

*Supporting*  
**TRANSGENDER &  
GENDER DIVERSE**

*Students in Manitoba Schools*

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**Supporting Transgender and  
Gender Diverse Students  
in Manitoba Schools**

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Print copies of this resource (stock number 80727) can be purchased from the Manitoba Learning Resource Centre. Order online at [www.manitobalrc.ca](http://www.manitobalrc.ca).

This resource is available on the Manitoba Education and Training website at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe\\_schools/](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/).

*Disponible en français.*

Available in alternate formats upon request.

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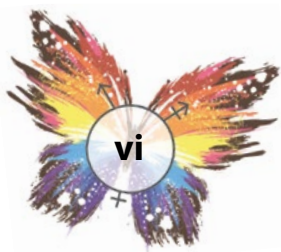


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## Introduction and Context

All schools should be places where all our children feel welcomed and safe. When students are included rather than excluded, welcomed and affirmed rather than marginalized, bullied, harassed, or made to feel invisible because of their gender identity or gender expression or any other aspect of who they are, they tend to flourish.

Manitoba Education and Training developed the guidelines in this support document to ensure that *transgender* and *gender diverse* students have equitable access to all aspects of school life (academic, extracurricular, and social) in ways that preserve and protect their dignity.

The education system in Manitoba is committed to fair and equitable participation and benefit by all people. The department and its school partners throughout Manitoba have worked diligently to make all our schools safer and more inclusive for all students. This resource will serve to enhance the work of school leaders, administrators, teachers, students, and parents/guardians in making schools safe, respectful, and equitable for all.\*

### Terminology

This document uses the words *transgender (trans)* and *gender diverse* to describe a wide range of people whose gender identities and/or gender expressions differ from what is typically associated with their assigned biological sex. Specific individuals may or may not identify as trans or gender diverse, and may prefer to identify themselves using different terms (see [Glossary](#)).

## Purpose

Schools should be places where all children feel welcomed and safe. School administrators, educators, staff, parents/guardians, and students each play an important part in creating and sustaining a safe and supportive school environment.

“I don’t want to be just someone wearing a costume. I want to be me”  
(trans youth, quoted in Sheldon and Krop).

\* It is recognized that each school or school division may seek its own legal counsel with respect to the guidelines set out in this document.



This resource is intended to support schools and school boards in fulfilling a shared responsibility to promote the dignity, respect, and equity of trans and gender diverse students. The guidelines are designed to support trans and gender diverse students by

- respecting their human rights, to enable the free and full expression of their identity
- ensuring their well-being, full participation, success, and achievement
- involving their parents/guardians and families as key partners in their development when and where possible
- highlighting areas to consider when developing school policy and practice to create safe and caring environments for learning, free from bullying and discrimination
- increasing the awareness and capacity of divisional and school staff in supporting gender diversity in the school community

## The Challenge

“I was tormented all the way until I was in the ninth grade (transgendered male-to-female youth, age 22 years)” (quoted in National Aboriginal Health Organization 8).

To progress academically and developmentally, all students need a safe and supportive school environment. Unfortunately, many trans students do not feel safe at school. As reported in the study *Every Class in Every School: First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools* (Taylor et al.), trans and gender diverse students often struggle to find safe and caring school environments. The study, which involved surveying over 3700 students from across Canada between December 2002 and June 2009, found that

**90%** of trans youth hear transphobic comments daily or weekly from other students and almost a quarter (**23%**) of trans students reported hearing teachers use transphobic language daily or weekly. Almost three-quarters (**74%**) of trans students reported being verbally harassed about their gender expression.

A quarter (**25%**) of trans students reported having been physically harassed . . . .

**44%** of trans students reported being likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe and **15%** reported having skipped more than 10 days because of feeling unsafe at school. (Taylor et al. 23)

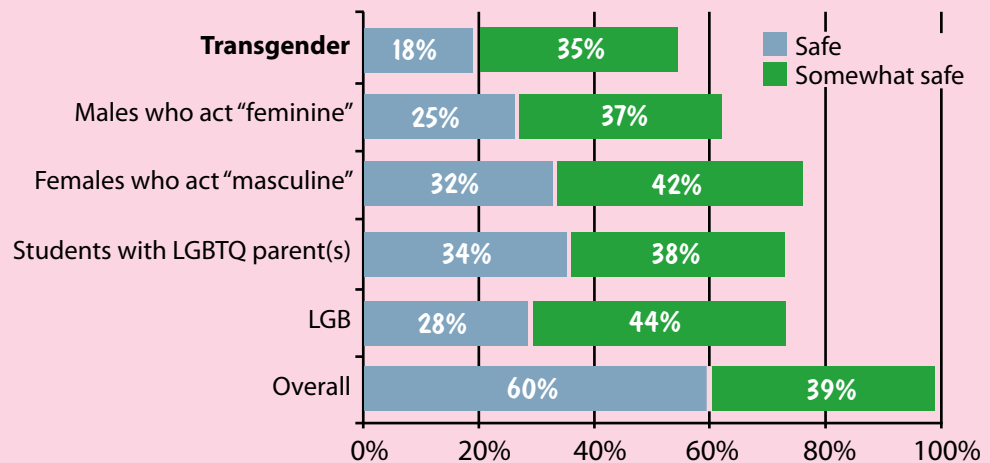


“The student Climate Survey showed that transgender students are even more likely to be harassed and feel unsafe at school than LGB students; the Every Teacher survey showed that most teachers felt that transgender students would not feel safe in their schools” (Taylor et al., *The Every Teacher Project* 156).

Lack of awareness or understanding and/or societal prejudice result in many trans and gender diverse students experiencing ongoing rejection, criticism, or bullying. In addition, they may not have access to appropriate supports and services, all of which may have a significant impact on their health, well-being, and academic achievement.

“Almost all educators (97%) considered their school to be safe but when they were asked questions that focus on the safety of LGBTQ students the numbers dropped substantially, especially for transgender students [see chart below]. LGBTQ participants and FNMI [First Nations, Métis, and Inuit] or other racialized participants were even more likely than CH [cisgender heterosexual] or White participants to see their schools as unsafe for LGBTQ students” (Taylor et al., *The Every Teacher Project* 17).

Educators’ Perceptions of School Safety\*



\* **Source:** Taylor, Catherine, Tracey Peter, Christopher Campbell, Elizabeth Meyer, Janice Ristock, and Donn Short. *The Every Teacher Project on LGBTQ-Inclusive Education in Canada's K-12 Schools: Final Report*. Winnipeg, MB: The Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2015. 27. Reproduced with permission.



The 2015 report *Being Safe, Being Me: Results of the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey* (Veale et al.) provides evidence of the effects of social exclusion and lack of appropriate supports and services for trans children and youth. The report provides a summary of the findings of a national online survey conducted by researchers from several Canadian universities and community organizations. The survey included 923 trans participants from all 10 provinces and one of the territories. Trans youth were asked about a wide range of life experiences and behaviours that influence their own and other youth's health.

The participating youth reported serious concerns:

Many of these youth face rejection, discrimination and even violence, within their families, at school or work, in their community, and in health care settings. They report significant stress and mental health challenges, a profound lack of safety in navigating their daily lives, barriers to supportive health care, and worrying rates of poverty. (Veale et al. 69)

The report also found hope:

When young people felt cared about, they reported much lower levels of distress and better health. Trans youth, like all youth, need the support and care of family, friends, school staff, and other professionals, to reach their full potential as healthy adults. (Veale et al. 69)

Other jurisdictions report similar research findings, and these experiences are not limited solely to high school students. Students in Early and Middle Years schools may also experience significant transphobia.

The results of these national and international studies and surveys are clear, and may be summarized as follows:

- Educational supports are needed to help trans and gender diverse students move from feeling at risk to developing the resilience necessary to adapt to often hostile and unwelcoming school, family, and community environments.
- Despite the risk factors, many trans and gender diverse youth learn to develop protective strategies and personal resilience in the face of daily adversity.
- Trans and gender diverse students, in spite of some improvements, often face extremely hostile and discriminatory school environments.
- Trans and gender diverse students have poorer educational outcomes, report less attachment to their school environment, and identify far greater experiences of harassment, homelessness, discrimination, and verbal, physical, and sexual abuse and assault than their cisgender peers, regardless of sexual orientation.



The authors of *Being Safe, Being Me* concluded that “Schools need to become safer and more welcoming for trans youth, even before youth make themselves known to school staff. Schools and school districts should work with trans youth, parents of trans youth, trans community leaders, and professionals to develop effective policies and programs that create supportive school environments” (Veale et al. 69).

## Document Content and Organization

The [Guidelines for Supporting and Affirming Trans and Gender Diverse Students](#) form the core of this document. The guidelines are intended to help school divisions and schools, with the involvement of parents/guardians, to develop their own policies and protocols to promote respect for and equity of trans and gender diverse students in safe, caring, and inclusive schools and learning environments.

The sections surrounding the guidelines include discussions of the Manitoba legal and policy framework, understanding trans and gender diverse identities and gender expressions, creating affirming schools for all, and planning for and implementing gender transitioning in schools. This document also includes information on related support services, an annotated list of selected print and online resources, and a glossary defining many of the terms used within this resource. A bibliography is also included.



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**Notes**





### Human Rights Legislation

*The Human Rights Code* of Manitoba (The Code) was amended in June of 2012 specifically to incorporate the protection of transgender people from discrimination. *Discrimination* is a term often used in *human rights* law to distinguish the *adverse* differential treatment of an individual because of a prohibited ground (such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, religious belief, or other characteristic).

According to The Manitoba Human Rights Commission,

Gender identity is a person's internal, individual experience of gender.<sup>1</sup> Gender refers to the "roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women."<sup>2</sup>

Persons who are transgender have a gender identity that differs from their biological sex. Persons who are transsexual have a gender identity that differs from their biological sex and take steps, or seek to take steps, to align their physical appearance with their felt sense of being male or female. Steps might include changes to their physical appearance and dress, and medical treatment such as hormonal therapy and surgery. Persons who are gender variant have an expression of gender identity that does not conform to the dominant norms for boys and girls, men and women. (The Manitoba Human Rights Commission, "Protections from Discrimination Based on Gender Identity")

- 
- 1 International Commission of Jurists and International Service for Human Rights. *The Yogyakarta Principles: Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*. Mar. 2007. [www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles\\_en.pdf](http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.pdf). Page 6.
  - 2 World Health Organization. "Gender, Equity, and Human Rights." *Health Topics*. [www.searo.who.int/topics/gender/en/](http://www.searo.who.int/topics/gender/en/).



In working with trans and gender diverse students to meet their needs, schools need to be aware of the difference between *differential treatment* and *reasonable accommodation*.

## Change of Sex Designation in Manitoba

With amendments to *The Vital Statistics Act*, Manitoba significantly changed the process for change of sex designation in February 2015 (Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency).

Manitoba changed its legislation to remove the requirement for transsexual surgery to change the sex designation on a Manitoba birth registration and birth certificate. A person whose birth is registered in Manitoba may apply for this change through an application that includes a statutory declaration and a letter from a health care professional (physician, psychiatrist, surgeon, nurse practitioner, psychologist, or other relevant health care professional).

Youth under the age of majority (18) may be able to change their sex designation *without parental consent*. To do so, they must be declared a “mature minor” by a recognized health care professional and follow the same requirements as those outlined above. The mature minor doctrine states that, regardless of age,

a child is capable of consenting (or refusing to consent) to treatment if he or she is able to appreciate the nature and purpose of the treatment and the consequences of giving or refusing consent. If the child has the requisite capacity, then the child’s consent is both necessary and sufficient; the parent’s consent is not required, nor can the parent override the child’s decision<sup>29</sup> (Women’s Health Clinic, quoted in Healthy Child Manitoba 29).

