues.

Hold a community discussion or make a presentation to teachers, staff, the school board or the PTA.

Start a transgender students' group or trans-inclusive GSA to take the lead on transgender issues in your school.

Join or create a coalition with transgender advocacy groups in your community.

Draft a petition to show support for making trans-friendly changes in your school, and submit the petition to the principal or the superintendent.

Become a member of your school board, if it has student members, and create policy yourself.

Advocate for transgender issues with elected officials and school administrators. Call or write a letter to your city council representatives or state legislator and ask for a meeting to discuss transgender rights.

Start a campaign to have your local school board adopt policies and directives for transgender support in school.

Write a letter to the editor, an opinion article and press releases about your activities. Take advantage of free advertising in community listings.

## USE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING IDEAS TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AND OTHER TRANSGENDER AND GENDER-NONCONFORMING YOUTH.

Create a poster campaign to advertise a meeting or rally or to raise awareness about your cause.

Raise money for your transgender education campaign by holding a party or performance, writing a grant proposal or selling artwork.

Distribute information about transgender issues to community members.

Get people together for a town hall meeting or community rally to promote transgender visibility or to protest transphobic policies.

Make T-shirts and give them away in exchange for donations to your campaign.

Write a poem or an article for your school newspaper.

Show a film or documentary about transgender rights, or make one of your own.

Set up an activist email network, start an email petition or join a chat group.

Lobby to change school policies to be inclusive of transgender students.

Hit the road and attend a conference or training on transgender issues. Find out if your school has a fund to help you pay for expenses.

Educate yourself about other forms of oppression, like racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and ableism.





Transgender and gender-nonconforming students are regularly harassed, bullied and otherwise targeted for violence and abuse in school. Research shows that transgender and gender-nonconforming youth are abused in school at disproportionate rates, leading to high numbers of absences and drop-outs in an effort to find safety. Other students are not the only source of abuse; harassment, cruelty and violence are sometimes perpetrated by teachers and staff as well. Your school has a duty to keep you safe, and you have the right to express your gender identity without harm.

Some states that have passed safe schools laws that prohibit bullying on the basis of gender identity (as of 2008) include California, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey and Vermont. Other places have passed gender-identity nondiscrimination laws that apply to education, including Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington State and Washington, D.C. Additional gender-identity protections may exist on the city or county level. But even in states with no such protections, you still have legal rights, and you can still enforce them.

## TAKE ACTION: PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

### 1. GET SAFE

First and foremost, take steps to find physical and emotional safety for yourself. Reach out to sympathetic friends, family, teachers, youth hotlines, community groups or any other source of support you can find. Some potential sources of support are listed in the Resources section.

### 2. REPORT THE ABUSE

School administrators can't take action to end abuse if they don't know about the problem. And the less they know, the less likely that they can be held accountable. Report all forms of abuse to the school principal verbally *and* in writing. Keep track of the dates, locations and details of harassment. Ask about your school's complaint procedures and follow them. Collect names of witnesses to the abuse, and ask them to write detailed and signed statements about what they saw. Keep copies of everything you submit. Also, move up the ladder: If your principal does not respond in a timely or effective manner, contact the superintendent or the school board.

### 3. BE READY WITH SOLUTIONS

School administrators may want to respond to complaints but could be unsure about what to do other than impose discipline that might not be effective. There are a variety of ways to address harassment and discrimination before it happens. Educational materials can be distributed and videotapes can be shown to classes and assemblies. Teachers can promote and create LGBTQ-inclusive curricula. Speakers and trainers can be invited to the school. Nondiscrimination policies can be expanded and enforced.

A photograph showing two individuals from behind, looking at a computer monitor. The person on the left has short dark hair and is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt. The person on the right has long, reddish-blonde hair and is wearing a camouflage-patterned jacket. The monitor displays a dark screen with some green and blue graphical elements. The background is a control room with various panels and equipment.

# SECURING FREEDOM OF GENDER EXPRESSION

Some schools maintain separate dress and grooming codes for male and female students, and sometimes transgender students are forced to comply with the code that matches the sex assigned to them at birth. This hurtful treatment can have disastrous consequences for a student's health and well-being and has resulted in successful lawsuits against school administrators. For example, in 2001, a Massachusetts court ruled in the case of *Doe v. Yunits* that a middle school had to permit a transgender girl to wear the feminine clothing that expressed her female gender identity. The court described her female identity as her "quintessence" — her true self. All schools should permit transgender students to dress in accordance with their gender identity, whether it be in the classroom, at prom or at any other school-related event. Protections for gender expression may be rooted in local, state or federal laws and in constitutional guarantees.

