

Know **YOUR** Rights In School



Team Leaders

Jenn Burleton
Executive Director

Hayley Klug
Associate Advocate

Why Doesn't My School Get It?
I'm A Kid... Do I Have Rights?

What Can I Do?

Where Can I Get Help?

We Get It

“Why Don’t **They** Get It?”



- 🧩 Cisgender privilege - most faculty & staff have never thought about their gender identity
- 🧩 They think it’s just a phase you’re going through
- 🧩 They think it’s about sexual orientation and don’t want to deal with it, especially if you’re under 14
- 🧩 They may believe you are the “only one”
- 🧩 The educators need education

“Why Don’t **They** Do Something?”

- 🧩 They may not know what to do
- 🧩 They hope peer pressure will silence you
- 🧩 They’re afraid of conservative backlash for promoting the “gay agenda”
- 🧩 They are afraid of doing the wrong thing
- 🧩 They may marginalize you and your family
- 🧩 The wrong message is conveyed, or the person delivering the message isn’t effective

In Other Words...

They feel:

- 🧩 Confused
- 🧩 Afraid
- 🧩 Pressured
- 🧩 Threatened
- 🧩 Defensive
- 🧩 Stupid and Uninformed



School officials may be unwilling to admit they don't know what to do... so they do nothing.

What Are My Rights?

🧩 **HARASSMENT**

you have the right to be yourself and be safe

🧩 **PRIVACY**

no one has the right to “out you” without permission

🧩 **FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

if you attend public school you have the right to express your gender as you experience it, so long as it falls within the dress code for other students of the same gender

🧩 **FORM SCHOOL ALLIANCES**

the Federal Equal Access Act requires your school to allow you to form an extra-curricular student alliance

🧩 **NAMES & PRONOUNS**

you have the right to be called by your preferred name & pronoun



The Law And You

"It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their rights at the schoolhouse gate...
In our system, state-operated schools may not be the enclaves of totalitarianism. School officials do not possess absolute authority over their students...."

Abe Fortas - U.S. Supreme Court Justice

School Safety/Resource Officers

- Talk to your principal or counselor about what the role of this person is. Is it "law enforcement" or is it to provide a "safe educational environment" for all students? Share with the officer information on bullying & harassment directed at gender non conforming students. If they seem uninterested or uncooperative get an organization like TransActive involved.

What Is The School Dress Code? You Should Know!

School District Policies

- Learn all you can about school district policies on gender identity and expression. Type the name of your school district into Google and go to their website. The info should be there.

Public School Districts with Inclusive Policies

Sunnyside Unified School District (AZ)
Tucson Unified School District (AZ)
Los Angeles Unified School District (CA)
Morgan Hill Unified School District (CA)
San Francisco Unified School District (CA)
San Leandro Unified School District (CA)
Denver Public Schools (CO)
City Schools of Decatur (GA)
Lawrence School District (KS)
Alexandria Township Public Schools (NJ)
Howell Township Public Schools (NJ)
Newark (NJ)
Oradell School District (NJ)
Gallup-McKinley County Schools (NM)
Katonah-Lewisboro (NY)
New York City Public Schools (NY)
Putnam Valley Central School District (NY)
Rochester (NY)
Guilford County Schools (NC)
School District of Philadelphia
(PA)Providence Public School District (RI)

Knox County School District (TN)
Denton Independent School District (TX)
Burlington (VT)
Chehalis School District (WA)
Deer Park School District (WA)
Highland School District 203 (WA)
Moses Lake School District (WA)
Mount Vernon School District (WA)
Peninsula School District (WA)
Port Townsend School District (WA)
Pullman School District 267 (WA)
Raymond School District (WA)
Ridgefield School District 122 (WA)
Riverview School District (WA)
Seattle Public Schools (WA)
Spokane Public Schools (WA)
Tacoma Public Schools 10 (WA)
Wenatchee School District 246 (WA)
West Valley School District 363 (WA)
Woodland School District (WA)
Madison Metro School District (WI)

And all schools in Oregon... even though they might not know it.