### Differential Treatment

According to *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba), discrimination is deemed to have occurred when there is differential treatment:

In this Code, “**discrimination**” means

- a. differential treatment of an individual on the basis of the individual’s actual or presumed membership in or association with some class or group of persons, rather than on the basis of personal merit; or
- b. differential treatment of an individual or group on the basis of any [protected] characteristic . . . ; or
- c. differential treatment of an individual or group on the basis of the individual’s or group’s actual or presumed association with another individual or group whose identity or membership is determined by any [protected] characteristic . . . ; or
- d. failure to make reasonable accommodation for the special needs of any individual or group, if those special needs are based upon any [protected] characteristic . . . (9[1])

Unless the differential treatment can be justified under the rigorous test set out in the legislation and as set by legal precedents, it is deemed to be discriminatory.

### Reasonable Accommodation

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission describes reasonable accommodation as

providing or modifying devices, goods, services or facilities or changing practices or procedures in order to provide access for a particular person with a particular activity. The duty to accommodate is not unlimited. The employer or provider of services need not accommodate to the point of undue hardship. (Burch)

Reasonable accommodation might occur when a school or teacher provides an accommodation that has been requested by a parent or child to meet the child’s specific needs.



It should be noted that the process for legal change of name is governed by *The Change of Name Act* (Manitoba). In the case of a person under the age of 18, the application must be made by a custodial parent or legal guardian and may require the consent of the other custodial parent, the consent of the child, and/or notice to a non-custodial parent.

For more information on legal change of sex designation, see:

- Manitoba. *The Vital Statistics Act*. C.C.S.M. c. V60. Winnipeg, MB: Queen's Printer—Statutory Publications, 1987. Available online at <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/v060e.php>.
- Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency. Home Page. <http://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/>.

For more information on legal change of name, see:

- Manitoba. *The Change of Name Act*. C.C.S.M. c. C50. Winnipeg, MB: Queen's Printer—Statutory Publications, 1987. Available online at <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/c050e.php>.

## Safe and Caring Schools

In 2013, amendments were made to *The Public Schools Act* (Manitoba) concerning safe and inclusive schools. The amendments require school boards to have a policy concerning respect for human diversity and to ensure that the policy is implemented in each school in the school division. This policy is also meant to “address training for teachers and other staff about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting respect for human diversity and a positive school environment” (41[1.6][b]).

The Act requires each school board to establish a respect for human diversity policy:

The policy is to promote acceptance of and respect for others in a safe, caring, and inclusive school environment. The policy must accommodate student activity that promotes the school environment as being inclusive of all pupils, including student activities and organizations that use the name “gay-straight alliance” (*The Public Schools Amendment Act [Safe and Inclusive Schools]*, Explanatory Note).

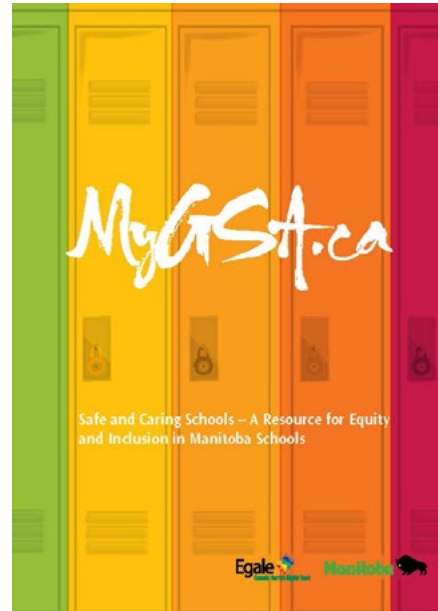


In 2014, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning collaborated in developing *Safe and Caring Schools: A Resource for Equity and Inclusion in Manitoba Schools (MB MyGSA.ca)*. This document is intended as a tool for educators, students, and parents/guardians in working together to create more equitable and inclusive schools, especially with respect to diversity of sexuality and gender identity and expression.

The importance of inclusion and social justice and their relationship to health and well-being is reflected in *Guide for Sustainable Schools in Manitoba*:

Sustainable schools aim to be models of social inclusion, health, and well-being. Sustainable schools enable all learners to participate fully in school life while instilling a long-lasting respect for human rights, freedoms, culture and creative expression . . . Sustainable schools promote community cohesion by providing an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that values everyone’s participation and contributions—irrespective of background, culture, age, religion, or ability—and by challenging prejudice and injustice in all its forms. (International Institute for Sustainable Development and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning 40)

These examples of Manitoba’s educational resources, along with the amendments made to *The Public Schools Act*, underscore Manitoba Education and Training’s commitment to upholding the values of equity and genuine acceptance and respect for diversity in all schools and learning environments.



For more information and resources on safe and caring schools, see:

- Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Safe and Caring Schools: A Resource for Equity and Inclusion in Manitoba Schools (MB MyGSA.ca)*. Winnipeg, MB: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014. Available online at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe\\_schools/mygsa/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/mygsa/index.html).
- Manitoba Education and Training. *Safe and Caring Schools*. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe\\_schools/](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/).



## Understanding Trans and Gender Diverse Identities and Gender Expressions

“If you’re not yourself, then it kind of gets sad and depressing. I’m glad that I told everybody.” (Wren Kauffman, quoted in Purdy)

It is important that all educators, school and divisional personnel, students, and parents/guardians have an understanding of the meaning of and distinctions between trans and gender diverse identities and gender expressions. A brief overview of this essential information is provided below in the form of summarized responses to frequently asked questions.\* (For further definitions of terms, see the [Glossary](#), and for additional information, refer to the list of annotated resources in [Appendix B: Selected Print and Online Resources](#).)

### Frequently Asked Questions

*What is the difference between biological sex, gender identity, and gender expression?*

The terms *sex* and *gender* are often used interchangeably, but there are very important distinctions between the two:

- *Sex* refers to one’s genitals and reproductive organs and other biological characteristics such as chromosomes and hormone prevalence. These anatomical details are thought to define a person’s biological status as male or female and are generally assigned at birth. (It is important to note that various conditions may lead to atypical development of physical sex characteristics in some children that are collectively referred to as *intersex conditions*.)
- *Gender* is generally understood to refer to one’s sense of gender identity, meaning one’s internal sense of self, regardless of biology. Gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), gender is a social and cultural construct that refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and characteristics that a given society or cultural group considers “appropriate” for females or males. These concepts or constructs of gender have a great influence on the ways people act, interact, and feel about themselves. While the aspects of what constitutes biological sex are similar across different societies and cultures, concepts of gender may differ significantly (APA, *Answers 1*).

\* **Source:** Some responses to these questions are drawn from the following source:

American Psychological Association. *Answers to Your Questions about Transgender People, Gender Identity and Gender Expression*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2011, 2014. Available online at [www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/transgender.aspx](http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/transgender.aspx) (3 May 2016). Copyright © 2011 American Psychological Association. Updated in 2014.



Everyone has a *gender identity*, which is described as one’s personal, internal, or intrinsic sense of being one in a spectrum of gender identities, such as male, female, transgender, two-spirit, genderqueer, bigender, gender fluid, transsexual, gender creative, pangender, transmen, transwomen, gender independent, agender, male-to-female (MTF), female-to-male (FTM), intersex, and/or something else. (See the [Glossary](#) for definitions of some of these identities.)

*Gender expression* refers to the way a person communicates, demonstrates, or “expresses” their personal concept of gender identity to others through behaviours, dress, grooming, voice, or body characteristics (APA, *Questions 1*). Some researchers suggest that a person’s gender identity is set by age 3 (Ryan, *Supportive Families*). For many individuals, gender identity and gender expression are consistent with their biological/anatomical sex (cisgender) and/or the societal expectations for being/acting male or female. For others, however, gender identity does not reflect their anatomical/biological sex.

#### Personal Pronouns

In this document, the terms *they*, *their*, and *them* are used as singular, gender-inclusive pronouns to refer to persons of diverse gender identities and expressions.

Gender, like sexual orientation, is diverse and includes multiple gender identities. Therefore, gender may be seen as being related to the following three aspects (Gender Spectrum):

- biology/anatomy
- sense of self (gender identity)
- presentation of self through dress and action (gender expression)

#### *What is the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation?*

*Sexual orientation* refers to a person’s “enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person” (APA, *Answers 2*). In contrast, *gender identity* refers to how one sees oneself; it is one’s personal or inner sense of being one in a spectrum of gender identities (as discussed earlier).

Transgender people, like cisgender people, vary in their sexual orientation. They may be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or asexual. APA addresses the question about the relationship between gender identity and sexual orientation:

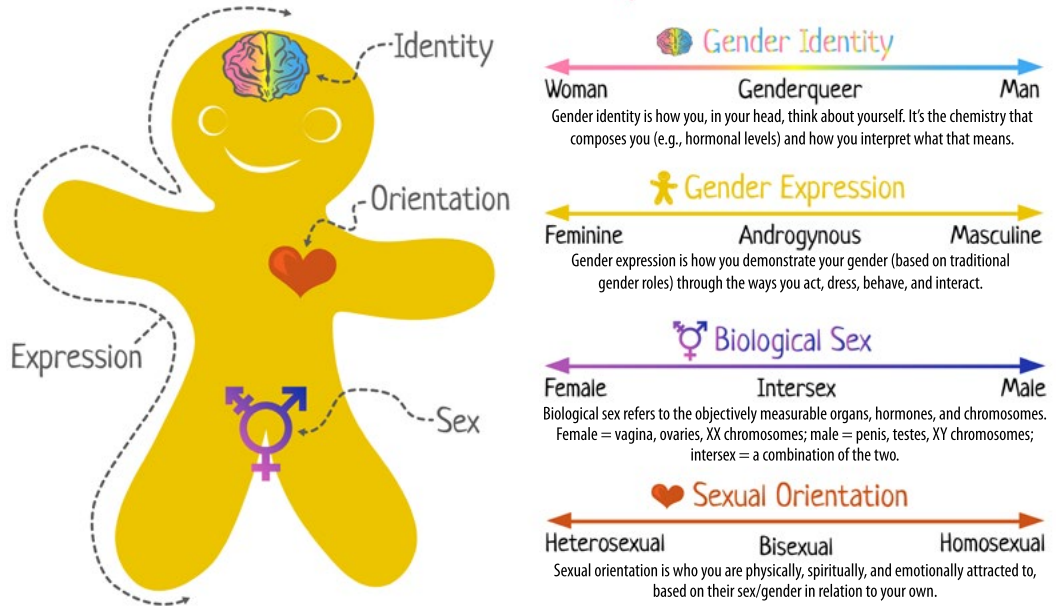
Some recent research has shown that a change or a new exploration period in partner attraction may occur during the process of transition. However, transgender people usually remain as attached to loved ones after transition as they were before transition. Transgender people usually label their sexual orientation using their gender as a reference. For example, a transgender woman, or a person who is assigned male at birth and transitions to female, who is attracted to other women would be identified as a lesbian or gay woman. Likewise, a transgender man, or a person who is assigned female at birth and transitions to male, who is attracted to other men would be identified as a gay man. (APA, *Answers 2*)



The following Genderbread Person\* summarizes the distinctions between gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation, and the spectrum of possibilities for each aspect.

# The Genderbread Person

by [www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com](http://www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com)



Sex (Biology/Body)	Gender (Culture)	Sexual Orientation (Attractions/Relationships)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chromosomes, genitals, reproductive organs, secondary sex characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender expression</li> <li>Gender identity</li> <li>Gender roles</li> <li>Cisgender/transgender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gay, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, etc.</li> </ul>

\* **Source:** Killermann, Sam. *It's Pronounced Metrosexual*. <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/01/the-genderbread-person/> (26 May 2016). Public Domain.



### *What does transgender mean?*

*Transgender* (or *trans*) is an umbrella term used for persons whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not conform to that typically (socially and culturally) associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth (the sex listed on their birth certificates) (APA, *Answers 1*). Diverse gender identities fall under the umbrella term *transgender*, such as male, female, two-spirit, genderqueer, bigender, gender fluid, transsexual, gender creative, pangender, transmen, transwomen, gender independent, agender, male-to-female (MTF), female-to-male (FTM), intersex, and/or something else.