## TAKE ACTION

### SECURING FREEDOM OF GENDER EXPRESSION

#### 1. DO YOUR RESEARCH, KNOW YOUR HISTORY

Remember that, in the words of the U.S. Supreme Court, students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate" (*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*). Schools must maintain an orderly and safe environment and are therefore allowed to restrict disruptive speech, but they are not allowed to stifle expressive conduct without a valid reason. The Supreme Court has also held that students' political speech is entitled to protection, such as in the 1969 *Tinker* case upholding high school students' right to wear armbands protesting the Vietnam War.

#### 2. INFORM SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Inform school administrators that clothing and accessories expressing gender are an integral part of transgender students' identities. Schools should also permit students to wear clothing, stickers and the like with a transgender symbol (see below) or slogans like "Question Gender."

#### 3. START A T-SHIRT/PATCH/ARMBAND CAMPAIGN

Use this transgender symbol:





# PROMOTING TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE POLICIES

An increasing number of school districts are adding “gender identity and expression” to their nondiscrimination policies. This is a critical first step that sends a strong signal about equal treatment and conforms to the protections in effect in many jurisdictions. But nondiscrimination policies can be insufficient when addressing all the questions that might arise about respecting transgender students. Some school districts have adopted comprehensive guidelines on dress codes, name and sex designation changes in school records, restroom and locker room access, privacy and confidentiality, and so on. A sample policy appears in the appendix on page 30.

## TAKE ACTION

### PROMOTING TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE POLICIES

#### 1. EXAMINE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES

Advocate for the revision of your school district’s nondiscrimination policy to include the term “gender identity and expression.” A list of K-12 schools with inclusive policies can be found on GenderPAC’s website ([www.gpac.org/genius](http://www.gpac.org/genius)). Once the policy is adopted, make sure it is published in student handbooks, on the school district’s website, on posters and through word of mouth. Protections won’t be enforced if people don’t know about them.

#### 2. ISSUE BROADER GUIDELINES

Work with your school to create and adopt comprehensive guidelines for the respectful treatment of transgender students, like the ones in effect in Los Angeles and San Francisco or the sample one in the appendix of this toolkit. If your school administrators have questions, contact Lambda Legal or another organization in the Resources section of this guide to help them find answers.

#### 3. ADDRESS HARRASSMENT

Learn whether your state or school district has antibullying laws or programs. Create a forum for antiviolence discussions with other students, or work with a teacher to have an assembly program, which could include guest speakers, focused on antibullying.

## WHERE CAN YOU FIND LAWS AND POLICIES IN YOUR AREA?

**Ask a librarian at your local public library or law library (if your town has one) about looking up state laws and local ordinances. Your school librarian can also point you in the right direction.**

**Your teachers, principal or school board members can help you find copies of school district policies, such as nondiscrimination policies. School counselors may also have access to helpful resources.**

**Online resources, such as the online library at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) or legal information websites like [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com), may help you learn more about the protections that exist in your jurisdiction. Check your school or town’s website to see if they list any policies.**



*BUILDING  
COMMUNITY  
AND FIGHTING  
INVISIBILITY*

Other transgender, gender-nonconforming and allied students can be a profound source of support and organizing power. Although the Internet and national organizations may make it easier to connect with others, your ability to find community may vary greatly based on where you live and what resources you can access. Nevertheless, sometimes just one person with the courage to come out and speak up will lead to the emergence of a whole community. You have the right to form a student organization and to speak out about your identity and experience. And you can help make it a safer climate for others to come out.

## TAKE ACTION

### BUILDING COMMUNITY AND FIGHTING INVISIBILITY

#### 1. FORM A TRANSGENDER STUDENTS' ORGANIZATION OR A TRANS-INCLUSIVE GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE (GSA)

As long as your school accepts public funds and lets other nonacademic clubs meet (and most do), then you have the right to form a transgender students' association. This is one of the most important ways to advocate for transgender issues within your school. To learn about the federal Equal Access Act, and for more information on starting a student group, see the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) website at [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org) or the GSA Network website at [www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org).

#### 2. DEVELOP A PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Inform your teachers and classmates about transgender issues. Explain the differences between gender identity and sexual orientation. Organize a Transgender Day of Remembrance event at your school each November. Start a petition for gender-neutral bathrooms. Write postcards to legislators in support of laws that include gender identity. Hang posters around school.

