

Policy Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students

Purpose

This policy should be interpreted consistently with the goals of becoming an antiracist and equitable district, including reducing the stigmatization of and improving the academic, social, and social-emotional experiences of transgender and gender nonconforming and non-binary students, maintaining the privacy of all students, and fostering cultural competence and professional development for school staff.

Definitions

These definitions are provided not for the purpose of labeling students, but rather to assist in understanding this policy.

Gender Identity: A person's particular gender or non-gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. A person's innate, deeply felt sense of being male, female, both, or neither. A person's gender identity may or may not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: The way in which a person expresses gender through clothing, appearance, interests, and more.

Transgender: An umbrella term for a person whose gender identity is different than what they were assigned at birth.

Gender Nonconforming: An umbrella term for those who expand ideas of gender expression or gender identity.

Nonbinary: 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 as an umbrella term for identities like genderqueer, genderfluid, gender non-conforming, gender diverse, or gender expansive.

Scope

This policy pertains to the school district at large, both in the schools and also inclusive of the usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs in the school as well as to the entire school community, including educators, school and district staff, students, caregivers, partner organizations and volunteers. This also pertains to extracurricular activities inclusive of athletics allowing students to participate in activities that align with their gender identity. The Cambridge Public Schools will provide training directly to its staff and, when possible, invite partner organizations and/or community members to participate. At a minimum, CPS will provide partner organizations with links and referrals to help train their staff and volunteers. CPS expects its partners to honor this policy.

General Policy Statement

It is our policy to protect all students from discrimination and bullying, including on the basis of gender identity and expression. To this end, the school district shall implement ongoing professional development to build an understanding of gender identity and expression and to equip all staff members in identifying, responding to, and ultimately preventing bullying, harassment, and discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression. Per the School Committee's Textbook Selection and Adoption Policy, staff shall seek to include gender-diverse voices in curriculum/when planning curricula.

In accordance with the School Committee's Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Policy, information about a student's transgender status, assigned birth name and sex, name change for gender identity purposes, gender transition, medical information related to gender identity or other information of a similar nature, if such information exists, shall be maintained in a separate, confidential file and shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable federal, state and local privacy laws and regulations, including without limitation, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The fact that a student chooses to disclose their transgender status to staff or other students does not authorize school staff to disclose this information, or other information as detailed above, including without limitation, medical information, about the student to others. Information that may reveal a student's gender identity to others will not be disclosed to others unless the school is legally required to do so, or unless the disclosure has been authorized in writing by the student, or in the case of a younger student, disclosure has been authorized in writing by the student's parents/guardians/caregivers.

In accordance with the School Committee's Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Policy, students may access restrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities that correspond to the student's gender identity. The school shall respond to student requests to change their preferred locker room at any time during the school year. Students uncomfortable using a shared facility (restroom, locker room, and changing facilities), regardless of the reason, shall be given access to a safe, non-stigmatizing, non-gendered alternative. All students shall have access to all-gender/gender neutral, physically accessible restrooms at all times.

In accordance with the School Committee's Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Policy, every student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronouns that correspond to the student's gender identity. Regardless of whether a transgender or gender nonconforming student has legally changed their name or gender, schools will allow such students to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity. It is incumbent upon staff members to take proactive steps to consistently use students' chosen names and pronouns.

The Cambridge Public Schools are committed to providing ongoing professional development, support and education for all staff members around transgender/gender non-conforming students and to providing a safe environment for all students of all gender identities. This includes encouraging educators to move away from grouping students by gender on class lists or for activities that are unrelated to gender.

Annually, the district will provide to the School Committee a public report on the implementation of this policy, including but not limited to, the number and types of training delivered, as well as statistics on incidents of gender identity-related discrimination reported through Speakfully and other avenues.

LEGAL REFS.: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education "Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools; Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment; Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity

Adopted: December 19, 2023