The concept of transgender is not new; historically, “transgender persons have been documented in many Indigenous, Western, and Eastern cultures and societies from antiquity to the present day. However, the meaning of gender nonconformity may vary [over time and] from culture to culture” (APA, *Answers 1*).

Many traditional cultures and peoples have embraced gender diversity in North America and in other parts of the world. Some of these cultures had names for multiple forms of gender beyond the male-female binary. Historically, individuals who had access to both the masculine and feminine, or exhibited multiple expressions of gender, often had special roles within the community. They were highly revered and respected in their communities, and were leaders, medicine people, or shamans.

### *How and when does one know one is transgender?*

In addressing the question of how individuals know they are transgender, APA states:

Transgender people experience their transgender identity in a variety of ways and may become aware of their transgender identity at any age. Some can trace their transgender identities and feelings back to their earliest memories. They may have vague feelings of “not fitting in” with people of their assigned sex or specific wishes to be something other than their assigned sex. Others become aware of their transgender identities or begin to explore and experience gender-nonconforming attitudes and behaviors during adolescence or much later in life. Some embrace their transgender feelings, while others struggle with feelings of shame or confusion. Those who transition later in life may have struggled to fit in adequately as their assigned sex only to later face dissatisfaction with their lives. Some transgender people, transsexuals in particular, experience intense dissatisfaction with their sex assigned at birth, physical sex characteristics, or the gender role associated with that sex. These individuals often seek gender-affirming treatments. (APA, *Answers 2*)

Gender diversity in any person, whether a child or an adult, may be experienced along a continuum from none, where the individual’s gender identity and biological/assigned sex match, to intense, where the individual experiences extreme emotional pain due to the mismatch or conflict between





their biological/assigned sex and their gender identity. Some youth report feeling like they are *neither* male nor female, while others report they feel like *both* male and female.

Of all the youth who are gender diverse, relatively few experience intense feelings or emotions of distress with respect to their identity. However, youth who do experience a high intensity of dissatisfaction and feelings of distress are often at the greatest risk in schools.

“My daughter is transgender. She’s out and she’s proud . . . The community loves her. Her school loves her and the other students love her” (parent, quoted in Paul).

### *What is gender dysphoria?*

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) in *Standards of Care (SOC) for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People, Version 7* (Coleman et al.) and the American Psychiatric Association in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* both speak to the meaning of gender dysphoria. Both documents stress that being transgender or gender diverse is a matter of human diversity, not pathology. *Gender dysphoria* may be diagnosed when individuals experience intense, persistent gender *incongruence* and significant “discomfort or distress that is caused by the discrepancy between a person’s gender identity and that person’s assigned sex at birth (and the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics)” (Coleman et al. 5).

Many obstacles may affect the well-being of transgender persons and may lead to distress, including a lack of acceptance within society, direct or systemic discrimination, or assault. As a result of these negative experiences, many transgender persons suffer from anxiety, depression, or related disorders at higher rates than cisgender persons.

“For many transgender persons, their gender identity is not distressing or disabling, and identifying as transgender does not constitute a mental/psychological disorder” (APA, *Answers* 3).



Educators should be aware that not all children who display gender creative or diverse behaviours will choose to transition. Research in clinical settings found that “gender dysphoria and cross-gender identification persisted into adulthood in up to 27% of cases, with people assigned female at birth being more likely to persist than those of a male natal sex” (Meier and Harris 1).

## Implications for Educators

Educators need to recognize that childhood and adolescence are critical periods of identity formation in which gender and sexuality are understood as fluid, and their related expressions may change frequently as children and youth develop and grow. Fluidity of gender identity should not be perceived as a problem, nor should the evolving nature of gender expression. The problem or significant and pressing issue is the strict nature of gender roles and sex role stereotyping in society that imposes limits on a child’s natural gender expression.

Therefore, the more educators seek to break down sex role stereotypes and gender regulation behaviours, the more inclusive their classrooms will become for all students who are questioning their gender and exploring facets of their identity (Luecke). Challenging and eradicating stereotypes to release students from their gender “straightjackets” is critical for creating inclusive schools. In this way, educators can open and create space for all students, including those who live outside cultural and social norms, to find support and to be valued for who they are and not for what society tells them they ought to be.

Diversity of behaviour and gender expression in young children is quite common, with gender diverse behaviour reported for about 23% of boys and 39% of girls. To this point, research indicates that diversity of gender behaviour and expression in young children does not mean they will become transgender adults. However, studies do indicate that some children who exhibit diversity of gender expression and behaviour do grow up to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Several studies have revealed associations between early gender diverse behaviour and later same-sex attraction. Regardless, children are at a high risk for adverse health outcomes if they are not provided with supportive and affirming environments. While professionals and parents can influence or pressure youth to change the way they express their external presentation of gender, ultimately, they cannot change a young person’s internal sense of self, and lack of affirmation and pressure to change one’s sense of gender identity and expression lead to significant negative mental health consequences, including high rates of suicidal ideation (Sherer et al. 16).



“It’s good to be special, brave and unique. There’s not one thing that you need to tweak” (Jackie Swirsky, author, and parent of a gender creative child, Manitoba).

### Principles

The principles informing the implementation of the [Guidelines for Supporting and Affirming Trans and Gender Diverse Students](#) set out in this document are as follows:

- The rights and needs of students who are trans and gender diverse are at the centre of, and are to be served by, the guidelines.
- Students have the right to self-identify. Self-identification is the sole measure of a student’s gender identity.
- The voices and experiences of trans and gender diverse students will be included in a collaborative way in decision making.
- Trans and gender diverse students are treated with dignity and respect.
- Trans and gender diverse students, along with the rest of the school community, benefit when parents/guardians and families are supportive of a respectful and inclusive school environment.
- Trans and gender diverse children and youth enrich the school community and challenge harmful gender stereotypes and norms on a wider scale.
- Parents/guardians are key partners in supporting trans and gender diverse students at home, at school, and in the community.
- Gender is a spectrum rather than a binary of male and female. Gender is an important part of a person’s identity, and developing a positive sense of gender identity is part of a person’s development.
- Supporting a trans or gender diverse student may require schools and individuals to revise and realign their views and practices with respect to gender identity and expression, which may have been accepted as “the norm” for a long time.
- The guidelines support a positive, proactive approach that promotes and protects the rights of trans and gender diverse students.



“Almost three-quarters (74%) of participants who had been bullied replied that they had not received any support from school staff. Those who had received no support or been blamed were much more likely to report that the harassment still distressed them” (Taylor et al., *The Every Teacher Project 22*).

## Roles and Responsibilities

Every person in the school community plays an important role and has a shared responsibility in creating supportive environments for trans and gender diverse students. It is important that the entire school community recognize diversity as the norm. All divisional and school staff should be proactive and prepare in advance to meet the needs of trans and gender diverse students.

The guidelines in this document support schools and school boards in protecting and respecting students, based on gender identity and gender expression. It is the responsibility of all school members to adhere to the provisions of *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba). These guidelines apply to

- the entire school community from Kindergarten to Grade 12, including school boards, trustees, superintendents of education, administrators, teachers, guidance counsellors, educational assistants, clinicians, social workers, coaches, student support workers, custodians, bus drivers, librarians, students, parents/guardians, volunteers, visitors, and anyone working in or with the school division or school
- a whole-school approach to planning for and maintaining a safe, caring, and inclusive school climate
- situations that occur outside school hours but have an impact on the learning environment of the school

Each student, educator, school, and school board is responsible to ensure that trans and gender diverse students have a safe learning environment. This includes making sure that any incident of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence is given immediate attention.

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a student’s *actual* or *perceived* gender identity and/or expression are to be handled in the same manner as other discrimination or harassment complaints. School and divisional codes of conduct will provide direction.

An outline of the roles and responsibilities of the various members of the school community follows.



## STUDENTS

- Respect the rights of all students with regard to their gender identity and gender expression.
- Support the safety and well-being of all students.
- Celebrate the diversity of the student population.

## PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Support their child's and other children's academic success and well-being.
- Provide information about their child's beliefs, values, and preferred learning styles, and other relevant aspects of the child's identity.
- Provide information about their culture and family beliefs.
- Contribute to creating safe and inclusive schools by volunteering at school activities and assisting school organizations.
- Teach and learn as true partners in the educational process.
- Provide suggestions for safe, inclusive, and successful schools.
- Respect the rights of all members of the school community with regard to their gender identity and gender expression.
- Celebrate the diversity of the student and community population.

## EDUCATORS

- Take personal responsibility to educate themselves (e.g., remain aware of available resources to help connect students to the supports they need), and model respect for, understanding of, and affirmation of diversity in the working and learning environment.
- Ensure curriculum and classroom materials and learning activities contain positive and affirming images of and inclusive and accurate information about history and culture that challenge stereotypes and reflect the accomplishments and contributions of trans and gender diverse persons.
- Participate in developing and implementing an action plan for transphobic incidents.
- Work with parents/guardians as key partners in supporting every student in the classroom.
- In the context of common system access, adhere to confidentiality best practice in the event of disclosure of a student's gender identity or expression.
- Listen to gender diverse students, as they are the "experts" of their experience.
- Ask gender diverse students whether, when, and how they wish to share their experiences.
- Monitor the academic achievement, engagement, attendance, and well-being of trans and gender diverse students.



## SCHOOL COUNSELLORS AND STUDENT SERVICES

- Implement comprehensive services to enhance and promote student learning (proactive and responsive services).
- Plan and implement strategies for all students and staff to enhance a positive school climate and facilitate a safe school environment.
- Build capacity through professional learning to meet the needs of trans and gender diverse students (e.g., develop awareness, skills, and knowledge).
- Connect and collaborate with specialized service providers/resources, and identify key contacts to establish consistent referral and timely service.
- Embrace diversity and include trans and gender diverse needs in whole-school planning.
- Provide programming for all students, including trans and gender diverse students, with respect to their educational, personal, social, emotional, and career development.
- Provide individual, small-group, and classroom-based guidance and counselling services for students.
- Work with school staff to support them in responding effectively to the needs of trans and gender diverse students, transphobic incidents, and related issues.
- Refer students and parents/guardians to experts for affirming support.
- Participate in gender transition planning and implementation as required.
- Assist the school principal in identifying and resolving student issues, needs, and problems.
- Advocate for students in planning processes (e.g., student-specific needs, transitions, student support, whole-school approach, and school events).

## SCHOOL LEADERS

- Take personal responsibility to educate themselves, and model respect for, understanding of, and affirmation of diversity in the working and learning environment.
- Implement divisional and school policies with respect to human diversity, safe and caring schools, and other relevant areas, including school plans.
- Create a structure and circle of support for students and staff.
- Designate a staff advisor.
- Ensure students' rights and safety are recognized and supported.
- Facilitate trans and gender diverse students' full participation in all school activities.
- Consider accommodations when requested and provide accommodations when it is reasonable to do so.



- Support teachers and other personnel through developing and implementing policies that protect students.
- Facilitate the recognition and use of students' preferred names and pronouns.
- Provide school staff with appropriate professional learning opportunities.
- Work with parents/guardians, students, educators, and community members to build an inclusive, caring, and affirming learning environment that respects trans and gender diverse students and the diversity of all students in the school.
- Facilitate the establishment of community advisory groups, including trans and gender studies experts, affirming service providers and community groups in developing policies, protocols, and practices.
- Identify and recognize special days and events related to trans and gender diverse people.
- Communicate processes to prevent, identify, report, investigate, and resolve gender-based discrimination.
- Provide opportunities for trans, gender diverse, and all students to provide anonymous feedback on school and classroom climate and suggestions for improvement.

## SCHOOL BOARDS

- Take personal responsibility to educate themselves, and model respect for, understanding of, and affirmation of inclusion and diversity in the decision- and policy-making environments.
- Ensure that divisional policies, guidelines, and practices are inclusive of all students and respond equitably to the needs of trans and gender diverse students and their families.
- Involve parents/guardians in the development of safe and caring school policies.
- Ensure that all students have equitable access to an appropriate education, facilities, services, and resources.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for divisional and school staff on creating safe learning environments for trans and gender diverse students and their families.
- Promote and celebrate trans and gender diverse communities.