#### 3. TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT TRANSGENDER ISSUES

Change society one mind at a time. The more people who understand gender identity and expression, the safer our schools and society will be for you and others.

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching into a blue folder within a filing cabinet. The hand is positioned as if searching for or retrieving a document. The filing cabinet is filled with various folders and papers, some with colorful tabs. The text "PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

# PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY

Your school should never disclose your transgender identity — or anyone else's — without express permission. Breaking confidentiality can expose you to discrimination and violence from family, school personnel, students and others in the community. At the same time, you have the right to be out if you choose to be, which means that teachers and administrators should treat you with respect by using your preferred name and pronoun and letting you express your gender in other ways.

## TAKE ACTION

### PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY

#### 1. START THE DISCUSSION

Educate teachers, staff and administrators about transgender issues and the importance of using the name and pronoun that you prefer, while also protecting your privacy. Invite guest speakers to share their experiences as transgender youth or adults. Many community organizations have speakers' bureaus that can provide such guests. Share poems, art, testimony and stories about your own experiences.

If your school refuses to refer to you by your preferred name and pronoun, ask trusted allies who support your gender identity (including any supportive family members) to encourage school administrators to respect your identity. If your school claims that it will only address students by their legal names, explain how that policy harms your identity and well-being, and ask them to make an exception. If they continue to refuse, contact Lambda Legal for assistance.

#### 2. REPORT ANY PROBLEMS

If you think confidentiality is violated in any way, ask your school counselor to identify the process for reporting a complaint. If your counselor can't help you, take your problem to the next level (e.g., vice principal, principal, superintendent, school board).

#### 3. TALK TO EACH OTHER

Support students struggling with coming out by holding a support/discussion group or staffing a peer helpline. (For more information, see NYAC's website at [www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org).)



*MAKING  
BATHROOMS &  
LOCKER ROOMS  
ACCESSIBLE*

If you've faced the challenge and outrage of others assuming you're in the wrong restroom, you may find yourself hesitating or even dreading trips to the bathroom or locker room. Some transgender people avoid public restrooms altogether, which can lead to health risks if physical needs are constantly ignored. Also, negotiating the locker room can be difficult and dangerous. Creating accommodations for transgender students is often simpler than many schools expect, and may be as easy as putting up a shower curtain or designating a private space where the student is comfortable changing clothes, or making a unisex restroom available. When transgender students fear for their safety, teachers' restrooms may be an acceptable alternative. Many colleges and universities have already taken the lead in offering multi-stall gender-neutral bathroom and shower areas. See the Sylvia Rivera Law Project's website ([www.srlp.org](http://www.srlp.org)) and GenderPAC's website ([www.gpac.org/genius](http://www.gpac.org/genius)) for a list of these schools and other resources to help you advocate for trans-friendly bathrooms and locker rooms at your school.

## TAKE ACTION

### MAKING BATHROOMS & LOCKER ROOMS ACCESSIBLE

#### 1. DEMAND A SAFE SPACE

Talk to your teachers and school counselor about your safety and privacy concerns and why it's important to have a safe space to change clothes or use the restroom. The school should make every effort to accommodate you, instead of simply instructing you to use the facility that corresponds with the sex you were assigned at birth.

#### 2. GATHER SUPPORT

Organize a petition to have gender-neutral bathrooms created in your school. You may want to begin your petition drive by promoting it with an article in your student paper. For more information, read about the film *Toilet Training* on the Sylvia Rivera Law Project's website ([www.srlp.org](http://www.srlp.org)).

#### 3. BE VOCAL

Speak up when you see teasing or harassment in bathrooms, locker rooms or anywhere on school grounds.



*FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY  
IN SPORTS TEAMS*

Student athletic associations are increasingly recognizing the importance of allowing transgender athletes to play on sports teams in accordance with their gender identity. School districts may adopt a case-by-case approach to athletic participation, consulting with the student to determine which team is safest and most appropriate for the individual. Some teams and athletic associations are new to this issue, and education on basic issues of respect for gender identity may be necessary.

## TAKE ACTION

### FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY IN SPORTS TEAMS

#### 1. HELP SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS FIND RESOURCES

Put them in touch with the Sports Project at the National Center for Lesbian Rights or another organization that advocates for transgender athletes.

