



Inclusive School Guide for LCS Employees

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) Students

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Introduction

Recognizing all students deserve the right to be treated fairly, without bias or discrimination, and all students have the ability to receive support and services, these guidelines are intended to provide information and resources for school personnel.

The Leon County Schools' ***Inclusive School Guide*** is intended to be a tool for school administrators and personnel to effectively navigate existing laws, regulations and policies that support LGBTQIA+ students. It provides guidance to ensure that all students are treated equitably and with dignity in the school setting. Leon County Schools will not discriminate nor tolerate harassment in its educational programs or activities on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

This guide is designed to supplement the regular and periodic training that school personnel receive. While this guide will serve as an important resource for school personnel, it cannot address every circumstance that school personnel may encounter. For further assistance, please contact Student Services (850)561-8933.

This guide is a living document and will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect current laws and information available to promote a safe and supportive learning environment for LGBTQIA+ students and families.

Importance of Safe and Supportive Schools

Having a school that creates a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and having caring and involved parents are especially important. Positive environments can help all youth achieve good grades and maintain good mental and physical health. While many LGBTQIA+ youth are happy and thrive during their adolescent years, some LGBTQ+ youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience negative health and life outcomes.

According to the Gay and Lesbian Student Education Network (GLSEN) 2019 National School Climate Survey of 16,713 students ages 13-21, 59% of LGBTQ+ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, 33% of LGBTQ+ students missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, and almost all students (99%) heard “gay” used in a negative way and 95% heard other homophobic remarks at school.

Compared with other students, negative attitudes toward LGBTQ+ persons may put these youth at increased risk for experiences with violence. ‘Violence’ can include behaviors such as bullying, teasing, harassment, and physical assault.

According to data from the 2019 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), of surveyed LGBTQ+ students:

- 66% of LGBTQ+ students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness compared to 32% of heterosexual peers
- 47% of LGBTQ+ students reported having seriously considered attempting suicide compared with 15% of heterosexual peers
- 14% of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling unsafe at school compared to 8% of heterosexual peers
- 32% of LGBTQ+ students were bullied on school property compared to 17% of heterosexual peers
- 27% were bullied electronically compared to 14% of heterosexual peers

For youth to thrive in schools and communities, they need to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe and supported. A positive school climate has been associated with decreased depression, suicidal feelings, substance use, and unexcused school absences among LGBTQ+ students.

For information about how the CDC Promotes Health Safety Among Youth – Read LGBTQ* Youth Programs-At-A-Glance

Terminology

Many terms are associated with sexual and gender identities, and terminology continues to evolve. Below are some of the terms currently used by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Adolescent and School Health. This list and the definitions offered may change over time.

- **Bisexual:** A person who is attracted to both people of their own gender and other genders.
- **Cisgender:** Individuals whose current gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Gay:** A person who is attracted primarily to members of the same gender. Gay is most frequently used to describe men who are attracted primarily to other men, although it can be used for men and women.
- **Gender:** The cultural roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes expected of people based on their sex.
- **Gender Expression:** How an individual chooses to present their gender to others through physical appearance and behaviors, such as style of hair or dress, voice, or movement.
- **Gender Identity:** An individual's sense of their self as man, woman, transgender, or something else.
- **Gender Minority:** Individuals whose gender identity (man, woman, other) or expression (masculine, feminine, other) is different from their sex (male, female) assigned at birth.
- **Gender Nonbinary:** Individuals who do not identify their gender as man or woman. Other terms to describe this identity include genderqueer, agender, bigender, gender creative, etc.
- **Gender Nonconforming:** The state of one's physical appearance or behaviors not aligning with societal expectations of their gender (a feminine boy, a masculine girl, etc.).
- **Heterosexual or Straight:** A man who is primarily attracted to women or a woman who is primarily attracted to men.
- **Lesbian:** A woman who is primarily attracted to other women.
- **LGBTQ:** Acronym that refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning community.
- **Queer:** An umbrella term sometimes used to refer to the entire LGBT community.
- **Questioning:** For some, the process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- **Sex:** An individual's biological status as male, female, or something else. Sex is assigned at birth and associated with physical attributes, such as anatomy and chromosomes.
- **Sexual Minority:** Individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or who are attracted to or have sexual contact with people of the same gender.