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**Notes**





## Guidelines for Supporting and Affirming Trans and Gender Diverse Students

“It is contrary to The Code to discriminate, without reasonable cause, in the provision of services to children and youth based on age and/or gender identity, including in health services, education, recreation, police services and child protective services. Children who are intersex are also protected from unreasonable discrimination on the basis of their age and gender identity” (The Manitoba Human Rights Commission, “Protections from Discrimination Based on Gender Identity”).

“Everyone has the right to define their own gender identity. Trans people should be recognized and treated as the gender they live in, whether or not they have undergone surgery, or their identity documents are up to date” (Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Gender Identity and Gender Expression*).

Trans and gender diverse students have the right to be openly who they are. This includes expressing their gender identity without fear of unwanted consequences. Trans and gender diverse students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. The following guidelines are intended to help educators make these rights a reality in their schools.

### 1

#### Support the student’s individual process.

It is essential that the school division and school accept and support a student’s affirmation of their gender identity and do not require any particular substantiating evidence. Every student, regardless of age, should have a voice in their life at school, their identity, and their needs. However, given the sensitivity of trans or gender diverse student disclosure, a gender transition plan may need to be developed by appropriate school staff (see [Supporting Gender Transitioning in Schools](#)), preferably with the involvement of the parents/guardians, unless it is objectively not in the best interest of the student to do so (see [Guideline 3: Work with parents/guardians of trans and gender diverse students](#)).

Each trans and gender diverse student is unique, with different needs. Supports that work for one student cannot simply be assumed to work for another. Specific supports, in addition to those outlined in these guidelines, may be sought to enable a student’s full expression of their identity and/or to protect their safety.



## *Implementation*

All members of the school community are expected to listen to the student's needs and concerns, and work collaboratively to identify and provide supports. For requests not outlined in this document, the student should be informed about who may be able to respond to their requests, and a decision should be made together about who will communicate the requests (i.e., the student, parent[s]/guardian[s], administration, teacher, support staff).

Trans and gender diverse students may, but are not required to, inform a school staff person with whom they feel comfortable of their particular needs. For example, although students have the right to use the washroom that aligns with their gender identity, they may request an accommodation in the form of access to a gender-neutral washroom to address their specific safety or other concerns.

Responses to student needs and requests are to be fulfilled on a case-by-case basis and individualized to best meet the needs of the student making the requests. If an issue arises about a trans or gender diverse student's full participation in school life, it should be resolved in a manner that involves the student in decision making. Ensuring reasonable adaptations, maximizing inclusiveness, and addressing the best interests of the student are inherent in this collaborative decision making.

A trans or gender diverse student might want to transfer to another school, depending on their transition process and experience. A transfer should be considered, in alignment with school division policy, when requested by the student and/or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

## 2

### Respect students' rights to confidentiality and privacy.

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All students must be able to decide what personal information they wish to share about themselves, with whom, and when. This includes their right to determine the dissemination of personal and private information such as their gender identity or trans status.

Deliberate or accidental sharing of a student's gender identity or other personal information without the student's consent can have significant negative consequences for them.

All educators and school personnel must ensure that they follow professional codes of conduct and protect the confidentiality and privacy of all students, including trans and gender diverse students, as set out in *The Personal Health Information Act* (Manitoba) and *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Manitoba).



## Implementation

In determining what issues relate to confidentiality and privacy, educators need to consider the following:

- The student's age and maturity. Regardless of age, a student may or may not choose to be open about their gender identity with peers or adults. Educators must consider factors such as age and maturity in making decisions with respect to the student's privacy. Consultation regarding each student is recommended.
- The level of parental/guardian support for the student's affirmed gender.
- A student's desire to live openly as their affirmed gender. Some students may choose to be very open about their trans or gender diverse identity and they should be supported in doing so.

In summary, divisional and school personnel are not to disclose a student's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression to others, including other students, parents/guardians, or other school personnel, unless required to do so by law or unless the student has provided their consent in writing. However, certain requests (e.g., a name and pronoun change) cannot be kept private. Therefore, school personnel are strongly encouraged to be in regular contact with trans and gender diverse students and their families to ensure that the parameters of privacy are discussed and addressed.

# 3

## Work with parents/guardians of trans and gender diverse students.

It is the school's duty to work to engage parents/guardians in schooling matters involving their child unless the school determines it is objectively not in the best interests of the student to do so.

Research has shown that supportive parenting can have a very important and positive impact on trans and gender diverse children and youth, and correlates with these children and youth having a positive outlook on life, improved mental health, and greater self-esteem (Travers et al.; Ryan et al.; Ryan, *Helping Families*). Conversely, rejection by parents/guardians directly correlates with trans and gender diverse children and youth having an increased risk of depression, suicide attempts, self-harm, and substance abuse (Ryan et al.; Ryan, *Helping Families*).

"Family acceptance predicts greater self-esteem, social support, and general health status; it also protects against depression, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation and behaviours" (Ryan et al., 205).



Many parents/guardians will be supportive when their children inform them that they identify as trans or gender diverse; however, familial rejection is also possible. A study in Ontario found that only 34% of transgender youth described their parent(s) as “strongly supportive,” while 42% described their parents(s) as “not very” or “not at all” supportive (Travers et al. 2).

In some cases, students will choose to transition even when their parents/guardians refuse to affirm their gender identity and/or expression. In these situations, schools must carefully balance the need for parents/guardians to be informed about their child’s experiences with the student’s right to live freely in their affirmed gender. Communication with parents/guardians may be further complicated on occasions when the school needs to inform the child’s family of events or incidents related to the child’s gender identity or expression.

Confidential information about a student must not be shared even with the parents/guardians without the student’s consent, unless there are overarching safeguarding reasons for sharing the information.

### *Implementation*

In general, the older the students are, the more they will be involved in the decision making. As far as possible, schools should ensure that the wishes of the individual students are taken into account, with a view to supporting them during a potential transition.

In certain cases, situations may arise at school that make it difficult or impossible for the school to keep the student’s gender status private from the parents/guardians. To respond appropriately to this tension, some schools, in consultation with the student, will work with the student and trained support providers to reveal the child’s gender status formally to the parents/guardians in the relatively safe confines of the school. Educators should carefully weigh all the potential consequences of such an approach, ideally consulting with and/or working with individuals trained for and familiar with such situations. This approach should also include having support services available in cases where it may not be safe for students to return home after such a revelation.

Some students will enter an Early Years school already expressing or presenting in their desired gender. If the child and the family wish that no information concerning the child’s transition be shared, then the child and the family may simply choose to enrol the student as the preferred gender. In some cases, they may choose to provide a letter from a doctor or therapist. When this is the case, no one in school except the adults approved by the child and parent(s)/guardian(s) can lawfully be informed of the student’s trans identity. Some students may also choose to enrol in a different Middle or Senior Years school, in their desired gender, as part of a transition process. In all cases, the school should confirm the level of openness that the child or youth and the family desire regarding the student’s gender identity.



In Manitoba, a number of agencies and organizations provide support to the parents/guardians of trans or gender diverse children and/or youth, or may provide helpful advice to schools about how to work with parents/guardians, including those who choose not to affirm their child's expression of gender identity and do not wish the school to do so. (For further information, see [Appendix A: Trans and Gender Diverse Support Services](#) and [Appendix B: Selected Print and Online Resources](#).)

# 4

## Attend to requests for accommodation.

Some trans and gender diverse students may feel that participating in sex-segregated school programs and activities or being in sex-segregated facilities (e.g., a washroom or change/locker room where students undress) is uncomfortable or inappropriate.

As well, some students may feel that participating in sex-segregated school programs and activities or being in sex-segregated facilities with another student whose gender identity is the opposite of their assigned sex is a violation of their right to privacy or their religious beliefs, or they may feel and express discomfort about inclusive, sex-segregated school programs, activities, or facilities. Such responses, while important, should not by themselves be taken as reasons or justifications for denying transgender students access to the sex-segregated school programs, activities, or facilities that align with their gender identity. Designated school staff should work with these students to address their concerns and discomfort and to foster understanding of gender identity, and create a school culture that respects and values everyone. These students may also be offered accommodations or alternative facilities such as access to a nearby all-gender or universal single-stall washroom, or other alternatives.

The divisional and school non-discrimination policy and related accommodation and complaint procedures should be easily accessible to both students and their parents/guardians. (Also see [Guideline 10: Provide safer access to washroom and change/locker room facilities, in accordance with the student's gender identity](#).)

### *Implementation*

To prevent difficult situations from arising, it is important that schools notify all students and parents/guardians of divisional or school human diversity, non-discrimination, or other relevant policies and related accommodation and complaint procedures as soon as they are developed. However, in doing so, schools must not violate a student's right to privacy. It is equally important to ensure that information about divisional or school policies and related accommodation and complaint procedures is easily accessible to both students and their parents/guardians, through means such as policy manuals, student handbooks, pamphlets, newsletters, divisional or school websites, school offices, and other appropriate means.



Students and their parents/guardians should have access to divisional and school policy statements recognizing the students' right to use school facilities and to participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities, including athletic teams and competitions, consistent with their gender identity.

When gender diverse or cisgender students request an accommodation concerning sex-segregated school programs, activities, or facilities, it is recommended that divisional or school administrators meet with the students and, if appropriate, the students' parents/guardians to develop a plan to accommodate the students' needs and wishes. As needed, the divisional or school leaders may choose to consult with legal counsel in responding to all such requests (California School Boards Association 4).

## 5 Use the student's preferred name(s) and pronoun(s).

All students have the right to choose the name by which they wish to be addressed. Trans and gender diverse students have the right to be addressed by their preferred name(s) and pronoun(s) that correspond to their gender identity. This is true whether or not the students have obtained legal documentation of a change of name or sex designation. Respecting a student's request to change their name(s) and pronoun(s) is a key aspect of supporting and affirming that person's identity.

### *Implementation*

School staff should consistently use the student's preferred name(s) and pronoun(s) according to the student's wishes and direction. Students who wish to use gender-neutral pronouns (e.g., they, hir, ze, xe), rather than masculine or feminine pronouns, need to be supported.

Some trans and gender diverse students may not have disclosed or shared their identity beyond the school community because of safety or other reasons. In keeping with the principle of self-identification, schools should ensure that the students are aware of limitations regarding their preferred names and gender identity in relation to official records that require a legal name and sex designation.

Students' prior consent must be obtained before disclosing their trans or gender diverse identity to their parents/guardians. The applied protocol for contacting the home of a trans or gender diverse student is to first determine from the student an appropriate way to reference their gender identity, gender expression, name(s), and pronoun(s).

### **Names and Pronouns**

Deliberately addressing a student by the incorrect name(s) or pronoun(s) may be a form of discrimination. This does not include inadvertent slips or honest mistakes, but it does apply to the deliberate and persistent refusal to acknowledge and respect a student's gender identity by not using their preferred name(s) and pronoun(s).



# 6

## Maintain student records consistent with legal practice.

The Manitoba government requires school divisions and schools to maintain a permanent record for each student that includes the legal name of the student and the student's assigned sex. If a student or their parent/guardian provides documentation of a legal name and/or sex designation change, then the official student record must be changed to reflect this.

### *Implementation*

The student's *legal* name is displayed in the provincial Education Information System (EIS), as well as on school or provincially issued transcripts of marks. With the consent of the student, it is acceptable for a school or a teacher to use the student's preferred name(s) on their report card, on their diploma, or in any provincial, divisional, or school form, report, or database that is not deemed to be a legal document. For the report card, a letter to the principal from the parent/guardian or, if the student is 18 years old or over, from the student requesting the preferred name, is required, and is kept on file. The principal has discretion in these matters and may reject the request if, for example, it is deemed to be frivolous or trivial.

In the case of student services, school counsellors and clinicians should indicate both the student's legal name and preferred name in clinical documents and reports to avoid confusion, and link clinical data to the student and the services that the student may receive in the future.