#### 2. CHALLENGE MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

Some people mistakenly believe that transgender athletes will have unfair advantages on the playing field, or won't be accepted by their teammates. These myths are false: Transgender athletes participate in athletics all the way from recreational leagues to the Olympics.

#### 3. ROOT FOR THE TEAM

Support individuals in their efforts to participate in sports and activities according to their gender identity.



# ACCESSING HEALTH CARE

Accessing fair and unbiased health care can be difficult for transgender people of all ages, particularly youth. Doctors may be dismissive, condescending, abusive or uneducated about transgender health needs. Transgender youth may be told that they cannot consent to gender transition on their own. It can also be difficult to get insurance coverage for transition-related care. Many transgender people find that their access to treatment is contingent upon receiving a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (GID), a recognized serious health condition.

A parent or guardian can consent to health care for youth under 18, and providers may offer transition-related care if a parent or guardian agrees or a court has ordered treatment. In addition, transgender youth can consent to their own health care if they are emancipated or in other circumstances that vary by state. For example, in New York, youth who meet the legal definition of a “mature minor” may be allowed to consent to their own health care.

## TAKE ACTION

### ACCESSING HEALTH CARE

#### 1. CONTACT A TRANSGENDER HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

Check out the annual Philadelphia Trans Health Conference, an organization like the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition or another online source of transgender health resources.

#### 2. CITE EXPERT OPINION

Medical research shows that social and medical support for gender transition improves the well-being of transgender people. This consensus is recognized by medical experts and professional organizations. The National Association of School Psychologists states that the gender identity and expression of transgender youth should be honored and respected.

#### 3. SEARCH FOR TRANS-FRIENDLY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN YOUR AREA

Ask transgender people in your community if they can recommend a doctor, or contact the clinics listed in the Resources section of this toolkit.

# GLOSSARY

Here's a quick reference for some of the most commonly used terms in the transgender community. Remember that people defy labels and not everyone will fit into a definition, label or box, no matter how large we make it.



**ableism:** a system of institutionalized practices and individual actions that benefits able-bodied people over people with disabilities.

**biological sex, sex:** a term used historically and within the medical field to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male.

**classism:** a system of institutionalized practices and individual actions that benefits people who have wealth and power.

**crossdresser:** a person who, on occasion, wears clothing associated with another sex, but who does not necessarily desire to change his or her sex. Many crossdressers identify as heterosexual but can have any sexual orientation.

**drag king / drag queen:** a performer who wears the clothing associated with another sex, often involving the presentation of exaggerated, stereotypical gender characteristics. The performance of gender by drag queens (males in drag) or drag kings (females in drag) may be art, entertainment and/or parody.

**FTM (female to male), transgender man:** terms used to identify a person who was assigned the female sex at birth but who identifies as male.

**gender:** a set of social, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other.

**gender binary:** the concept that everyone must be one of two genders: man or woman.

**gender expression:** The outward manifestation of internal gender identity, through clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms and other characteristics.

**gender identity:** the inner sense of being a man, a woman, both or neither. Gender identity usually aligns with a person's sex, but sometimes does not.

**gender dysphoria:** an intense, persistent discomfort resulting from the awareness that the sex assigned at birth and the resulting gender role expectations are inappropriate. Some consider gender dysphoria to be a symptom of Gender Identity Disorder, a health condition recognized by the American Psychiatric Association. Many transgender people do not experience gender dysphoria.

**genderqueer:** a term used by some people who may or may not identify as transgender, but who identify their gender as somewhere on the continuum beyond the binary male/female gender system.

**gender-nonconforming:** behaving in a way that does not match social stereotypes about female or male gender, usually through dress or physical appearance.

**gender role:** the social expectation of how an individual should act, think and feel, based upon the sex assigned at birth.

**gender transition:** the social, psychological and medical process of transitioning from one gender to another. Gender transition is an individualized process and does not involve the same steps for everyone. After gender transition, some people identify simply as men or women.

**hormone therapy:** administration of hormones and hormonal agents to develop characteristics of a different gender or to block the development of unwanted gender characteristics. Hormone therapy is part of many people's gender transitions and is safest when prescribed and monitored by a health care professional.

**intersex:** a health condition, often present at birth, involving anatomy or physiology that differs from societal expectations of male and female. Intersex conditions can affect the genitals, the chromosomes and/or other body structures. People with intersex conditions should not be assumed to be transgender.

### **MTF (male to female), transgender**

**woman:** terms used to identify a person who was assigned the male sex at birth but who identifies as female.

**oppression:** the acts and effects of domination of certain groups in society over others, caused by the combination of prejudice and power. Systems of oppression include racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia.