- **Sexual Orientation:** Refers to a person’s sexual and emotional attraction to another person and the behavior and/or social affiliation that may result from this attraction (lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc.)
 - **SGM:** Acronym for sexual and gender minorities.
 - **SGMY:** Acronym for sexual and gender minority youth.
 - **SMY:** Acronym for sexual minority youth.
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- **Transgender:** Individuals whose current gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Terms listed are referenced from APA’s Definitions Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity and the World Health Organization’s glossary of terms and tools.*

Above reference is as of May 2022. For additional updates visit CDC Adolescent and School Health Terminology and CDC Sexual and Gender Identity Terms

Federal and State Law, Board Policy and Best Practices

Topic	Law	Best Practice
Athletics	<p>The <u>federal law Title IX</u> ensures the safety and inclusion of transgender students in all school-sponsored activities (Department of Education, 2014).</p> <p><u>Florida Statute 1006.205</u> delineates participation by gender. Related: <u>Florida Statute 1000.05</u>.</p>	<p>As a result of <u>Florida Statute 1006.205</u>, athletic teams or sports designated for female, women, or girls may not be open to students of the male sex. A statement of a student’s biological sex on the student’s official birth certificate is considered to have correctly stated the biological sex if the statement was filed at or near the student’s birth.</p> <p><u>Florida High School Athletic Association Bylaws</u> include Gender Equality (2.4): The FHSAA will conduct its activities in a manner free of gender bias and will adopt rules that enhance schools’ efforts to comply with applicable gender-equity laws. Gender Identity Participation (16.8): All eligible students should have the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity and expression, irrespective of the gender listed on a student’s birth certificate and/or records. The process for transgender students to participate in same-sex athletics is described in section 16.8.</p>
Bullying/ Harassment	<p>The <u>federal law Title IX and F.S. 1006.147</u> prohibit bullying and harassment of all students.</p> <p><u>LCSB po5517.01 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT</u></p>	<p>School will follow district policy prohibiting bullying and harassment, addressing any incident against a LGBTQ+ student the same way they would address an incident against any other student, unless the bullying/harassment is based on the student’s LGBTQ+ status, in which case the matter may need to be addressed through the District’s anti-discriminatory policy. (Contact the Office of Labor Relations, see page 14).</p>
Dress Code	<p>Gender expression is protected by the <u>U.S. Constitution, Title IX</u> and the <u>First Amendment</u>. This right to free expression includes choice of clothes. As long as what is worn would be appropriate if worn by other students, then a student should be able to wear that clothing even if it isn’t stereotypically associated with their biological gender.</p> <p><u>LCS po5511 DRESS AND GROOMING</u></p>	<p>Dress code applies regardless of the students’ gender identity and gender expression.</p>

GSA Clubs at School	Under the federal Equal Access Act , a public school permitting any non-curricular club must also allow students to form a GSA. The school must also treat the GSA the same as it does any other non-curricular club in terms of access to facilities, resources, and opportunities to advertise. LCSB po2430 DISTRICT-SPONSORED CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES	Schools will permit students to form GSA clubs. The clubs will comply with S. B. Rule 4.06 "Student Clubs and Organizations."
Individual Expression	First Amendment guarantees students have a right to individual expression and identity at school.	Schools will respect the rights of students who are open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, or who question their orientation or gender identity. Also, see Topic Privacy .
Locker Rooms	Neither federal nor Florida state law requires or prohibits schools to allow a transgender student access to the locker room corresponding to their gender identity.	All students are allowed to access locker rooms and restrooms that are consistent with their gender identity or be provided appropriate accommodations. If the parent and student have requested privacy and nondisclosure about their child's gender identity within their Plan and have accepted an accommodation regarding locker room use that will provide privacy for all students, no further action is needed by school administration. Upon notification or determination of a student who is open about their gender identity, parents of the affected students will be notified of reasonable accommodation options available. (See the sample parent notification example below.) If accommodations are desired, decisions should be made on case-by-case basis, and should be student focused, with support of parents, and district and school staff. However, no student should be required to use a single-user restroom. <i>Parent notification example:</i> "All students are allowed to access locker rooms and restrooms that are consistent with their gender identity or be provided appropriate accommodations. A student who is open about their gender identity may be in your child's Physical Education class or extra/co-curricular activity. If you are requesting accommodation for your student, please contact school administration to discuss reasonable accommodation options."
Names and Pronouns	Neither federal nor Florida state law requires or prohibits schools to call a student by a requested	The parent or student of legal age will notify the school of the preferred name and gender pronoun corresponding to their gender identity. The parent or student of legal age can add the preferred name and preferred pronoun into Student Information System