Pick **Your** Battles

- 🧩 Don't expect the faculty and staff to change overnight
- 🧩 This is about you, not about a political or social agenda
- 🧩 Be a teacher, not a nuisance
- 🧩 Stay within the school dress code for your gender identity
- 🧩 It's not about winning arguments, it's about making allies
- 🧩 Don't discuss who you might or might not be attracted to. Keep them focused on gender identity.

What Can **I** Do?

You're the expert on you. That gives you power. Don't waste it.

Report bullying & harassment to the Principal or Asst. Principal.

Help them find reasons TO help. Don't give them reasons NOT to help.

Read EVERYTHING you can about gender identity. YOU are the expert.

Use the internet to find reliable resources:

- This does NOT include people you meet on MySpace or Twitter.
- NEVER meet someone alone you've met on the internet.
- ALL trans people don't necessarily know what they are talking about
- There's a lot of garbage out there. Get a 2nd opinion from people you trust.

Refuse to negotiate your identity. Cooperate, but don't compromise.

When dealing with adults, paperwork is GOD. Keep a diary/log of everything that happens related to your gender identity/expression at school.

An Actual Student Log

Incidents

August 28, 2008

As reported to TransActive by [Student Name] and her parents.

[Student Name] – Age 15
Complaint: The administration, faculty and staff of the YOUR School District has been negligent in responding to repeated and reported incidents of harassment, bullying, & human rights abuses directed at [Student Name] based upon her gender identity expression and/or perceived Sexual orientation.

Schools involved:

- Happy Middle School –
100 Happy Rd, Your Town, USA
- Happier High School –
200 Happy Rd, Your Town, USA

Steve A. – Happy MS

"Put your cosmetics away,"
Broke [Student's] binder

Scott F. – Happy MS

Deliberate disregard for reports of harassment

Joe S. – Happier HS

Ignored bullying and teasing

Ken H. – Assistant Principal at Happier HS

"Read the computer."
Said to [Student] when she told him her name was [Female Name] and not [Male Name]. His point seemed to be that [Student's] request could not be granted because her birth name was still in the computer.

Refused to hear [Student's] side of the story regarding Being assaulted by another student.

Made prejudiced remarks and insulted [Student].

Said he did not hear Dave (classmate of [Student's] call [Student] a queer, even though Mr. H. was standing right there.

Said he couldn't help [Student] if she didn't come see him, but when she did, he didn't follow through.

Choosing Your Team

🌸 Family:

If they are there for you, let them know how much you appreciate it.

🌸 Faculty & Staff Allies:

Start by talking to your favorite teacher, or someone else you trust, like the school counselor.

🌸 Local Organizations:

If there is a local group that is strong on trans youth issues, contact them. If not...

🌸 National Organizations:

Contact a national organization that specializes in transgender & gender non-conforming youth issues.

🌸 Health Care Professionals:

If you are working with a therapist or doctor that supports your gender identity & expression, get them on your team.

🌸 Friends:

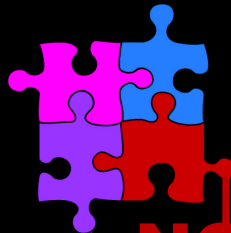
You've got them. Let them be there for you and in return, you be there for them.

Put Your Team To Work

Schools must take steps to reduce harassment, bullying and violence.
To improve school climate for all students, schools must:

- ✿ Establish clear policies that protect gender identity & gender expression
- ✿ Enforce these policies meaningfully
- ✿ Train teachers, counselors, administrators and other school staff in gender identity & expression sensitivity
- ✿ Introduce curriculum that addresses gender identity & expression
- ✿ Employ staff that is gender non-conforming or that has experience with these issues
- ✿ Ensure that students have access to support and information
- ✿ Support GenderYOUTH programs, Diversity or Tolerance Clubs, Human and Civil Rights Clubs or similar student clubs
- ✿ Gender-neutral bathrooms and gender appropriate restroom and locker room accessibility
- ✿ Confidentiality – Schools should never disclose a student's gender identity, gender expression, or gender non-conformity to a parent without the student's consent
- ✿ Students must have the right to use a locker room they feel corresponds with their gender identity and expression

© Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GPAC)
Children As They Are



thetimeisNOW

**The world deserves to
know the real you**

**The first month is the hardest for most...
after that, it gets better
almost every day**

We know... we've been there.