**post-op, pre-op, non-op:** terms used to identify a transgender person's surgical status. Use of these terms is often considered insulting and offensive. Surgical status is almost never relevant information for anyone except a transgender person's medical providers.

**privilege:** social and institutional advantages that dominant groups receive and others do not. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it.

**racism:** a system of institutionalized practices and individual actions that benefits white people over people of color.

**sex reassignment surgery (SRS):** any one of a variety of surgeries involved in the process of transition from one gender to another. Many transgender people will not undergo SRS for health or financial reasons, or because it is not medically necessary for them.

**sexism:** a system of institutionalized practices and individual actions that benefits men over women.

**transgender or trans:** an umbrella term used to describe those who challenge social gender norms, including genderqueer people, gender-nonconforming people, transsexuals, crossdressers and so on. People must self-identify as transgender in order for the term to be appropriately used to describe them.

**transphobia:** the irrational fear of those who challenge gender stereotypes, often expressed as discrimination, harassment and violence.

**transsexual:** a person who experiences intense, persistent, long-term discomfort with their body and self-image due to the awareness that their assigned sex is inappropriate. Transsexuals may take steps to change their body, gender role and gender expression to align them with their gender identity.

# RESOURCES

## Lambda Legal

120 Wall Street, Suite 1500

New York, NY 10005

T 212-809-8585

### Help Desk Toll Free Number:

866-542-8336

F 212-809-0055

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

[legalthelp@lambdalegal.org](mailto:legalthelp@lambdalegal.org)

*National civil rights organization seeking equality for LGBT people and people with HIV through the court system, advocacy and public education.*

## National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)

1638 R Street, NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20009

T 800-541-6922

F 202-319-7365

[www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org)

[nyac@nyacyouth.org](mailto:nyac@nyacyouth.org)

*National social justice organization that advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender youth.*

## SUPPORT

### FTM International

601 Van Ness Ave. Suite E327

San Francisco, CA 94102

T 877-267-1440

[www.ftmi.org](http://www.ftmi.org)

[info@ftmi.org](mailto:info@ftmi.org)

*International organization providing support and services to FTMs. Publishes a newsletter and resource guide. Links to additional resources.*

### Gay & Lesbian Medical Association

459 Fulton Street, Suite 107

San Francisco, CA 94102

T 415-255-4547

F 415-255-4784

[www.glma.org](http://www.glma.org)

[info@glma.org](mailto:info@glma.org)

*Organization seeking to support and advocate health care equality for LGBT people. Has trans-friendly health care provider listings online.*

### PFLAG Transgender Network

1726 M Street, NW

Suite 400

Washington, D.C. 20036

T 202-467-8180

F 202-467-8194

[www.pflag.org/TNET.tnet.0.html](http://www.pflag.org/TNET.tnet.0.html)

[info@pflag.org](mailto:info@pflag.org)

*Support for parents, friends and families of transgender people. Resources for transgender people.*

### Survivor Project

P.O. Box 40664

Portland, OR 97240

T 503-288-3191

[www.survivorproject.org](http://www.survivorproject.org)

[info@survivorproject.org](mailto:info@survivorproject.org)

*Support for transgender and intersex survivors of domestic and sexual violence.*

### TransYouth Family Allies

PO Box 1471

Holland, MI 49422-1471

T 888-462-8932

<http://imatyfa.org/>

[info@imatyfa.org](mailto:info@imatyfa.org)

*Partners with educators, service providers and communities to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected.*

## EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

### Advocates for Youth

2000 M Street NW, Suite 750  
Washington, DC 20036  
T 202-419-3420, ext. 30  
F 202-419-1448  
www.youthresource.com  
angel@advocatesforyouth.net

*Provides information and peer support to LGBTQ youth. Great listing of resources and articles for transgender youth.*

### American Civil Liberties Union LGBT Project — Schools and Youth

125 Broad Street, 18th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
T 212-549-2500  
www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth  
aclu@aclu.org

*The ACLU's LGBT Project fights discrimination and moves public opinion on LGBT rights through the courts, legislatures and public education.*

### Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)

30 Winter Street, Suite 800  
Boston, MA 02108  
T 617-426-1350  
www.glad.org  
gladlaw@glad.org

*GLAD is New England's leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity and expression.*

### GLSEN

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
T 212-727-0135  
F 212-727-0254  
www.glsen.org  
glsen@glSEN.org

