

Gender Identity Support Discussion Guide

LA Unified is committed to building safe, supportive school environments where students can fully and authentically participate in their education. All students deserve to bring their full identities to school. The purpose of this guide is to support school sites in discussing and affirming students' gender identities. Welcoming environments support students' academic success, attendance, and social emotional wellbeing. Students have the right to be recognized by their chosen name and pronouns, access facilities and activities that align with their affirmed gender identity, and be protected from bullying or harassment. There is no legal or medical threshold that students must meet to access these rights.



Many transgender and gender expansive individuals are aware of their identity at a very young age. While some students will feel comfortable asking to be called by a chosen name, many others will not feel comfortable approaching staff or are not aware of their rights as students in LA Unified. Schools are encouraged to openly discuss identity, model sharing and respecting pronouns, and help students identify trusted adults they can ask for help if needed. This resource is a guide for supporting conversations, however it is important to follow the student's lead. Students are the experts in their own identities and experiences.

Students have a right to decide what information is shared with whom and when. Schools should help students think through these decisions, consider possible outcomes, and make a plan to address any barriers. Students must be recognized by their affirmed name/pronouns. Using the affirmed name and pronouns dramatically reduces risk of depressive symptoms and suicide for transgender youth. Persistent or intentional misgendering or misnaming of a student should be addressed under applicable District policies on bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

LA Unified utilizes three approaches to supporting gender diverse students- Informal, Unofficial, and Official/Legal. If schools become aware that a student would like to go by a different name or pronoun, they should explain these different options to the student.

Informal:

Upon student request, schools must recognize students by their affirmed name/gender identity in interpersonal interactions, such as how the student is addressed in class. No parental notification or permission is required. Students have the right to access the facilities and activities that affirm their gender identity, regardless of legal name or sex assigned at birth. Pupil records, such as records in MiSiS and Welligent, remain in the legal name.

Unofficial:

Students may request that their name/gender be changed in most District-generated documents. Upon receipt of their parent/guardian's signature on [Attachment A](#) of LAUSD [Bulletin 5703](#), school sites will update student records (MiSiS, Single Sign-On, etc.) through the steps outlined in this [MiSiS job aid](#).

- Follow the [MiSiS job aid](#) to make changes in MiSiS. Open a ticket with ITD to make any changes to the Single Sign-On or other applications.
- Students with Unofficial name changes should be able to log onto State testing platforms with their affirmed name. Legal documents that are generated internally (e.g., transcripts) and externally (e.g., Advanced Placement exams) will continue to show the student's legal name/gender.
- The school should develop strategies to minimize distress, protect confidentiality and ensure that only those with a need-to-know have access to documents with legal name and gender.

Official/Legal:

A court order showing legal name/gender change is recognized permanently across student records. Some historical documents may be updated upon request.

In addition to supporting individual students, schools should look at universal and targeted approaches for affirming school climates. LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, kindness campaigns, affirming policies, Genders & Sexualities Alliances (GSAs), and school-wide positive behavior supports help create a healthy school environment. Positive Behavior Intervention & Support/Restorative Practices can aid in building community and responding to conflict or unkind behaviors. Harassment or bullying should be addressed promptly. Human Relations, Diversity & Equity can provide consultation, professional development, parent workshops, OUT for Safe School badges, posters, lesson plans, and support for GSA/Rainbow Club advisors.

Getting Started

School staff should familiarize themselves with relevant District policies, resources and responsibilities so they will be best prepared to support gender diverse students and their families. Obtain professional development from Human Relations, Diversity & Equity. Remember that it can be extremely difficult for a student to approach a staff member about a name/gender change. When a student comes to you, take time to appreciate their courage and self-advocacy. This guide was written for use with students of all ages. The sample language below is a model and should be modified, as appropriate, for each individual student.

SAY: "My name is _____ and my pronouns are _____."

ASK: "What name and pronouns would you like me to use for you? Do you go by this name/pronoun with others at school?"

SAY: "Thank you so much for letting me know. I'm glad you told me. I want to be sure to use the name and pronouns you'd like."

ASK: "What name and pronouns do you go by outside of school? At home?"

- Students may choose to include their parent/guardian(s) in the gender support process. Students also have a right to privacy. We must honor their request that certain information is kept confidential, unless there is a legal or policy requirement to disclose. Discuss what information the student would like to be shared and with whom.
- Explain the different ways that the school can affirm the student's name/gender (Informal, Unofficial, and Official/Legal Changes). Provide the student with a copy of Attachment A of LAUSD Bulletin 5703.
- Brainstorm the various situations (rosters, school pictures, standardized exams, peer interactions, etc.) when their legal name could appear and explore how those situations could be handled to maximize privacy and minimize distress.
- Acknowledge that it can take time for others to learn a new name/pronoun and help the student identify ways to respond to various situations where someone gets it wrong.