The process for registering for provincial examinations and reporting student marks to the Manitoba government is more complicated, as the student's legal name that is related to the MET# is to be used. Schools will need to check that the name the student and school are using for these purposes is the student's legal name rather than the preferred or "known as" name(s).

It should be understood that the legal name and sex designation have to remain the ones that were registered at the time the student's MET# was assigned unless the birth certificate has been legally changed to reflect the new change of name and/or change of sex designation with the Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency and new documentation has been issued.

As noted earlier, changes to Manitoba's *Vital Statistics Act* allow youth under the age of majority (18) to change their sex designation. However, a change of name requires application by a custodial parent or legal guardian in accordance with the notice and consent provisions set out in *The Change of Name Act*. Information on the requirements is available on the Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency website.



Student records can be changed when a student or their parent/guardian presents documentation that indicates a legal change of name and/or sex designation. A certificate of change of name from the Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency will confirm the change of the person’s legal name. Persons born in Manitoba may apply to the Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency to have their sex designation on their birth certificate changed. Once an *Application for a Change of Sex Designation on Birth Registration and Birth Certificate* has been submitted and approved, Vital Statistics will reissue a birth certificate with the new sex designation. As well, residents of Manitoba who were born outside the province may apply for a *Change of Sex Designation Certificate*, provided they are Canadian citizens and have lived in Manitoba for at least one year before the date the application is submitted.

When required to use or report a trans or gender diverse student’s legal name or legal sex designation, teachers should adopt practices that avoid inadvertent disclosure of the student’s gender identity or expression.

## 7 Ensure dress codes support the full expression of students’ cultural and gender identities.

Trans and gender diverse students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression, within the constraints of divisional and school dress code policies. Where schools have dress codes or uniforms, it is important to eliminate distinctions between boys’ and girls’ apparel or uniforms and allow students to choose to wear the “approved” apparel that is in keeping with their gender identity and expression, or their preference.

### *Implementation*

A flexible and gender-neutral dress code will ensure that students who are not comfortable dressing in stereotypically feminine or masculine clothing will feel fully included and respected. Some students are most comfortable in clothing that is neither clearly male-identified nor clearly female-identified, but rather a combination of the two. Respecting choices in clothing and general appearance is an important aspect of honouring a trans or gender diverse student’s identity.

If schools have or adopt inclusive dress codes, gender-specific descriptors or labels should be eliminated.

### *Examples of Allowable Clothing for All Students*

- **Bottoms:** Navy, walking shorts, slacks, skorts, skirts, plain skirted jumpers, solid-colour twill
- **Tops:** White or navy with collar, long or short sleeves, knit polo-type, oxford or woven dress shirts, blouses, turtlenecks





“There are no boy clothes or girl clothes, clothes are just clothes. Feel confident with your style, just ‘strike a pose’” (Jackie Swirsky, author, and parent of a gender creative child, Manitoba).

## 8 Minimize sex-segregated activities.

Trans and gender diverse students have the right to participate in sex-segregated activities (educational, recreational, and competitive) in ways that are safe and comfortable and consistent with their gender identity.

It is important to develop and maintain inclusive environments that allow for and respect students’ full expression of who they are. This includes not requiring students to play, learn, dress/present, or express themselves in stereotypically feminine or masculine ways. As well, it involves reducing sex-segregated activities and spaces within the school.

### *Implementation*

To the greatest extent possible, school staff should reduce or eliminate the practice of grouping or segregating students by sex (e.g., avoid structuring activities based on stereotypical roles such as “boys vs. girls” debates, or school dances/proms that feature the crowning of the dance/prom “king and queen”). In circumstances where students are separated by assigned sex, staff should help them access inclusive activities and spaces in alignment with their gender identity.

## 9 Enable full and safe participation in physical education classes and extracurricular activities, including athletics, in accordance with the student’s gender identity.

All students, regardless of their gender identity or expression, should be able to participate in physical education classes and extracurricular activities, including competitive and recreational athletic teams, in a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. Trans and gender diverse students have the right to participate in such classes and activities in ways that are safe and comfortable and consistent with their gender identity.

The Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association “Policy on Transgender Students” states: “Any transgender student athlete may participate fully and safely in sex-separated sports activities in accordance with his or her gender identity.” British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario have similar policies.



This approach should be extended to all sports and athletic competitions, activities, and events, enabling trans and gender diverse students to participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity if they wish to do so.

When schools participate in sports or athletic events in other provinces/territories or internationally, they may need to check and clarify the applicable policies with the relevant sports organization. As well, schools need to plan ahead to ensure that appropriate washroom and change facilities for “away games” or events are available and accessible.

### *Implementation*

School staff must ensure that trans and gender diverse students can participate in physical education classes and extracurricular activities, including competitive and recreational athletic teams, in ways that are comfortable for them and according to their gender identity. Communication with parents/guardians of a trans or gender diverse student regarding their child’s participation in these activities should be consistent with school policy and practice.

It is not acceptable to deny a student the opportunity for physical education, either by denying the student the opportunity to participate in general physical education activities or by forcing the student to choose independent study.

Schools and school boards should proactively review school and student athletic policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive of trans and gender diverse students.

## **10** Provide safer access to washroom and change/locker room facilities, in accordance with the student’s gender identity.

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Although schools may maintain separate washrooms, change/locker rooms, or other facilities for males and females, students must be allowed to use the facility that corresponds to their gender identity, regardless of their sex assigned at birth.

Where available, universal single-stall or all-gender washrooms or changing areas may be offered to any student who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason. All students have a right to safe washroom and change/locker room facilities. Trans and gender diverse students have the right to supports that best meet their individual needs.

### *Implementation*

Trans and gender diverse students should be able to access facilities that they are comfortable with and that correspond to their gender identity. This applies



during school time and school-related activities off school property (such as field trips). Any alternative arrangement should be used only at the request of the student and, if applicable, in a manner that keeps the student's gender identity confidential.

Where possible, schools should provide an easily accessible single-stall or all-gender washroom for use by *any* student who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason (e.g., medical, religious, cultural, gender identity). *Accessible* refers to a non-stigmatizing location within the school, a non-stigmatizing process for access, and physical accessibility for someone with a wheelchair. It is important that the use of an all-gender, single-stall washroom is a matter of choice for a student and provided not only as a result of continuing harassment. Schools are encouraged to provide, if possible, more than one all-gender washroom for use by students.

When accessing change rooms, a student should be able to choose among the following supports:

- access to a change room that corresponds to the student's gender identity (their basic right)
- access to a nearby all-gender or universal single-stall washroom
- use of a private area within the public area (such as a washroom stall with a door or an area separated by a curtain or divider)
- a separate changing schedule in the public area (using the change room either before or after the other students)
- access to a change room that corresponds to the student's assigned sex at birth
- access to alternative facilities as appropriate, available, and agreed to by the student



The guidelines for access to washroom and change/locker room facilities apply while students travel for competition at another school. Schools are responsible for ensuring access to appropriate changing, showering, or bathroom facilities, based on the needs of students.

If staff are concerned that travel to another site could pose safety issues, the school should, in consultation with and with the consent of the student, contact the other site in advance to ensure that the student has access to facilities that are appropriate and safe in accordance with the student's gender identity. It is important to maintain the student's confidentiality by not disclosing their trans or gender diverse identity without their permission.

# 11

## Plan for excursions, trips, and camps.

Prior dialogue, care, and preparation are essential to enable trans and gender diverse students to participate safely and respectfully in excursions, overnight trips, camps, or other activities that require sharing sleeping accommodations. To exclude trans and gender diverse students from such activities would be contravening *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba).

### *Implementation*

To the extent possible, trans and gender diverse students should be able to sleep in dorms, common lodging, or hotel accommodations appropriate to their gender identity.

Activities that may involve the need for housing accommodations should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Staff should check with the individual trans and gender diverse students about their needs and wishes. They must make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations that are acceptable to the students. If, for reasons of privacy or safety, a trans or gender diverse student objects to sex-segregated housing accommodations or to shared accommodations, private accommodations should be made available to the student without extra costs. Parents/guardians should be informed of any decisions made regarding accommodations on field trips, regardless of the student's gender identity.

Similarly, the degree of participation in physical activities that trans or gender diverse students feel comfortable with should be discussed with them prior to any camping or other trip involving significant physical activity, and with their parents/guardians, if appropriate. When a trans or gender diverse student feels they do not want to or cannot participate, alternative arrangements should be made to enable the student to participate in a more appropriate activity. Risk assessments can be carried out prior to residential trips in order to make reasonable adjustments that would enable the participation of trans and gender diverse students.

When school teams or groups plan excursions or travel to other provinces/territories or internationally, they should consider and check the laws and protections regarding trans and gender diverse people. Egale Canada Human Rights Trust offers *Tips for Travelling Trans* on its website. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) website has information about countries that pose a risk to trans and gender diverse individuals.



**Source of poster:** The Native Youth Sexual Health Network. *Healthy Sexuality and Fighting Homophobia and Transphobia Native Youth Photography Project*. [www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/youthphotoproject.html](http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/youthphotoproject.html) (26 May 2016).



## A Whole-School Approach to Integrating Trans and Gender Diverse Students

Through school planning and collaborative practices, principals implement divisional and school policies and develop procedures to provide learning environments that are respectful and safe for all students. With parents/guardians as partners, educators do their best to ensure all children and youth feel safe, confident, and capable as they interact with others and develop as learners. In a safe and inclusive school, the whole school community develops awareness, knowledge, and skills that support well-being, positive relationships, and solution-focused problem solving.

Meeting the needs of trans and gender diverse students involves proactive planning and developing awareness of the specific needs to prevent and respond to transphobia and discrimination. Proactive planning enables schools to respond with understanding and information to concerns raised by cisgender members of the school community, including students, parents/guardians, educators, and community members. A whole-school approach to planning a safe, inclusive, respectful learning environment includes developing and communicating solution-focused processes to restore a sense of belonging and safety when responding to issues that arise.

A healthy, respectful, and safe school for trans and gender diverse children and youth extends beyond awareness and equal access to school programming, services, and facilities according to the students' gender identity rather than their assigned sex at birth. It involves attending to the basic human need of belonging and acceptance for all students within the school community, whether cisgender or transgender.

For more information on applying a whole-school approach to a planning process, see:

- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. *A Whole-School Approach to Safety and Belonging: Preventing Violence and Bullying*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005. Available online at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/guidance/whole\\_school\\_approach.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/guidance/whole_school_approach.html).



## Planning for Student Diversity and Inclusion of Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Youth in School Settings

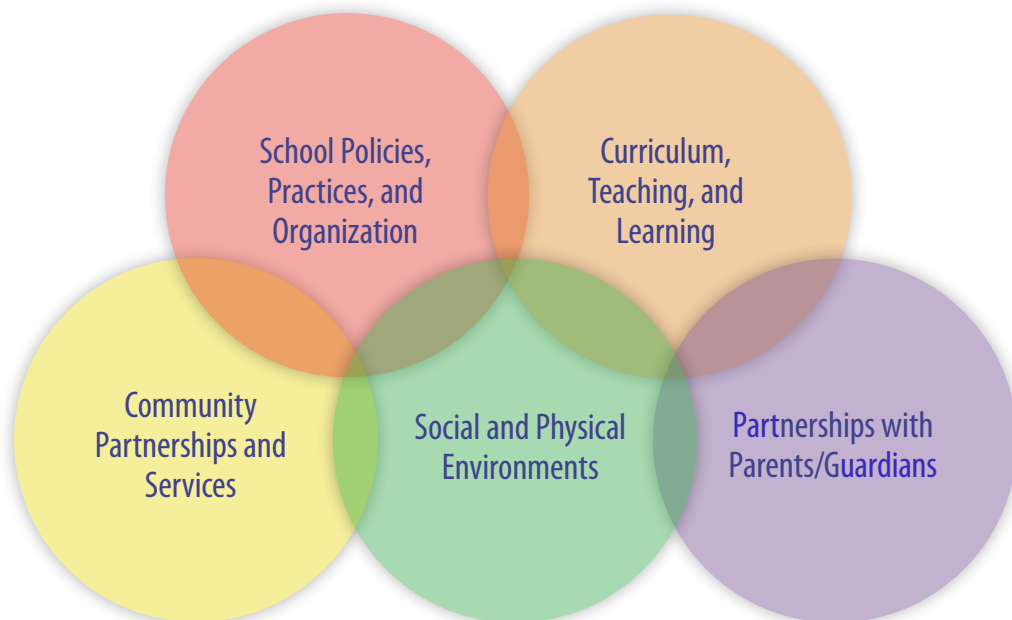
“Schools should work to foster environments that challenge binary representations and, in turn, embrace the fluidity of sex, sexuality, and gender” (Wells, Roberts, and Allan 33).