*The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.*

### Gender Spectrum Education and Training

1122 E Pike St #796  
Seattle WA 98122  
T 877-809-4159  
www.genderspectrum.org  
info@genderspectrum.org

*An organization that provides education, resources and training to help create a more gender sensitive and supportive environment for all people, including gender variant and transgender youth.*

### GenderPAC

1731 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Fourth Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
T 202-462-6610  
www.gpac.org  
gpac@gpac.org

*GPAC works to ensure that classrooms, communities, and workplaces are safe for everyone to learn, grow, and succeed — whether or not they meet expectations for masculinity and femininity.*

### Gay-Straight Alliance Network

1550 Bryant St., Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
T 415-552-4229  
F 415-552-4729  
www.gsanetwork.org  
info@gsanetwork.org

*GSA Network is a youth leadership organization that connects school-based GSAs to each other and community resources.*

### National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)

870 Market Street, Suite 370  
San Francisco CA 94102  
T 415-392-6257  
F 415-392-8442  
www.nclrights.org  
info@nclrights.org

*NCLR is a national legal organization committed to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy and public education.*

### National Center for Transgender Equality

1325 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005  
T 202-903-0112  
F 202-393-2241  
www.nctequality.org  
ncte@nctequality.org

*NCTE is a social justice organization dedicated to advancing the equality of transgender people through advocacy, collaboration and empowerment.*

### **National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)**

1325 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005  
T 202-393-5177  
F 202-393-2241  
www.thetaskforce.org  
info@thetaskforce.org

*The Task Force's mission is to build the grassroots power of the LGBT community. Transgender-specific legislative policy resources.*

### **Safe Schools Coalition Public Health - Seattle & King County**

10501 Meridian Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98133  
T 206-632-0662, ext. 49  
www.safeschoolscoalition.org

*Offers resources on LGBT issues as a starting point for educators, parents/guardians and youth.*

### **Sylvia Rivera Law Project**

322 8th Avenue  
3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
T 212.337.8550  
F 212-337-1972  
www.srlp.org  
info@srlp.org

*SRLP works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing harassment, discrimination or violence.*

### **Transgender Law Center**

870 Market Street, Room 823  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
T 415-865-0176  
F 877-847-1278  
www.transgenderlawcenter.org  
info@transgenderlawcenter.org

*A civil rights organization advocating for transgender communities.*

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **General LGBTQ Youth Support Lines**

*These toll-free lines are staffed by either trained LGBTQ youth or adults, or by trained youth or adults that are LGBTQ friendly.*

### **Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Youth Hotline**

(ages 23 and under)  
800-773-5540  
Mon-Fri, 12pm-8pm EST

### **GLBT National Help Center Hotlines: National Youth Helpline**

800-246-PRIDE  
Mon-Fri, 8pm-12am EST  
Sat, 12pm-5pm EST  
GLBT National Hotline (youth and adults)  
888-843-4564  
Mon-Fri, 4pm-12am EST  
Sat, 12pm-5pm EST

*The following toll-free numbers are open to the general public but are LGBTQ friendly. They are open 24/7 unless otherwise noted:*

### **The Trevor Helpline**

T 866-4-U-TREVOR (866-488-7386)  
www.thetrevorproject.org  
*Nationwide around-the-clock crisis and suicide prevention helpline for gay and questioning youth.*

### **Covenant House's Nine Line**

800-999-9999  
*A crisis line for youth and their families.*



**Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention**

HIV/AIDS/STD Line: 800-342-2437

**HIV/AIDS Treatment Info Services**

800- 448-0440

TDD: 888-480-3739

Mon-Fri, 12pm-5pm EST

**National Runaway Hotline**

800-231-6946

**Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline**

800-422-4453

**The National Domestic Violence Hotline**

800-799-7233

TDD: 800-787-3224

**Alcohol and Drug Abuse Hotline**

800-821-4357

**Focus on Recovery: National 24-Hour  
Drug Abuse Hotline**

800-888-9383

## CLINICS

**Callen-Lorde Community Health Center**

356 West 18th Street

New York, NY 10011

T 212-271-7200

[www.callen-lorde.org](http://www.callen-lorde.org)

[healtheducation@callen-lorde.org](mailto:healtheducation@callen-lorde.org)

**Chase Brexton Health Services**

1001 Cathedral Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

T 410-837-2050

[www.chasebrexton.org](http://www.chasebrexton.org)