And we'll be there for you

Your Tool Kit #1

Share these tips with teachers, administrators and staff

1. **Allow youth to define themselves.**
Use student's preferred name and pronoun and encourage classmates to do the same.
2. **Create an approachable atmosphere.**
Model openness and acceptance, and intervene when children gender-police each other.
3. **Celebrate diversity.**
Be expansive regarding gender choices and curriculum materials that show boys and girls challenging traditional gender stereotypes.
4. **Talk with parents about students' freedom of gender expression in your classroom.**
Students are with us for 1,260 hours a year – and with their families for 7,500 hours a year. What we do in the classroom comes quickly undone unless students' families support it.
5. **Encourage administrators and colleagues to address gender-based bullying and harassment as avidly as other forms of discrimination and violence.**
6. **Don't create groups or assign tasks according to gender.**
Use creative methods – like drawing names from a jar – or establish a cycle to create groups and assign tasks.
7. **Support all interests that children display, regardless of whether these conform to gender expectations.**
Don't react negatively to a child's gender choice, comment, or behavior.
8. **Address name-calling and other incidents of harassment when they occur.**
Don't let "boys be boys!" Bullying and harassment, gender-based or otherwise, should not be ignored.

© Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GPAC)
Children As They Are

Your Tool Kit #2

We, as teachers and staff of [Your High School], believe that society's stigmatization of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals is unjust;

That this largely unchallenged stigma is responsible for an educational environment hostile to all transgender and gender non-conforming students;

That such an environment perpetuates bias;

That we, as teachers and staff, have a responsibility to create a school climate which welcomes and honors transgender and gender non-conforming individuals just as it should welcome and honor all others.

We, therefore, pledge to support this Bill of Educational Rights for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students.

We will serve these students in accordance with these principles and actively support their adoption by the [Your School District] as part of our concern for the rights and dignity of all people.

1. The right to fair and factual information about gender identity and expression in textbooks and other classroom materials.
2. The right to unbiased information about the historical and continuing contributions of transgender and gender non-conforming people in all subject areas, including art, literature, science, sports and history.
3. The right to positive role models, both in person and in the curriculum; the right to accurate information about themselves, free of negative judgment and delivered by trained adults who not only inform transgender and gender non-conforming students, but affirm them.
4. The right to attend schools free of verbal and physical harassment.
5. The right to attend schools where respect and dignity for all students is a standard set by the superintendent of public instruction, supported by the boards of education, and enforced by every principal, teacher and staff member.
6. The right to be included in support programs that exist to help teenagers deal with the difficulties of adolescence.
7. The right to a heritage free of crippling self-hate and unchallenged discrimination.
8. The right to advocacy through concerned staff and faculty.
9. The right to inclusion in programs, curriculum, activities and teacher training that address issues of cultural diversity

Your Tool Kit #3 (Resources)

LEGAL

National Center for Lesbian Rights

Courtney Joslin

Staff Attorney

870 Market St., Ste. 570,

San Francisco, CA 94102,

(415) 392-6257

www.nclrights.org

Transgender Law Center

(415) 865-0176

www.transgenderlawcenter.org

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

125 Broad Street, 18th Floor

New York, NY 10024

(212) 549-2627

<http://gbge.aclu.org/>

SOCIAL SERVICES

National Association of Social Workers

202-408-8600

www.helpstartshere.org/common/Search/Default.asp

EDUCATION

TransActive

(503) 927-7052

transeducate@gmail.com

www.transactiveonline.org

GLSEN

(212) 727-0135

glsen@glsen.org

www.glsen.org

Gender Spectrum Family

(877) 809-4159

www.genderspectrumfamily.org