An effective whole-school approach to inclusion will contribute to creating and sustaining a positive school climate for the diversity of students and people in the school community, including trans and gender diverse students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members.

The following diagram provides a summary of a whole-school approach to supporting trans and gender diverse students, through a comprehensive school health perspective, with actions and initiatives addressing five areas:

- School Policies, Practices, and Organization
- Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
- Community Partnerships and Services
- Social and Physical Environments
- Partnerships with Parents/Guardians

### A Whole-School Approach to Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse (T/GD) Students



## School Policies, Practices, and Organization

- Implement a whole-school approach.
- Support T/GD students by developing and implementing human diversity policies.
- Build capacity by developing staff awareness, skills, and knowledge related to T/GD students.
- Protect privacy.
- Maintain records consistent with gender identity.
- Support accommodation requests and gender transition plans.

## Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning

- Integrate T/GD topics, themes, and content (including learning resources).
- Affirm T/GD identities and expressions.
- Provide opportunities for the expression of gender identity and related experiences.
- Challenge T/GD stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.
- Implement tiered planning for identified T/GD students.
- Implement integrated digital citizenship.
- Limit sex-segregated learning activities.
- Apply strength-based approaches.

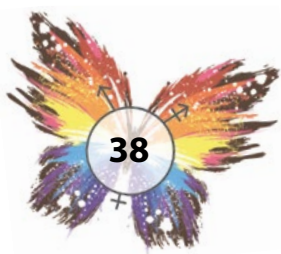


## Community Partnerships and Services

- Collaborate with service providers and identify key contacts.
- Facilitate appropriate and individually managed referrals and support, including links to other services.
- Plan and implement tiered supports based on student needs.
- Participate in projects with T/GD support groups, experts, and networks.

## Social and Physical Environments

- Develop inclusive and welcoming environments where diversity is valued.
- Model respect for and use of preferred names and pronouns.
- Provide opportunities for T/GD-inclusive gay-straight alliances (GSAs) and other student groups.
- Limit sex-segregated programs and activities.
- Communicate T/GD-friendly messaging and resources.





## Partnerships with Parents/Guardians

- Provide T/GD resources/awareness sessions for parents/guardians.
- Welcome and engage families and communities.
- Work to understand the perspectives of parents/guardians.
- Involve parents/guardians in planning for T/GD inclusion (e.g., parent council).



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**Notes**



## Supporting Gender Transitioning in Schools

The goal of this document is to help all schools across Manitoba support trans and gender diverse students effectively throughout their schooling, including those who are transitioning.

The process and nature of gender transitioning will mean different things to different students. Therefore, it is crucial to find out what the transitioning means to the individual child or youth who is being supported.

Transitioning may be conceptualized as having two distinctive but related aspects: social and medical.

- The *social* aspect of transitioning is choosing to live life in one's preferred gender. This could include
  - changing name(s)
  - changing preferred pronoun(s) (e.g., he, she, they, them, zie)
  - changing gender expression (e.g., clothing, footwear, grooming) to be consistent with gender identity
  - breast binding (flattening breast tissue to create a male-appearing chest using a variety of materials and methods)
  - packing (wearing padding or a phallus-type object to give the appearance of a penis)
  - choosing to use washrooms or change/locker rooms consistent with gender identity instead of biological sex
- The *medical* aspect of transitioning is the process and means of changing one's body physically. Medical treatment is provided in a series of phases that include
  - psychological assessment and counselling (individual and/or family)
  - medication to block natural hormones or to feminize or masculinize the body
  - surgery to primary and/or secondary sex characteristics (e.g., breasts/chest, external/internal genitalia, facial features, body contouring)

Note that the WPATH publication *Standards of Care* (Coleman et al.) clearly outlines the appropriate steps regarding medical transitioning for those under the age of majority. Specifically, WPATH considers genital surgery an irreversible intervention and, therefore, states that genital surgery should not be carried out until after the age of majority and when a number of other criteria have also been met.



While some transgender children and youth may choose to undergo both social and medical aspects of transitioning, others will choose to undergo only the social aspect. It is important to recognize that a student's preferences and choices with respect to transitioning may change over time and that the support offered by the school will need to address these changing needs.

If students identify that they want to transition and are not connected to community resources, they can be referred, or may self-refer, to the Gender Dysphoria Assessment and Action for Youth (GDAAY) program, located within the Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg, and supported by the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba. GDAAY serves children and youth throughout Manitoba and provides both assessment and services to make social and medical transitions.



"The Canadian Trans Flag was designed by Ottawa Graphic Designer Michelle Lindsay. It is a simple and very recognizable design. The colours are bold with the Trans Logo spanning the flag to represent the confidence and pride we have in the Trans Community. The horizontal bands are Sunset Magenta and Ocean Blue. They come together to represent the unlimited horizons the Trans Community has in this world."

**Source:** Canadian Trans Flag. [www.transflag.com/](http://www.transflag.com/).  
Used with permission.

## Timing of the Transition Process

The decision of when to transition may be a difficult and challenging question for trans and gender diverse children and youth, and their families. Some may choose to transition into their authentic gender identity at any point in the school year, and others when they are changing schools (e.g., from Middle to Senior Years). Some students in Manitoba have made a successful transition during their time in Middle and Senior Years schools. The "right time to transition" will be an individual one; the point at which the child or youth feels ready to transition from one gender to another will be the right time. The school must work with the student, the family, and other systems involved to understand how best to support the transition process, including the potential of changing schools within or outside the school division.

"Look for the hidden blessings. The bad stuff is going to be easy to see. It's going to be right in your face. But there are blessings too. Amazing chances to love and to be loved. To see your child blossom. To find out about your own issues and find freedom from the dark places inside that you didn't even know were there. Look for those things" (parent of a trans youth, Central Toronto Youth Services 18).



## Developing and Implementing a School-Based Gender Transition Plan: School Roles and Responsibilities

“Strategic efforts to promote bonding among students should be in place, as this is related to personal, emotional, behavioral, and scholastic success. Teens must therefore have a true connection with at least one adult on campus who periodically checks on them, builds them up with encouraging words, asks meaningful questions about their lives, and issues gentle reminders that he or she is there if the student ever has any need for help—or even if the student just wants to chat about how things are going (which typically involves expressing socio-emotional needs that the adult can help meet)” (Hinduja and Patchin, *School Climate* 88–89).

Ideally, when a child or youth has made the decision to transition and has approached the school for support, many hours of assessment and counselling will have taken place between the student, the student’s parents/guardians, and appropriate mental health professionals who specialize in gender dysphoria. The role of the school then becomes one of supporting the transitioning student and the parents/guardians. A staff person should be identified to help coordinate the open communication that is critical to a successful school-based transition. This may be a school counsellor, psychologist, or social worker who is (or can become) knowledgeable of trans and gender diversity issues and the potential challenges the student may face in school. The staff person can ensure that accurate information is shared and a gender transition plan is in place.

A gender transition plan that is unique to the particular student should be developed, taking into account the school culture, community culture, and family situation. In Manitoba, under *The Personal Health Information Act*, everyone’s medical history is considered highly confidential, and others are informed only on a “need-to-know” basis. For a transitioning student choosing to remain in the same school, or transferring to another school within the same school division, the reality is that the “news” will likely disseminate quickly. This reality should be considered as the gender transition plan is developed. Every effort should be made to ensure that the student’s right to confidentiality is maintained at all times.

In the process of determining how best to support the transitioning student, it is natural to focus on the individual student. Siblings of the transitioning student should, however, also be considered in terms of their own reaction to the process and possible need for support, the potential for bullying or harassment, or the role they can play in supporting the transition process (Wells, Roberts, and Allan 27).



As part of developing and implementing a school-based gender transition plan for a student, schools should take into account the following considerations. These should be reviewed even in circumstances where the student has transitioned over a school break or has not made the school aware of the transition.

### **Considerations in Implementing a School-Based Gender Transition Plan**

- Keep the student at the centre of the planning and implementation process.
- Identify a qualified staff person to coordinate the student's gender transition plan.
- Plan with the student and the student's family how to deal with confidentiality and disclosure issues and how they want the school to communicate about the transition.
- Ensure the school principal or designate is prepared to address questions or concerns raised by other parents or students. Advise other staff about what to do if approached by parents or others in the community.
- Discuss the timing of the transition and any concerns about the transition date or time (e.g., examination period).
- Discuss when the student wants to have their preferred name(s) incorporated into informal records and discuss the process for changing formal records.
- Discuss and plan for access to washrooms, change/locker rooms, and school activities for the transitioning student in light of their preferences.
- Discuss with the student their experiences and perceptions concerning school connections and safety.
- Discuss and identify community and agency supports.
- Enlist support in preparing for the student's transition, from services and resources such as
  - Gender Dysphoria Assessment and Action for Youth (GDAAY)
  - Rainbow Resource Centre
  - Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) Manitoba
  - other schools or school divisions that have had experience with a transitioning student
  - other students who have transitioned or parents/guardians who have a child who has transitioned



- ❑ Review legislation and policies about respect for human diversity, including student transition procedures and plans.
- ❑ Work with the school staff, other students, and parents/guardians to support the gender transition plan.
- ❑ Invite the community to a learning night—not about a specific student, but about the school being a leader in advocacy and social justice.
- ❑ Plan for and be prepared to work with students and staff at varying levels of awareness and acceptance who may
  - ❑ experience difficulty adjusting due to their own personal issues raised by a transitioning student
  - ❑ inadvertently address trans or gender diverse students inappropriately, such as using incorrect pronouns, making comments about dress, and so on
  - ❑ deliberately use incorrect pronouns, express blatant transphobia, and/or demonstrate bullying behaviours (including cyberbullying)
- ❑ Consider whether there is a need for students to receive trans and gender diversity inclusive information from school counsellors and/or knowledgeable community resource persons and organizations.

## Post-Transition Support and Monitoring

School personnel can provide ongoing support for the transitioning student by maintaining a safe and inclusive environment that promotes a positive experience for all.

The school should consider reviewing the effectiveness of the student's gender transition plan and whether any revisions or changes need to be made.

“When a student (or an adult within the school system) transitions there is natural curiosity about the individual's transition. Usually, this curiosity quickly subsides and within a few days or weeks, the ‘novelty’ of the situation wears off, and the school environment returns to ‘normal’” (Wells, Roberts, and Allan 30).



Schools need to keep in mind that trans and gender diverse children and youth remain at greater risk of bullying and violence when compared with their cisgender peers, regardless of sexual orientation. The safety of the transitioning student should continue to be monitored by school staff. It is important that “any negative issues be promptly acted upon by the school administration. All . . . [members of the school community] must clearly see that there are swift consequences for any transphobic bullying or prejudicial behaviour” (Wells, Roberts, and Allan 30).

For more information on supporting transitioning students, see:

- Orr, Asaf, National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and Joel Baum, Gender Spectrum, with National Education Association (NEA), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation. *Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools*. 3 Aug. 2015. [www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf](http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf) (4 May 2016).





## Appendix A: Trans and Gender Diverse Support Services

Schools in Manitoba are encouraged to work with other agencies and service providers to support trans and gender diverse students.

Support for trans and gender diverse children and youth and their families is available from the following support services in Manitoba.