**Fenway Community Health**

7 Haviland Street

Boston, MA 02115

T 617-267-0900

[www.fenwayhealth.org](http://www.fenwayhealth.org)

**Hartford Gay and  
Lesbian Health Collective**

1841 Broad Street

Hartford, CT 06114

T 860-278-4163

F 860-278-5995

[www.hglhc.org](http://www.hglhc.org)

[info@hglhc.org](mailto:info@hglhc.org)

**Howard Brown Health Center**

4025 N. Sheridan Road

Chicago, IL 60613

T 773-388-1600

[www.howardbrown.org](http://www.howardbrown.org)

**L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center**

1625 N. Schrader Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90028

T 323-993-7400

[www.lagaycenter.org](http://www.lagaycenter.org)

**Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services**

1748 Market Street, Suite 201

San Francisco, CA 94102

T 415-565-7667

F 415-252-7512

[www.lyon-martin.org](http://www.lyon-martin.org)

[info@lyon-martin.org](mailto:info@lyon-martin.org)

**Legacy Community Health Services**

215 Westheimer

Houston, TX 77006

T 713-830-3000

F 713-830-3023

[www.legacycommunityhealth.org](http://www.legacycommunityhealth.org)

**Mazzoni Center**

1201 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19107

T 215-563-0652

F 215-583-0664

[www.mazzonicenter.org](http://www.mazzonicenter.org)

[info@mazzonicenter.org](mailto:info@mazzonicenter.org)

**Tom Waddell Health Center**

50 Lech Walesa Street

San Francisco, CA 94102

T 415-355-7400

[www.dph.sf.ca.us/chn/HlthCtrs/](http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/chn/HlthCtrs/)

[TomWaddell.htm](http://TomWaddell.htm)

**Whitman-Walker Clinic**

1407 S Street, NW

Washington, DC 20009

T 202-797-3500

[www.wwc.org](http://www.wwc.org)

[wwcinfo@wwc.org](mailto:wwcinfo@wwc.org)

# APPENDIX:

## MODEL SCHOOL POLICY REGARDING TRANSGENDER AND GENDER-NONCONFORMING STUDENTS

This policy is intended to advise school administration and staff regarding issues relating to transgender and gender-nonconforming students in order to provide equal educational opportunities to all students and ensure that schools maintain environments free from unlawful discrimination or discriminatory harassment.

### Definitions

#### For the purposes of this policy:

**Transgender Students** refers to students whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Identity** refers to one's understanding of oneself as a girl (or woman), boy (or man), or both, or neither, regardless of one's sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Expression** refers to the way a person expresses her or his gender, through dress, grooming habits, choice of name and pronoun, mannerisms, activities, etc.

**Gender-nonconforming Students** refers to students who have a gender identity or expression that does not conform to stereotypical expectations, such as feminine boys, masculine girls and androgynous students. Examples of gender-nonconforming students include boys who come to school wearing what is commonly considered to be girls' clothing (such as a skirt or dress), or girls who play games on the playground that might be perceived as "boys' games" (like football).

### Student Self-Identification

Students, including transgender and gender-nonconforming students, may use a variety of terms to describe their gender, gender expression and gender identity. Not all students who fall within the broad definitions of "transgender" and "gender-nonconforming" set forth above will use these terms to self-identify. School personnel should not label students unnecessarily, and should respect the terms students adopt to identify themselves. Whenever possible, school forms to be filled out by students should allow students to fill in their gender (or to decline to answer) rather than force them to choose between male and female.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

All persons, including students, have a right to privacy; this includes the right to keep one's transgender status private. Absent consent from the student, school personnel should not disclose a student's transgender status to others, such as students, parents or school personnel, unless there is a specific "need to know" (for example, a health emergency). A student's transgender status may also be disclosed to others to the limited extent necessary to investigate and/or resolve a claim of discrimination or harassment brought by that student.

### Names and Pronouns

Students may request to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity without changing the legal name designated in their official records and school-wide informational systems. All school staff and faculty must honor such requests. If the student consents, such requests must also be noted

in any materials that are shared with or accessible to staff and faculty, in order to inform teachers and other staff of the name and pronoun to use when addressing the student.

Teachers should privately ask transgender or gender-nonconforming students at the beginning of the school year how they prefer to be addressed at school and how they prefer to be addressed in correspondence to the home or at conferences with their parents. In cases where students and parents disagree about the name and pronoun to be used at school, school officials may refer families to appropriate internal and/or external counseling or support services.