	<p>name or use gender pronouns consistent with their gender identity. However, Chapter 1014, Florida Statutes does reserve the right to the parent to direct the education and care as well as to direct the upbringing of his or her minor child.</p>	<p>portal or request it be done by the school. Additional services (referral to student services personnel or community resources) may be needed.</p> <p>Faculty and staff shall use the preferred name and pronoun listed in the Student Information System.</p>
Official Documents	<p>Official Documentation is required to reflect a change in name and/or gender in a student's official school records.</p> <p>FAC 64V-1.003: Birth Certificate Amendment documentary evidence requirements.</p>	<p>School will only modify student records to reflect a change in legal name or gender upon receipt of an official document. While official student records must contain the student's legal name, schools should permit the use of preferred name on unofficial records to assist staff in calling the student the preferred name. <i>The guardian or student of legal age can add the preferred name and preferred pronoun in the Student Information System.</i></p>
Overnight activities	<p>Neither federal nor Florida state law requires or prohibits school personnel to adhere to the requests of a student.</p>	<p>All students are allowed to attend school overnight activities. If parents or students have concerns about rooming assignments based on religious or privacy concerns, they may request accommodations.</p> <p>If accommodations are desired, decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, and should be student-focused, with the support of parents, and district and school staff. School staff who are aware of a transgender student participating in overnight activities should refer to the student's LCS Welcoming and Affirming Plan for preferred accommodations and the student's preferences on who is allowed to know they are transgender.</p> <p><i>Language to be included in overnight activity permission form district-wide: "All students are allowed to attend school sponsored overnight activities. Parents or students who have concerns about rooming assignments for their student's upcoming overnight event based on religious or privacy concerns may request an accommodation. If you are requesting accommodations for your student, please contact school administration to discuss reasonable accommodation options."</i></p>
Parent Notification	<p><u>Chapter 1014, Florida Statutes</u> requires the parent to be notified if there is a change in a students' mental, emotional, or physical health or wellbeing.</p>	<p>School personnel will notify a parent if there is a change in a student's services or monitoring related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or wellbeing, unless a reasonably prudent person would believe that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect, as those terms are defined in s. 39.01. Under those circumstances school personnel must report the potential harm to the Florida Department of Children and Families.</p>

Privacy	<u>Article 1 Section 23 of Florida constitution recognizes the federal constitutional right to privacy</u> , which extends to students in a school setting.	School personnel will not disclose information about a student’s sexual orientation, gender identity or questions they may have about their sexual orientation or gender identity. A student’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression should not be shared with others without their input and permission. All LGBTQIA+ students have the right to participate in the decision-making process for deciding when and to whom their gender identity or expression and sexual orientation is shared unless it is directly related to concerns about the student’s health and safety. For parents who have concerns about their child’s well-being and have contacted the school district, administration and guidance, a meeting will be coordinated with the parent and student. School personnel must not intentionally withhold information from parents unless a reasonably prudent person would believe that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect, as those terms are defined in s. 39.01. Under those circumstances school personnel must report the potential harm to the Florida Department of Children and Families.
Prom/Dances	The <u>federal law Title IX and First Amendment court cases</u> prohibits excluding same-sex couples from school-sponsored proms and dances.	Schools will allow same-sex couples to attend school sponsored proms and dances and dress in a manner that is affirming to their gender identity or gender expression. Schools will not dictate clothing choices based on the sex of the student.
Single-sex Classes and Activities at School	<u>Title IX Gender Specific Activities</u> Title IX regulations permit offering single-sex classes under certain circumstances. The general rule under Title IX is that a recipient may not exclude, separate, deny benefits to, or otherwise treat differently any person on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities—including classes and extracurricular activities—unless expressly authorized to do so under Title IX or the Department’s implementing regulations. <u>LCS po31.22</u>	Students can join a school sponsored club that corresponds to their gender identity. Students can be separated by sex in class for contact sports in physical education classes and other topics such as Human Growth and Development.

- In order to best meet the needs of a student, a parent may give additional information and request accommodations by completing the **LCS Welcoming and Affirming Plan** (*link inserted when established*) and provide the information to the student's school administration.
- A parent may request a **Plan to Support Student** by contacting student services at the school the student attends.

When a Student Shares with You...

When a student shares with you they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning their sexuality or gender identity (LGBTQIA+) your initial response is of critical importance. The student has likely spent time in advance thinking about whether or not to tell you and when and how to tell you. Here are some tips to help you support them:

Offer support but don't assume a student needs any help. The student may be completely comfortable with their sexual orientation or gender identity and may not need help dealing with it or need any support. It may be that the student just wanted to tell someone, or just simply wanted to tell you so you might know them better. Offer and be available to support your students as they come to others. Keep personal opinions to yourself and be prepared to point the student in the direction of appropriate people for specific help and encourage the student to speak with their parent.