Support Services in Manitoba	
<b>FTM Gender Alliance of Winnipeg</b>	<p><a href="http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/programming/">www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/programming/</a></p> <p>This is a peer support group for female-to-male (FTM) individuals. The group meets at the Rainbow Resource Centre, and is open to the general public.</p>
<b>Gender Dysphoria Assessment and Action for Youth (GDAAY)</b>	<p><a href="http://www.gdaay.ca/">www.gdaay.ca/</a></p> <p>GDAAY is a self-referral program that offers supportive services for transgender youth (under the age of 17 years) in Manitoba and area (northwestern Ontario and Saskatchewan). Its office is at the Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg.</p>
<b>Parents, Friends and Family of Trans Individuals (PFFOTI)</b>	<p><a href="http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/programming/">www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/programming/</a></p> <p>PFFOTI is a social support group for parents, friends, and family members of transgender individuals. The group meets at the Rainbow Resource Centre, and is open to the general public.</p>
<b>Rainbow Resource Centre</b>	<p><a href="http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/">www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/</a></p> <p>The Rainbow Resource Centre serves the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer, and ally communities within Winnipeg, throughout Manitoba, and within northwestern Ontario. It provides a safe and non-judgmental space where trans and gender diverse children and youth can be themselves and explore their gender identity. There is no expectation to conform to any single trans identity or follow any particular path of transition.</p> <p>The centre provides counselling, anti-homophobia education and training, and youth programming and services. It also provides a meeting space for community groups and peer support groups, and offers community programming free/at low cost (e.g., book club, knitting club, art classes, yoga, tai chi, ballroom dancing). The centre hosts an extensive library that members can access with a library membership, featuring a collection of books, DVDs, journals, audio books, and magazines, all with LGBT2SQ+ themes.</p> <p>The centre works not only to provide a safe space to support the community, but also to act as a meeting place for community members to learn and come together. It operates from a place of support, harm reduction, and a belief in providing a positive space for healthy learning and growth.</p>



## Support Services in Manitoba

<p><b>Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) Manitoba</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.serc.mb.ca/lgbt/">www.serc.mb.ca/lgbt/</a>  <a href="http://www.serc.mb.ca/programs-and-services/lgbt-program/">www.serc.mb.ca/programs-and-services/lgbt-program/</a></p> <p>This community-based, non-profit, pro-choice organization is dedicated to promoting sexual health through education. The centre offers affirming and supportive programming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBT*) individuals and their families and friends in Manitoba.</p> <p>SERC has two Manitoba offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>SERC Winnipeg</b></li> <li>■ <b>SERC Brandon</b></li> </ul> <p>SERC Brandon provides LGBT* community programming and supports in Brandon and western Manitoba, including LGBT* learning opportunities, community education workshops, information, counselling, and support.</p>
<p><b>Transgender Health Clinic, Klinik Community Health</b></p>	<p><a href="http://klinik.mb.ca/health-care/specialized-services/transgender-health-klinik/">http://klinik.mb.ca/health-care/specialized-services/transgender-health-klinik/</a></p> <p>One of the services provided by Klinik Community Health, Transgender Health Clinic is a trans-aware and trans-friendly agency “dedicated to providing specialized health services to transgender individuals who are unable to receive these services elsewhere.”</p>
<p><b>Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc.</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.twospiritmanitoba.ca/">www.twospiritmanitoba.ca/</a></p> <p>The mission of this organization is to improve the quality of life of two-spirited people in Manitoba. This includes “raising funds for and assisting in providing appropriate advocacy, education, health services, housing, employment training and cultural development.”</p>
<p><b>Winnipeg Transgender Support Group</b></p>	<p><a href="http://winnipegtransgendergroup.com/">http://winnipegtransgendergroup.com/</a></p> <p>This volunteer-run organization of transgender and intersex individuals has been active in Winnipeg since 1998. Its primary goal is “to offer peer support and information for anyone who wishes to explore issues of gender identity or transition in an affirming environment.” The group welcomes individuals of all ages, sexes, and cultural backgrounds to join them. There is no cost and no obligation. The group meets at the Rainbow Resource Centre, and is open to the general public.</p>



Information for trans and gender diverse children and youth and their families is available from the following Canadian and international support services.

<b>Support Services in Canada</b>	
<b>Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health (CPATH)</b>	<p><a href="http://www.cpath.ca/">www.cpath.ca/</a></p> <p>CPATH is the largest national professional organization for transgender health in the world. Their members are diverse, representing and identifying within the trans and gender diverse community—from medical students, to social workers, to psychologists. As an interdisciplinary, professional organization, CPATH works to further the understanding and health care of individuals with trans and gender diverse identities by professionals in medicine, psychology, law, social work, counselling, psychotherapy, family studies, sociology, anthropology, sexology, speech and voice therapy, and other related fields. CPATH strives to include representation from community support groups and trans and gender diverse identifying persons on committees and the board and as members at large.</p>
<b>Gender Creative Kids/Enfants Transgenres Canada</b>	<p><a href="http://gendercreativekids.ca/about/">http://gendercreativekids.ca/about/</a></p> <p>This non-profit community organization was initiated by a group of parents and registered in Quebec in April, 2013. It offers support and advocacy parent groups, training to schools and other organizations, and workshops, and contributes to creating safe spaces for gender creative kids. The website provides resources for supporting and affirming gender creative kids within their families, schools, and communities. The sponsors of the website hope that by offering information and opportunities for connection between parents/guardians, educators, health and social service providers, researchers, activists, and children and youth across Canada, they will “contribute towards transforming our world into a safe, affirming, and joyful place for all children.”</p>
<b>The Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN)</b>	<p><a href="http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/">www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/</a></p> <p>NYSHN is an organization led by and for Indigenous youth. It addresses a cross-section of issues ranging from sexual and reproductive health to rights and justice. The organization works throughout Canada and the United States.</p>
<b>TransParent Canada</b>	<p><a href="http://www.transparentcanada.ca/">www.transparentcanada.ca/</a></p> <p>TransParent Canada is an associate organization of the St. Catharines, Ontario, chapter of Parents, Friends, and Family of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Canada. The website offers support to families and friends of trans or gender diverse identified individuals. The organization is open to all. Parents, siblings, co-workers, health care providers, members of the clergy, or anyone else who may know and wish to support a child, youth, or adult on their journey of transition may find the organization and its services helpful. TransParent Canada embraces human diversity and is a forum for affirmation, empowerment, and celebration.</p>



## International Support Services

**World  
Professional  
Association for  
Transgender  
Health (WPATH)**

[www.wpath.org/site\\_home.cfm/](http://www.wpath.org/site_home.cfm/)

This not-for-profit, interdisciplinary professional and educational organization is devoted to transgender health. WPATH's professional, supporting, and student members engage in clinical and academic research to develop evidence-based medicine and strive to promote a high quality of care for transsexual, transgender, and gender variant individuals internationally.



## Appendix B: Selected Print and Online Resources

### Youth

Cho, Stephanie, Carolyn Laub, Sean Saifa M. Wall, Chris Daley, and Courtney Joslin. *Beyond the Binary: A Tool Kit for Gender Identity Activism in Schools*. Oakland, CA: Gay-Straight Alliance Network, Transgender Law Center, and National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2004. Available online at <https://www.gsanetwork.org/files/getinvolved/BeyondtheBinary-Manual.pdf> (5 May 2016).

This resource is designed for student leaders, activists, and gender diverse youth who want to challenge the gender binary system in schools by ensuring gender-inclusive policies exist in schools and by raising awareness about gender diversity and transgender issues through education of students and staff.

GSA Network. *About Us*. <https://gsanetwork.org/about-us/> (5 May 2016).

GSA Network is an LGBTQ racial and gender justice organization that seeks to “empower and train queer, trans, [gender diverse], and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities.”

Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2014.

This book is based on Susan Kuklin’s meetings and interviews with six trans or gender diverse young adults. The author and photographer represents the teens and their stories thoughtfully and respectfully before, during, and after their personal acknowledgement of gender preference. The book includes portraits, family photographs, and candid images providing insights and expanding the emotional and physical journey each person took. The six individuals each present a unique story that reflects their own family dynamics, living situations, gender, and the transition they made in recognition of their authentic selves.

Transgender Law Center. “TRUTH—Share Your Story.” *Truth*. <http://transgenderlawcenter.org/programs/truth/truth-share-your-story> (25 May 2016).

An initiative of the Transgender Law Center, TRUTH—Share Your Story is a trans and gender diverse “storytelling campaign that aims to build empathy, understanding, and a movement for youth to share their stories in their own words and in their own way.” The website provides a toolkit to help youth prepare for and have the supports they need in place to think through the benefits and risks of sharing their story, and, if they choose, craft their story for a wide audience. The website also features several video stories of trans and gender diverse youth and their families.



## Parents/Guardians

Barz, Erica, and Loz Owen. *Our Trans Loved Ones: Questions and Answers for Parents, Families, and Friends of People Who Are Transgender and Gender Expansive*. Washington, DC: Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc., 2008, 2015. Available online at <http://community.pflag.org/document.doc?id=921> (25 May 2016).

This resource is intended to be a starting place for parents/guardians, family members, friends, and allies of people who are affirming their trans or gender diverse identity. The PFLAG publication, updated in 2015, contains a wealth of information, including first-person stories, expert input, and much more.

Brill, Stephanie, and Rachel Pepper. *Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals*. San Francisco, CA: Cleis Press Inc., 2008.

This comprehensive, informative guidebook explores the unique challenges families face in raising their trans and gender diverse children. It focuses on gender diversity in children and youth from birth through college, addressing parenting practices, developmental stages, disclosure to others, working with the school, legal and medical issues, and much more.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). "Inspiring Parents of Transgender Children—CBC Video Resources." 24 Aug. 2015. *DOC ZONE*. [www.cbc.ca/doczone/features/transgender-children-inspiring-parents](http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/features/transgender-children-inspiring-parents) (24 May 2016).

Available from CBC's *DOC ZONE*, this resource on transgender children and their families features videos that share the stories and experiences of various families. The website shares stories of what it is like to be in conflict with the gender assigned at birth. That conflict is often especially pronounced in the life journeys of young trans and gender diverse children. The CBC videos feature some inspiring parents who love and fully support and accept their trans and gender creative children for who they are. Collectively, the stories show that by embracing diversity parents pave the way for wider acceptance.

Ehrensaft, Diane. *Gender Born, Gender Made: Raising Healthy Gender-Nonconforming Children*. New York, NY: Experiment, 2011.

This is a guidebook for parents, guardians, and therapists of children who do not identify with their biological sex and who are gender diverse or gender creative. The author encourages caregivers to support gender diverse and creative children as they explore their gender identities.



Green, Fiona Joy, and May Friedman, eds. *Chasing Rainbows: Exploring Gender Fluid Parenting Practices*. Toronto, ON: Demeter Press, 2013.

This resource provides insights into the gender aware and gender fluid ways that feminist parents approach parenting their children. The book brings together the perspectives and experiences of scholars, activists, and community members to open a dialogue about the challenges of exploring and maintaining a gender aware parenting approach while living in a highly gender normative world.

Gromko, Linda. *Where's My Book? A Guide for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth, Their Parents, and Everyone Else*. Philadelphia, PA: Bainbridge Books, 2015.

Linda Gromko is a family physician who has worked with the trans and gender diverse community for almost two decades. In this book, she outlines the fundamentals of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, puberty, puberty blockers, hormone treatments, and gender affirming surgeries. She shares her patients' experiences, knowledge, and practical information on surviving and flourishing in an often hostile environment. Topics range from publicly affirming gender identity, to parents, to school issues, to coping with depression, to love and sexuality. This book is intended to give gender diverse and creative children and youth some of the information they need to grow to be happy, productive, loving, and loved. As well, it provides essential information needed by parents, educators, and health care providers.

Human Rights Campaign (HRC). *Explore: Transgender Children and Youth*. <http://hrc.org/trans-youth> (25 May 2016).

The HRC website, based in the United States, provides a variety of resources for parents and families of trans and gender diverse children and youth. The resources are intended to help parents understand and support their children's gender identity and expression. The website also offers suggestions on how parents can talk to their children's medical providers, as well as responses from experts to parents' questions about whether their child is transgender and about the transition process in schools. A map of clinical care programs available across the US is also available.