Confidentiality

Several State and Federal laws protect students' right to privacy. The California Department of Education advises schools to consult with students about what information will be shared with whom. They advise, "With rare exceptions, schools are required to respect the limitations that a student places on the disclosure of their gender identity, including not sharing that information with the student's parents."

SAY: "You have a right to privacy. I will only share this information with the people you named unless there is danger to yourself or others, in which case certain information may be shared."

ASK: "If another educator or student asks me why I use this name/pronouns with you, how would you like me to respond?"

SAY: "We should also come up with a plan for when you have a substitute teacher."

ASK: "Do I have your permission to share this information with a substitute?"

Restroom & Locker Room Facilities

Students have access to the facilities, programs and activities that align with their affirmed gender. Gender-neutral facilities are available to any student but no student may be required to use them. This school's gender-neutral restrooms are located _____.

SAY: "We want you to feel comfortable using the restroom and locker room facilities. You have the right to use the facilities that align with your affirmed gender."

ASK: "What restrooms do you think would be most appropriate for you? Is there anything that would make you feel more comfortable? Where do you prefer to change and/or shower for PE, etc.?"

Extracurricular Activities

School dress codes and all school activities should be gender inclusive. Students have the right to play on teams and participate in school activities such as clubs, field trips, and dances that align with their gender identity.

ASK: "What activities do you participate in at school (sports, clubs, after-school program, etc.)?"

ASK: "What support do you need to participate in these activities (uniforms, supplies, overnights, etc.)?"

ASK: "Is there a staff member that we can approach to help them better support you (sharing pronouns, changing for sports, etc.)?"

Safety & Support

Schools should promote safe and affirming environments by teaching inclusive curriculum, hosting campaigns that promote equity and celebrate diversity, and building community through positive behavior supports. Transgender and gender expansive students have the right to protection from harassment or bullying, which should be immediately addressed.

SAY: "We want to make sure every student feels included and affirmed at school."

ASK: "Are there situations at school that you're worried about?"

ASK: "What makes you feel most comfortable at school?"

ASK: "Who are your trusted adults at school that could help you if you needed it?"

ASK: "Are there places at school that bring up concerns? (restrooms, locker room, hallways, etc.)?"

Wrapping Up

Gender is a journey. Identity exploration is a core developmental task for young people. Students' needs will likely shift over time. Be flexible and revisit this discussion as needed.

ASK: "Do you have any other questions or concerns we should discuss?"

SAY: "Who could you talk to on campus if you're having trouble with any of the things we talked about today?"

ASK: "When should we check in again?"

Relevant LAUSD Policies

- [BUL-5703 Name and/or Gender of Pupils for Purposes of School Records with Attachment A](#)
- [BUL-6224 Gender Identity and Students – Ensuring Equity and Nondiscrimination](#)
- [Gender Identity and Students – Ensuring Equity and Nondiscrimination Brochure](#)
- [BUL-6285 Guidelines for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Inclusive Education](#)
- [REF-6799 Sex-Specific and All-Gender Single and Multiple User Restrooms](#)
- [BUL-6494 Student Dress Codes/Uniforms](#)
- [BUL-2047 Hate-Motivated Incidents and Crimes –Response and Reporting](#)
- [BUL-1347 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements](#)
- [BUL-2637 Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention](#)
- [MiSiS Job Aid: Updating Student Chosen Name and Gender](#)

Additional Resources

- [California Department of Education – Frequently Asked Questions for Assembly Bill 1266](#)
- [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning \(LGBTQ\) Community Resource Guide](#)
- [Handbook of SOGIE Language & Vocabulary](#)
- [Defining LGBTQ Words for Elementary School Students](#)
- [LGBTQ+ History Lesson Plans](#)
- [Ready, Set, Respect! GLSEN's Elementary School Toolkit](#)

Human Relations, Diversity & Equity

For training, consultation or support, please [contact us](#).

- **Website:** <https://achieve.lausd.net/human-relations>
- **Email:** humanrelations@lausd.net
- **Office:** 213-241-8719
- **Instagram:** [@lausdhrde](#)
- **Schoology Groups:**
 - LAUSD Pride: DQ2SX-4RSZ6
 - Standing with Black Students, Staff & Families: 93HB-DDBP-338PG
 - GSA Sponsors: XSMW-XTGC-4K4QW

