



TDSB Guidelines

for the Accommodation of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students and Staff

FACT SHEET: Definitions

The definitions provided below are not meant to label an individual but are intended as helpful functional descriptors.

Gender Identity: is linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self and their sense of being female, male, a combination of both, or neither regardless of their biological sex.

Gender Expression: refers to the way an individual expresses their gender identity (e.g. in the way they dress, the length and style of their hair, the way they act or speak, the volume of their voice, and in their choice of whether or not to wear make-up.)

Gender Non-Conforming: refers to individuals who do not follow other people's ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the female or male sex they were assigned at birth (also called Gender Variance and/or Gender Independence).

Intersex: a person who has male and female genetic and/or physical sex characteristics.

Transgender: refers to individuals whose gender identity is different from their biological sex at birth, and/or whose gender expression is different from the way males or females are stereotypically expected to look or behave.

Transition: the process (which for some people may also be referred to as the "gender reassignment process") whereby people change their appearance and bodies to match their internal (gender) identity, while living their lives full-time in their preferred gender role.

Transsexual: a term for a person who undergoes a medical gender reassignment process to change their birth-assigned sex.

Two-spirit: an English term coined to reflect specific cultural words used by First Nation and other indigenous peoples for those in their cultures who are gay or lesbian, are transgendered or transsexual, or have multiple gender identities.

This is not an exhaustive list. Please refer to the guidelines for further information.

What does this mean for students and staff?

Transgender or gender non-conforming individuals, have the right to be who they are openly. This includes expressing gender identity without fear of unwanted consequences. These guidelines set out the TDSB's best practices related to accommodation based on gender identity and gender expression. They have been designed to raise awareness and help protect against discrimination and harassment.

Individual Procedures for students

Board and school staff must consider each student's needs and concerns separately. Each transgender and gender non-conforming student is unique with different needs. An accommodation that works for one student cannot simply be assumed to work for another.

Individual Procedures for staff

An individual employee beginning the transition process should contact their immediate supervisor and the Human Rights Office, and be prepared to speak about their intentions, needs, and concerns.

POSSIBLE ACCOMODATIONS

Privacy for students

All students have a right to privacy; schools must keep a student's transgender/gender non-conforming status confidential. Therefore, school staff should not disclose a student's transgender/gender non-conforming status to others unless there is a specific "need to know" (e.g., to fulfill a specific accommodation request).

A school should never disclose a student's gender non-conformity or transgender status to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) without the student's explicit prior consent.

Privacy for staff

The transgender status of an employee is considered confidential and should only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis, and only with the consent of the employee. However, transitioning employees are encouraged to participate in the necessary education of their coworkers at whatever level they are comfortable.

Official Records

The school will change a student's official records to reflect a change in legal name or gender on receipt of documentation that such legal name or gender has been changed pursuant to applicable legislation.

Names/Pronouns

Transgender and gender non-conforming students have the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity.

Curriculum Integration and Access to Accurate Information

School board and school staff are expected to challenge gender stereotypes and integrate transpositive content into the teaching of all subject areas in accordance with TDSB policy and procedures and Provincial legislation.

Washroom Access for students

All students have a right to safe restroom facilities and the right to use a washroom that best corresponds to the student's gender identity, regardless of the student's sex assigned at birth. Where possible, schools will also provide an easily accessible all-gender single stall washroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason.

Washroom Access for staff

Employees have the right to use a washroom that corresponds to their gender identity, regardless of their sex assigned at birth. Where possible, schools will also provide an easily accessible all-gender single stall washroom for use by any staff member who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason.

Dress Codes for students

Schools' dress codes should be flexible and gender neutral. Students should not have to choose between 'male' and 'female' clothing. Some students are most comfortable in clothing that is not clearly male-identified or female-identified, but rather a combination of the two.

Dress Codes for staff

All employees have the right to dress consistently with their gender expression. For transitioning employees, the decision as to when and how to begin the real-life experience remains the individual's choice.

Sports Activities, Gym Classes, and Change Rooms

School staff must ensure students can exercise their right to participate in gender segregated sports and physical education (P.E.) class activities in accordance with each student's gender identity.

This is not an exhaustive list. Please refer to the guidelines for further information.