## Educators

American Psychological Association. *Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in Schools: Key Recommendations for School Administrators*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2015. Available online at [www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/lgbt/school-administrators.pdf](http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/lgbt/school-administrators.pdf) (25 May 2016).

This resource is part of a series of informational guides on Promoting Resiliency for Gender Diverse and Sexual Minority Students in Schools, produced by American Psychological Association, Div. 16 (School Psychology), and Div. 44 (Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues). The series describes best practices for educators, school counsellors, administrators, and personnel, based on the latest research on the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, gender diverse, questioning, and intersex students. This resource provides key recommendations for building a safe, gender diverse environment, including strong anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that are enforced.

The following guides are also part of the series:

- *How Educators Can Support Families with Gender Diverse and Sexual Minority Youth: Promoting Resiliency for Gender Diverse and Sexual Minority Students in Schools*
- *Key Terms and Concepts in Understanding Gender Diversity and Sexual Orientation among Students*
- *School-Based Risk and Protective Factors for Gender Diverse and Sexual Minority Children and Youth: Improving School Climate*
- *Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in Schools: Key Recommendations for School Health Personnel*

The Media Education Foundation. Home Page. [www.mediaed.org/](http://www.mediaed.org/) (25 May 2016).

The Media Education Foundation is a producer and distributor of documentary films and other educational resources. The organization aims “to inspire critical thinking about the social, political, and cultural impact of American mass media, including videos on media and gender.” The site offers information on videos and films that deal with a variety of issues related to gender, gender identity, and gender expression.

Orr, Asaf, National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and Joel Baum, Gender Spectrum, with National Education Association (NEA), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation. *Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K–12 Schools*. 3 Aug. 2015. [www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf](http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf) (4 May 2016).

This American resource provides a guide for building safe, supportive, and inclusive school environments for trans and gender diverse youth. Written for administrators, teachers, parents, and other adults who work with youth, the guide addresses topics ranging from basic concepts of gender and the importance of affirming gender identity, to best practices for washroom access, and working with unsupportive parents. NCLR and Gender Spectrum led the effort to produce the guide, joined by NEA, ACLU, and HRC Foundation.





Welcoming Schools. Home Page. [www.welcomingschools.org/](http://www.welcomingschools.org/) (25 May 2016).

This website, sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign, offers a comprehensive approach to creating respectful and affirming Early Years (elementary) schools with resources and professional learning. The resources provided are intended to promote the embracing of family diversity, support the creation of LGBTQ-inclusive schools, prevent bullying and gender stereotyping, and support trans and gender diverse students.

## General

Ehrensaft, Diane. *Gender Born, Gender Made: Raising Healthy Gender-Nonconforming Children*. New York, NY: Experiment, 2011.

This guide for parents, clinicians, and educators addresses both the philosophical dilemmas and the practical, daily concerns of working with children who do not fit a “typical” gender mould.

Gender Spectrum. *About Us*. <https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/about-us/> (25 May 2016).

Gender Spectrum is dedicated to providing resources, consultation, training, and events that help families, educators, professionals, and organizations understand and address the concepts of gender identity and expression. The organization seeks to offer an accessible, practical approach based on research and experience, and strives to enable its clients to gain a deeper understanding of gender all along the spectrum. Gender Spectrum presents an overview of how contemporary society defines gender and how these restrictive definitions can harm and limit those who do not fit neatly into these categories or norms. The organization helps identify and remove obstacles so that all can be free to affirm their true selves.

Meyer, Elizabeth J., and Annie Pullen Sansfaçon, eds. *Supporting Transgender and Gender Creative Youth: Schools, Families, and Communities in Action*. New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2014.

This resource combines research, social action methods, and theory on the topic of transgender youth and gender diverse or creative children and youth. The book is divided into three sections, addressing theoretical and clinical, educational, and community perspectives. The specific issues and challenges addressed relate to education, social work, medicine, and counselling. The recommendations will be of interest to parents, families, medical/clinical practitioners, and educators. This well-researched and accessible book will be of interest to a broad range of individuals committed to improving the lives of gender diverse and creative children and youth.



Public Health Agency of Canada. *Questions and Answers: Gender Identity in Schools*. Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010. Available online at [www.sieccan.org/pdf/phac\\_genderidentity\\_qa-eng.pdf](http://www.sieccan.org/pdf/phac_genderidentity_qa-eng.pdf) (25 May 2016).

This document provides answers to some of the most common questions that educators, parents/guardians, school administrators, and health professionals may have about gender identity in the Canadian school context.

Trans Youth Family Allies (TYFA). Home Page. [www.imatyfa.org/](http://www.imatyfa.org/) (25 May 2016).

TYFA emerged from a parental discussion group related to the needs of trans and gender diverse youth and their families. The organization aspires to empower children and families by partnering with educators, service providers, and communities to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected. The website offers resources for parents/guardians, health care practitioners, and educators.



The selected terms and definitions in this glossary are not meant to label an individual but are intended to be helpful functional descriptors. These terms, like all words, are social constructs developed over time. New language is constantly evolving and forming to unite community members, as well as to divide groups, by experience, politics, and membership. These terms and definitions are not standardized and may be used differently by different people and organizations in different regions.

Although the following are some of the most commonly used terms, individuals and groups may prefer other terms to describe their gender identity or expression. Labels and identities should only be self-selected by individuals, not assumed by others. Biology does not imply identity. Nor do behaviour and expression alone constitute identity.

The definitions used here are from the support document *Safe and Caring Schools: A Resource for Equity and Inclusion in Manitoba Schools* (MB MyGSA.ca) (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning). For additional definitions, refer to the Terms and Concepts section of the document at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe\\_schools/mygsa/terms\\_concepts.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/mygsa/terms_concepts.pdf).

### **agender**

Without gender. Often used for self-identification by persons who do not identify with or conform to any gender.

### **binary gender system**

A system that forces all people into only two categories—either men or women, boys or girls. In this system, men and women are expected to look and behave in particular ways that are different from one another.

### **cisgender/cisgendered** (adj.)

Refers to someone whose gender identity and gender expression correspond with their assigned birth sex. (Egale Canada)

### **COFAB**

Acronym for *coercively assigned female at birth*. Refers to people who were assigned to be female at birth, and raised with a female gender role that does not match their gender identity.

### **COMAB**

Acronym for *coercively assigned male at birth*. Refers to people who were assigned to be male at birth, and raised with a male gender role that does not match their gender identity.



### **coming out**

“1. The process through which [LGBT2SQ\*] people recognize and acknowledge their non-heterosexual orientation and integrate this understanding into their personal and social lives. 2. The act of disclosing this orientation or identity to others.” (The Alberta Teachers’ Association)

“From ‘coming out of the closet,’ the process of becoming aware of and open about one’s sexual orientation or gender identity.” (Girl’s Best Friend Foundation, and Advocates for Youth 63)

The process of becoming aware of one’s trans identity, accepting it, and/or telling others about it.

### **discrimination**

“The unjust or prejudicial treatment of an individual or groups of people; here unfair treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.” (Girl’s Best Friend Foundation, and Advocates for Youth 63)

The unequal treatment of groups or individuals with a history of marginalization by a person, a group, or an institution which, through the denial of certain rights, results in inequality, subordination, and/or deprivation of political, educational, social, economic, and cultural rights.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission defines discrimination as “an action or a decision that treats a person or a group negatively for reasons such as their race, age or disability. These reasons are known as **grounds of discrimination.**”

As used in human rights laws, discrimination means making a distinction between certain individuals or groups based on a prohibited ground of discrimination.

“When you are treated less favourably than someone else either because of your real or perceived sexual orientation, your gender, your ethnicity or religion, etc.” (Schools OUT UK)

### **gender**

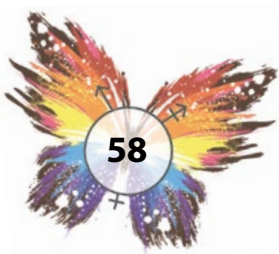
The social classification of people as masculine and/or feminine. Whereas sex is an externally assigned classification, gender is something that becomes evident in a social context. (Egale Canada)

### **gender diverse/creative** (adj.)

Refers to a person whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from stereotypical, cultural, or societal expectations based on assigned sex and gender. (Egale Canada)

### **gender dysphoria**

“A medical term for unhappiness or discomfort with the gender role assigned by one’s culture to one’s biological sex; a term disliked by many transgender [and gender diverse] people as implying that there is something wrong with them; may or may not coincide with *sexual dysphoria.*” (Girl’s Best Friend Foundation, and Advocates for Youth 64)



**gender expression**

The way a person presents and communicates gender identity to society, through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours and traits used publicly to express one's gender as masculine or feminine or something else. The traits and behaviours associated with masculinity and femininity are culturally specific and change over time. Gender expression is not an indication of sexual orientation. (Also called *gender presentation*.) (Egale Canada)

**gender identity**

A person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender—one's internal sense of being male, female, or another gendered being entirely. A person's gender may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others. (Egale Canada)

**genderqueer (ambigender) (adj.)**

Refers to a person whose gender identity may not correspond with social and societal gender expectations. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may identify with both male and female genders, may move between genders, or may reject the gender binary or gender altogether. Those who identify as genderqueer may or may not also identify as trans. (Egale Canada)

**intersex/intersexual (adj.)**

Refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. Many people experience the designation of *intersex* as stigmatizing, given the history of medical practitioners imposing the diagnosis on infants, children, and young adults (some people may not be identified as intersex until puberty). As with all humans, gender identity for intersex individuals may be complex. (Egale Canada)

**sex/assigned sex**

The biological classification of a person as male, female, or intersex. Most often, sex is assigned by a medical professional at birth and is based on a visual assessment of external anatomy. (Egale Canada)

**sexual orientation**

A person's capacity for profound emotional and sexual attraction to another person based on their sex and/or gender. (Egale Canada)

**trans (adj.)**

A term commonly used to refer to transgender, transsexual, and/or gender diverse identities and experiences. While it is often used as an umbrella term, some people identify just as trans. (Egale Canada)



**transgender** (adj.)

A person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex (the antonym for cisgender)—often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions, including those who may self-identify as *male*, *female*, *two-spirit*, *genderqueer*, *bigender*, *gender fluid*, *transsexual*, *gender creative*, *pangender*, *transmen*, *transwomen*, *gender independent*, *agender*, *male-to-female (MTF)*, *female-to-male (FTM)*, and others. Transgender people (like cisgender people) may identify as straight, gay, etc. (Egale Canada)

**transsexual** (adj.)

A person whose sex assigned at birth does not correspond with their gender identity. A transsexual woman needs to live and experience life as a woman, and a transsexual man needs to live and experience life as a man. Some transsexual people may physically alter their body (e.g., sex reassignment surgery and/or hormone therapy) and gender expression to correspond with their gender identity. Many identify as transgender, rather than transsexual, because they are uncomfortable with the psychiatric origins of the term *transsexual*. (Egale Canada)

**transition/transitioning**

The process whereby people change their appearance or physical body to align with their gender (also called the *gender affirming process*).

Transitioning means different things to different people, due in part to issues of access, safety, and personal choice. It may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance, presentation, or function by medical, surgical, or other means. (Egale Canada)

**two-spirit** (n.)/**two-spirited** (adj.)

The term *Two Spirit* emerged in 1990 at the third annual Intertribal First Nations/Native American gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg. *Two-Spirit* is an Aboriginal spirit-name shared at that 1990 gathering of Aboriginal people who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans at the time. *Two-spirit* is a name now embraced by many LGBTIQ Indigenous people of Turtle Island. It is unique to North American Aboriginal LGBTIQ people because First Nations peoples' connections to this land and ecology are cultural, historical, and familial. (Albert McLeod, cited in Egale Canada)



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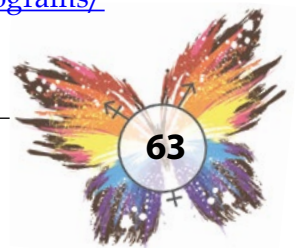
**Notes**





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