Be a role model of acceptance. Always model good behavior by using inclusive language and setting an accepting environment by not making assumptions about people's sexual orientation or gender identity. Addressing other's (adults and students) biased language and addressing stereotypes and myths about LGBTQIA+ people also puts you in a position as a positive role model. By demonstrating that you are respectful of LGBTQIA+ people and intolerant of bullying or name calling, all students are more likely to see you as a supportive educator.

Appreciate the student's courage. There is often a risk in telling someone something personal, especially sharing for the first time one's sexual orientation or gender identity, when it is generally not considered the norm. Sharing this personal information with you means that the student respects and trusts you.

Listen Non-Judgmentally. One of the best ways to support a student is to hear them out and let the student know you are there to listen. If the student needs support, the school personnel must notify the parent. Be prepared to offer resources that may include a referral to the student to school counselor or other student services personnel to identify resources for the student and family. *If a student discloses that they are at risk of harming themselves or others, immediately report the information to an administrator. As a mandated reporter, if you know or suspect child abuse, neglect, or abandonment, you must report that information to Florida Department of Children and Families. [Florida Abuse Hotline](https://www.fdcf.org) 1-800-962-2873*

Adapted from: A Guide for Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students in Your School www.qlsen.org

LGBTQIA+ Resources

Leon County Schools is committed to ensuring that all Leon County School students and employees, including LGBTQIA+, reach their fullest potential by creating safe and supportive environments in our schools. Schools are places where all young people should feel safe and secure. Students who experience acceptance at school are more highly motivated, engaged in learning, and committed to achieving the best possible education. Below is not an exhaustive list of state and government resources; however, for up-to-date statistics and resources, visit the websites below:

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health

Provides resources from the CDC, other government agencies, and community organizations for LGBTQ Youth, their friends, educators, parents, and family members to support positive environments.

<https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm>

FL Department of Education Equal Educational Opportunity

The Office of Equal Educational Opportunity (OEEO) provides services and information to Florida schools, school districts, parents, students, and community groups on topics impacting educational equity.

<https://www.fldoe.org/schools/equal-edual-opportunity/>

Florida School Counselors Association

The Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA) expands the image and influence of professional school counselors through advocacy, leadership, collaboration and systemic change at the state level. FSCA empowers professional school counselors with the knowledge, skills, linkages, and resources to promote student success in the school, the home, the community, and the world.

[LGBTQ Resource Page | Florida School Counselor Association \(fla-schoolcounselor.org\)](https://www.fla-schoolcounselor.org)

US Department of Education Resources

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces civil rights laws to protect all students from unlawful discrimination and harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/lgbt.html>

Local Mental Health Resources:

211 Big Bend <https://www.211.org/> Call 211

Apalachee Mobile Response: 800.342.0774

LCS- Mental Health Services www.leonschools.net/mentalhealth

LCS Safety & Security Center: 850.922.KIDS (5437)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.8255

Apalachee (Evaluation & Admissions)

2634 Capital Circle N. E.

850.523.3333 Ext 7

www.apalacheecenter.org

TMH-Behavioral Health Direct Admissions

1616 Physicians Dr.

850.431.3872

www.tmh.org/behavioral

CRMC Adolescent Intensive

Outpatient Program

850.325.5750

www.capitalregionalmedicalcenter.com

References

APA's Definitions Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Adolescent and School Health Terminology

Gay and Lesbian Student Education Network (GLSEN) 2019 National School Climate Survey

GLSEN: A Guide for Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students in Your School

World Health Organization's glossary of terms and tools

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2019

Nondiscrimination Notification

“No person shall on the basis of sex (including transgender, gender nonconforming and gender identity), marital status, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, color, pregnancy, disability or genetic information be denied employment, receipt of services, access to or participation in school activities or programs if qualified to receive such services, or otherwise be discriminated against or placed in a hostile environment in any educational program or activity including those receiving federal financial assistance, except as provided by law.” “No person shall deny equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society.”

An employee, student, parent or applicant alleging discrimination with respect to employment or to any educational program or activity may contact:

Students: Director of Equity and/or
Title IX Compliance Officer

Employees: Labor and Relations and/or
Equity Coordinator

**Leon County Schools
2757 West Pensacola Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32304
(850) 487-7100**

A student or parent alleging discrimination as it relates to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act may contact:

**Program Specialist for Section 504
(850) 487-7160**

**Rocky Hanna, Superintendent
Leon County School District
Tallahassee, Florida**