

KIPP DC:

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TRANSGENDER & GENDER NON-CONFORMING STUDENT POLICY

Objective

At KIPP DC, our objective is to create an inclusive and supportive school environment for all students. Studies and student survey data demonstrate that transgender and gender non-conforming students are vulnerable to victimization in school.¹ This feeling of victimization often resulted in worse educational outcomes and decreased psychological well-being, particularly for students of color.² Ultimately, when schools implement LGBTQIA+-supportive policies and practices, **all students** experience less emotional stress, less violence and harassment, and fewer suicidal thoughts and behaviors.³ The purpose of this policy is to address the pressing issue of discrimination and victimization faced by transgender, gender non-conforming, and LGBTQIA+ youth in KIPP DC schools and activities. This policy aims to foster a culture that ensures the well-being and academic success of all students, irrespective of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. By implementing LGBTQIA+-supportive policies and practices, we aspire to reduce emotional stress, instances of violence and harassment, and mitigate suicidal thoughts and behaviors among our students. Through these efforts, we strive to contribute to a positive and affirming educational experience for every individual, promoting equality, safety, and overall student success.

¹ According to the National 2013 Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) school climate survey, transgender and gender non-conforming students in school were more likely than students whose gender expression conformed with societal expectations to feel victimized and miss more days of school due to feeling unsafe. Joseph G. Kosciw, Ph.D.; Emily A. Greytak, Ph.D.; Neal A. Palmer, Ph.D.; and Madelyn J. Boesen, M.A. for the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), *The 2013 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools* (2013), <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/GLSEN-2013-National-School-Climate-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>.

² In the 2020 GLSEN report on Black LGBTQIA+ more than half (51.6%) of Black LGBTQIA+ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression. These students are more than twice as likely to skip school because they feel unsafe and less likely to create a plan to graduate. In addition, these students experience lower levels of school belonging and greater levels of depression. Nhan L. Truong, Ph.D.; Adrian D. Zongrone, M.P.H.; and Joseph G. Kosciw, Ph.D. for the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), *Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ youth in U.S. schools* (2020), <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Erasure-and-Resilience-Black-2020.pdf>.

³ United States Department of Education, *Toolkit for Creating Inclusive and Nondiscriminatory School Environments for LGBTQI+ Students* (2023), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/lgbtqi-student-resources-toolkit-062023.pdf>.

Definitions⁴

These definitions are intended to assist in understanding KIPP DC's policy guidance and the terms students may use to describe themselves.

- **Cisgender**: People who identify as the sex they were assigned at birth
- **Gender Expression**: How a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, or mannerisms. Many transgender people may match their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than their sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender Identity**: One's internal sense or psychological knowledge of their gender, regardless of the biological sex they were assigned at birth. For some people, their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity may not necessarily be the same.
- **Gender-Nonconforming**: An umbrella term that is used for people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender nonconforming students may identify as male, female, some combination of both, or neither. Similar terms include gender variant and gender atypical.
- **Gender Pronouns**: The pronoun a person prefers to have used when referred to in conversation (i.e., a person with a traditionally male gender identity likely prefers he, him, and his). Please note that young people may choose to go by they, ze, or no pronouns.
- **LGBTQ+**: An acronym for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning community.
- **Queer**: A term used by some people who are not cisgender and/or heterosexual. Though the word queer has been reclaimed by some in the LGBTQ+ community, it should still be used carefully given its history as a hateful slur.
- **Questioning**: This term describes someone who is questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Transgender**: A person whose gender identity or expression is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transition**: The process in which a person assumes a gender expression to match their gender identity. Transitions are not linear and may include any combination of physical, social, and medical processes. A transition can include: coming out to one's family and friends; hormone therapy; and in some cases, surgery. Not all transgender or gender-nonconforming people transition or desire to transition in the same way. Most importantly, transitions are private, and personal information about a transition should not be discussed unless a conversation is initiated and led by the transgender or gender-nonconforming person.

⁴ Definitions largely adopted from Transstudent.org.