### **Official Records**

A school shall change the legal name designated in a student's official records upon receipt of a court order documenting a legal change in name. However, upon the request of the student, the student's official record shall include a notation indicating the preferred name even in the absence of such documentation.

Any school records indicating a student's gender should do so in accordance with the student's gender identity.

### **Dress Codes**

Students have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity. A student's clothing shall not be deemed to violate any applicable dress code on the ground that it does not conform in whole or in part to stereotypes or gender norms associated with the sex assigned to that student at birth.

### **Restroom Accessibility**

Students shall have access to restroom facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Where available, a single-stall restroom or other alternate restroom, such as one in a health or nurse's office, shall be used by any student with a need for increased privacy (for example, because of his or her gender identity, a permanent or temporary disability, etc.) regardless of the underlying reason. The use of such

a single-stall bathroom shall be a matter of the student's choice; no student should be compelled to use such a bathroom.

### **Locker Room Accessibility**

Students shall have access to locker room facilities that correspond to their gender identity. In locker rooms that require undressing in front of others, students who desire increased privacy for any reason (for example, because of their gender identity, a permanent or temporary disability, etc.), shall be provided with accommodations that best meet their needs and privacy concerns. Based on availability and the nature of the privacy concerns, such accommodations could include, but are not limited to:

Use of a private area in or near the locker room (e.g., an area separated by a curtain, the physical education instructor's office, a nearby restroom or nurse's office, etc.), or a separate changing schedule (using the locker room before or after other students).

### **Physical Education Classes and Sports**

Transgender and gender-nonconforming students are to be provided the same opportunities to participate in physical education as all other students, shall not be forced to have physical education outside of the assigned class time, and shall be permitted to participate in any gender-segregated activities in accordance with their gender identity. Generally, students shall also be permitted to participate in any gender-segregated recreational and competitive athletic activities, including extracurricular activities, in accordance with their gender identity. If a dispute arises with regard to a transgender student's participation in competitive athletics or contact sports, such disputes shall be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

### **Other Instances of Gender Segregation**

Generally, in any circumstance where students are separated by gender in the course of a school activity, students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity. If such

an activity raises privacy concerns for any transgender or gender nonconforming student, for any reason, staff shall make a reasonable effort to provide an accommodation to address such concerns. If no such accommodation is available, concerns shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Access to Information**

Schools should endeavor to include in their libraries or health offices (or other appropriate locations) books, pamphlets and/or other materials that provide accurate information about gender identity issues and related matters. Students should be permitted to access these materials confidentially and, if possible, anonymously.

### **Discrimination/Harassment**

Schools must take effective steps to provide transgender and gender-nonconforming students with a safe school environment. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment or violence is promptly investigated and all appropriate corrective actions are taken.

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on someone's actual or perceived sex, gender identity and/or gender expression are to be handled in the same manner as other discrimination or harassment complaints. School authorities may not discipline students or pressure them to alter their gender expression because other students react to that expression in a disruptive manner.

### **Safety Transfers**

Generally, schools should endeavor to keep transgender and gender-nonconforming students at their school site. Incidents of harassment or discrimination against a transgender or gender-nonconforming student should not result in an automatic transfer to another school. However, transfers should be considered and/or granted when it would be in the student's best interest to be in a different social environment or when a transfer is necessary for the protection or personal welfare of the student. In such cases, the decision to transfer a student should be made in close consultation with the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in order to determine whether a transfer is in the best interest of the student.



## Contact Lambda Legal

### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

120 Wall Street  
Suite 1500  
New York, NY 10005-3904  
tel 212-809-8585  
fax 212-809-0055

### WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

3325 Wilshire Boulevard  
Suite 1300  
Los Angeles, CA 90010-1729  
tel 213-382-7600  
fax 213-351-6050

### MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE

11 East Adams  
Suite 1008  
Chicago, IL 60603-6303  
tel 312-663-4413  
fax 312-663-4307

### SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

730 Peachtree Street, NE  
Suite 1070  
Atlanta, GA 30308-1210  
tel 404-897-1880  
fax 404-897-1884

### SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE

3500 Oak Lawn Avenue  
Suite 500  
Dallas, TX 75219-6722  
tel 214-219-8585  
fax 214-219-4455

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)  
[legalhelpdesk@lambdalegal.org](mailto:legalhelpdesk@lambdalegal.org)  
Help Desk 1-866-542-8336

**nyac**  
National Youth Advocacy Coalition

 **Lambda Legal**  
making the case for equality