



Book	Administrative Guideline Manual
Section	5000 Students
Title	TRANSGENDER AND GENDER VARIANT STUDENTS
Code	ag5517.02
Status	Active
Adopted	August 12, 2022

5517.02 - **TRANSGENDER AND GENDER VARIANT STUDENTS**

SAFE & SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Columbus City Schools' Board of Education Policies 5517 and 5517.01 prohibit harassment, bullying, intimidation, and any other aggressive behavior based upon a student's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and any other legally protected category. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities [20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)]. Columbus City Schools' Board of Education Policy 5517.02 supports these prohibitions with respect to transgender and gender variant students.

Communication with the student is paramount. Schools are encouraged to communicate openly, albeit confidentially, with students regarding their transgender status or gender identity or expression. Proper communication with the student will ensure that appropriate steps are taken to determine a student's preferences and address potential privacy concerns and associated risks to the student's well-being.

Columbus City Schools will work closely with transgender and gender variant students and their parents/guardians to address preferences with respect to name and pronoun usage in school. A plan will be developed to reflect the student's needs and wishes with respect to the use of names and pronouns within the school and in any school-related activity. In situations where the parent/guardian is opposed to any name or pronoun usage changes, school staff will continue to work with families and students in an effort to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution. Parents/guardians must be kept informed of any name or pronoun usage changes.

Name, Pronoun and/or Other Gender Identity Related Request

When a request for a name change or other assistance is made at the building level, the nature of the request might require a tiered response, based on the permanence or temporary nature of the name, pronoun and/or other gender identity-related request. Steps should be taken to determine a student's desires regarding the scope of sharing their name, pronoun, or other information. This may not always, or initially, require the formality of contacting the Equity Department liaison, identity_request@columbus.k12.oh.us, who shall be a District staff member who will assist building staff, students, and families in discussing these issues.

When a request is made at the building level on a more permanent basis, for a student to use a name and/or pronoun, based on gender identity, and those are different from the ones assigned at birth, that request must be sent to a District liaison at the designated email address. A District liaison will follow up with the District support team which includes but is not limited to school counselors, social workers, nurses, school psychologists and/or building administrators. A District support team representative will schedule a meeting with the support team, student, and student's parent/guardian to discuss and review the CCS Name and Gender Change Request Form and any questions, including but are not limited to involvement in sports, use of dressing rooms or restrooms, other staff who might need to be made aware of the student's gender identity and other layers of support the student may need.

During the scheduled meeting, the building administrator will provide a copy of the CCS Name and Gender Change Request Form to the parent/guardian as well as a copy of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Transgender Student Policy and the CCS Board of Education Transgender and Gender Variant Policy 5517.02, which provides definitions of official and unofficial school records which may be changed in accordance with completion of the form. If the form is completed and

signed, the building administrator will return the form to the Director of Central Enrollment who will facilitate the changes in the electronic student database. In order to ensure confidentiality, the completed form will be maintained electronically in a secure location by the Director of Central Enrollment and an encrypted copy will be sent to the provided Equity liaison.

Privacy, Confidentiality & Safety

The District (and all school personnel) will make every effort to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for the student regarding their birth name and/or gender. The District will work closely with transgender and gender nonconforming students, their guardians and families to address confidentiality and safety regarding the students' gender identity. When a name and/or gender change has been approved, an identified group will be permitted access to the student's protected identity information screen in the Student Information System.

Use of Facilities

In determining which gender-specific school facilities (restrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms) will be used by transgender and gender variant students, the building administrator shall take into consideration the desires of the individual transgender and gender variant student and student's guardian, as well as the privacy interests of other students. However, in the interest of educational equity, transgender and gender variant students must be provided access to facilities consistent with their gender identity. A transgender or gender variant student may not be required to use a single-gender facility or a facility that conflicts with the student's gender identity as reported to the school. Building principals will work with transgender and gender nonconforming students and their guardians on a private/confidential and individual basis for ensuring that students have access to facilities. Neither the collaborative discussion nor the identified facilities should violate the student's sense of privacy, confidentiality, or in any way marginalize or stigmatize the student. If the desired use by the transgender student is in significant conflict with safety requirements for other students, the building administrator should consult with the Superintendent, Chief of Equity and/or Legal Counsel, as appropriate.

Student Records and References

The District is required to maintain a permanent pupil record ("official record") that includes a student's legal name and legal gender. This is the name and gender listed on the student's birth certificate or in a court order correcting or revising it. The District will change a student's official record to reflect a correction or revision in legal name or legal gender upon receipt of a court document or a revised birth certificate. Official records include transcripts, standardized testing information, reports to the Ohio Department of Education and reports to law enforcement. Access to this portion of official student records shall be restricted by a process that maintains the confidentiality of a student's birth identity.

The District is not required to use a student's legal name and gender on other school records or documents. In situations where school staff or administrators are required, by law, to use or to report a transgender or gender nonconforming student's legal name or gender, school staff and administrators shall adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information. Unofficial records shall reflect the preferred name and gender identity of the student. Unofficial records are school records or documents that do not require a legal name or gender such as: class rosters, attendance records, discipline documents, diplomas, evaluation team reports (ETR), individualized education plans (IEP), Section 504 records, student ID badge, and yearbook photos. Students shall be addressed or referred to by the pronouns associated with their transgender and gender nonconforming identity, ie: "he", "his", "him", "she", "her", "hers", "they", "them", "theirs", et. al.

Activities

With respect to gender-specific classes or athletic activities, including intramural and interscholastic athletics, all students must be allowed to participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity. When classes or intramural activities are separated by gender, transgender and gender nonconforming students are to be grouped according to the student's gender identity or preference (in the case of non-binary students). When school activities involve overnight travel, lodging arrangements for transgender and gender nonconforming students shall take into consideration the desires of the individual transgender or gender nonconforming student and of the student's guardian as well as the safety requirements and consideration for other students. If the arrangement desired by the transgender or gender nonconforming student is in significant conflict with privacy interests of other students, the building administrator should consult with the Superintendent, Chief of Equity and with Legal Counsel, if appropriate.

Sports

Participation by students in extracurricular sports and interscholastic athletics are educational opportunities. Therefore, transgender and gender nonconforming students must be given the same opportunities to participate in extracurricular sports as all other students. Subject to the eligibility requirements of the Ohio High School Athletic Association ("OHSAA") and Board Policy 2431, Interscholastic Athletics, a student must be permitted to participate in intramural sports, competitive athletic activities and contact sports in accordance with the student's gender identity or preference (in the case of non-binary students).

Interscholastic athletics are under the oversight of the OHSAA. As a result, interscholastic athletics are subject to OHSAA rules and regulations. Columbus City Schools students who participate in interscholastic sports must meet OHSAA eligibility requirements to participate. OHSAA has very specific guidelines regarding athletic eligibility for transgender and gender nonconforming students. Guardians of transgender and gender nonconforming students and GNC students should be directed to OHSAA's Transgender Policy for guidance. A copy of OHSAA's Transgender Policy will be provided to guardians and students upon request and/or upon signing the Name/Gender Change Request Form.

Classes

Transgender and gender nonconforming students shall be permitted to participate in physical education & health classes in a manner consistent with their gender identity or preference (in the case of non-binary students). Where students are grouped according to qualities which may have some association with gender (such as vocal quality for singing groups), the pertinent quality shall be evaluated without regard to assigned gender or gender identity.

Dress Code

Dress codes may be enforced by schools. Students may dress in accordance with their gender identity, but within the constraints of the dress codes adopted by the District or the individual school. A school's dress code should not be enforced more strictly against any group of students including transgender and gender nonconforming students.