Policies and Protocols

KIPP DC strives to create a safe and inclusive atmosphere for all students. The Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Policy outlines KIPP DC's protocols and best practices for ensuring the safety, treatment, and respect of all students regardless of their gender identity or expression. This guidance will help ensure all students are treated equitably and with dignity while at school.

All KIPP DC staff and administrators shall respect a student's right to confidentiality. Failure to protect a student's confidentiality may result in sexual harassment and a possible Title IX violation. Disclosing a student's legal name and/or gender to their parents or guardians, other students, or other third parties *may* violate applicable DC and federal privacy laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Thus, KIPP DC staff should not disclose this personal information unless legally required, due to a major safety concern, or with the student's authorization. Consequently, the needs of each student must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, students have the right to express their gender identity openly and are free to decide when and with whom they want to share such information.

Athletics

The mission of KIPP DC Athletics is to provide an athletic experience that fosters the development of a well-rounded education through structured sports and competition. KIPP DC Athletics is committed to ensuring equitable opportunities for all student-athletes. As such, a student can participate in athletics or a team consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed in a student's records, and without the requirement of prior medical or mental health care.

- I. **Athletic Dress Code:** Students are not required to wear team uniforms that conflict with their gender expression, and any dress codes for athletic teams must be gender-neutral.
- II. **Notice:** Prior to the start of the athletic season, a school administrator and/or athletic director should be notified if the student's gender identity differs from what is listed on school records to support the student's ability to fully engage in athletics, use preferred facilities according to their level of comfort, and in the sharing of their gender identity.
- III. **Participation/Enrollment:** Consistent with school policy for all student-athletes, all students generally must apply or try out to participate in an athletic program prior to the start of the specified athletic season. Additionally, all students are prohibited from switching between multiple sports mid-season.
- IV. **Competition at Other Schools:** Without violating a student's confidentiality, school administrators or the athletic director should communicate with competing schools to ensure that students have access to facilities and are addressed appropriately according to their respective gender identity.

Bathroom, Locker Room, and Changing Facilities

Students may choose to use the facilities for the gender which they feel the safest and most comfortable. Students may also choose to use a separate space, such as a single-stall bathroom, or have a separate changing schedule in the locker room. Even though some students may feel uncomfortable using the same bathroom, locker room, or changing facility as

a transgender or non-conforming student, this discomfort is not a reason to deny access to the transgender student considering that the school can provide an alternative.

Enrichment Activities

KIPP DC schools have a wide range of clubs and organizations to promote a variety of student passions and interests. At times, these clubs are geared towards a specific gender. A student can participate in a club or organization consistent with their gender identity.

Dress Code

KIPP DC respects and protects students' religious, ethnic, and cultural expression, and gender expression through their attire, during school, and while participating in school-sponsored events, such as prom. Dress code policies will be applied without bias, recognizing diverse gender expressions.

Names/Pronouns

KIPP DC students must be addressed by the name and pronouns with which they identify or request, despite whether or not a student has legally made the change. All unofficial records must reflect a student's name and pronouns as requested. However, KIPP DC staff should use a student's legal name and pronouns when contacting a parent or guardian, unless the student specifies otherwise.

Overnight Field Trips

When attending an overnight field trip, students will be assigned to housing based on the gender with which they identify. Although a student may request to stay in single-occupancy accommodations, KIPP DC will not require transgender or nonconforming students to stay in single-occupancy accommodations.

Reporting and Resolution

Any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bullying based on gender identity or expression should be promptly reported to:

Ashley Ogbonna, Title IX Coordinator
Phone: 202-265-5477
E-mail: Ashley.Ogbonna@kipfdc.org

KIPP DC is committed to investigating and addressing such reports in a timely and confidential manner.

Review and Revision

This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Feedback from students, staff, and parents will be considered in the ongoing improvement of our practices.

KIPP DC strives to create a learning environment that celebrates diversity, fosters inclusivity, and empowers every student to thrive academically and personally. This transgender and gender non-conforming policy reflects our commitment to these principles.