

Catalyst Academy Charter School

Nondiscrimination- Transgender Students

Purpose

Catalyst Academy Charter School (“Catalyst”) is committed to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression and to ensuring that every student has equal access to all components of the educational program.

This policy covers conduct that takes place in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses, or vehicles and at bus stops, and on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists. This policy applies to the entire school community, including educators, school staff, students, parents/guardians, and volunteers

Definitions

Sex Assigned at Birth or Assigned Sex: Refers to the gender designation listed on one’s original birth certificate.

Gender Identity: Refers to one’s internal sense of gender, which may be different from one’s assigned sex, and which is consistently and uniformly asserted most or all of the time, or for which there is other evidence that the gender identity is sincerely held as part of the individual’s core identity. It is one’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: Refers to external cues that one uses to represent or communicate one’s gender to others, such as behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, mannerisms, or body characteristics.

Transgender: An adjective describing an individual whose gender identity is different from the individual’s assigned sex. “Transgender boy” and “transgender male” refer to an individual assigned the female sex at birth who has a male gender identity. “Transgender girl” and “transgender female” refer to an individual assigned the male sex at birth who has a female gender identity. Other terms that can have similar meanings are transsexual and trans. An individual can express or assert a transgender gender identity in a variety of ways, which may but do not always include specific medical treatments or procedures. Medical treatments or procedures are not considered a prerequisite for one’s recognition as transgender. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Transgender Student: A student who consistently and uniformly asserts a gender identity different from the student’s assigned sex most or all of the time or for which there is documented medical evidence that the gender identity is sincerely held as part of the student’s core identity.

Gender Transition: The processes by which some individuals strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward manifestations. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as the "other" gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions. It is also important to know that many people are unable or choose not to transition medically.

Gender Stereotypes: Refers to stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity, including expectations of how boys or girls represent or communicate one's gender to others, such as behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, mannerisms, or body characteristics

Gender Expansive: A term for people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations, such as "feminine" boys, "masculine" girls, and those who are perceived as androgynous. Conveys a wider more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. This includes people who identify outside traditional gender categories or identify as both genders. Other terms that can have similar meanings include gender diverse or gender fluid.

Sex-Specific Facilities: Refers to facilities and accommodations used by students at school or during school-sponsored activities and trips, and include, but are not limited to, restrooms, locker rooms, and overnight facilities.

Guidelines

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived gender identity or expression are to be taken seriously and handled in a manner consistent with Catalyst's policies, law and regulation.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All students have a right to privacy and this right includes the right to keep one's transgender status private at school. Information about a student's transgender status, legal name, or sex assigned at birth may also constitute confidential protected health information. Disclosing this information to other students, their parents/guardians, or other third parties may violate privacy laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Catalyst shall ensure that protected health information and education records relating to transgender and gender expansive students shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws.

Transgender and gender expansive students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share private information. The fact that a student chooses to disclose his or her transgender status to Catalyst staff or other students does not authorize Catalyst staff to re-disclose that information. To ensure the safety and well-being of the student, Catalyst personnel should not disclose a student's

transgender status to others, including the student's parents/guardians or other Catalyst personnel, unless: (1) legally required to do so, or (2) the student has authorized such disclosure. When contacting the parent or guardian of a transgender student, Catalyst staff should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's sex assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise.

Names and Pronouns

Every student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to the student's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the student need not change his or her official records. It is strongly recommended that Catalyst staff privately ask transgender or gender expansive students at the beginning of the school year how they want to be addressed in class, in correspondence to the home, or at conferences with the student's guardian.

Student Records

Catalyst is required to maintain a mandatory permanent student record that includes a student's legal name and legal gender. However, to the extent that Catalyst is not legally required to use a student's legal name and gender on other school records or documents, such as school IDs, classroom rosters or the yearbook, Catalyst will use the name and gender preferred by the student. Catalyst will change a student's official record to reflect a change in legal name or gender upon receipt of documentation that such change has been made pursuant to a court order, or through amendment of state or federally-issued identification. In situations where Catalyst staff are required by law to use or to report a transgender student's legal name or gender, such as for purposes of standardized testing, administration and school staff shall adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

Dress Code

Students shall have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the dress code adopted by the school. Catalyst staff shall not enforce a school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender expansive students than other students.

Student Transitions

Generally, notifying a student's parent/guardian about his or her gender identity, expression, or transition, is unnecessary. In some cases, notifying parents/guardians carries risks for the student, such as physical abuse and being kicked out of their home. Prior to notification of any parent/guardian regarding the transition process, Catalyst staff should work closely with the student to assess the degree to which, if any, the parent/guardian will be involved in the process and must consider the health, wellbeing, and safety of the transitioning student.

Upon notification by a student, parent/guardian, or representative that a student is undertaking, planning to undergo, or has completed a gender transition, the school will promptly inform the notifying individual and the student of the right to request a support team, consisting of appropriate school staff such as the school principal or his/her designee, counselor, social worker and teacher(s). When a student transitions during the school year, the school team shall hold a meeting with the student and parents/guardians, if they are involved in the process, to ascertain their desires and concerns. The school team should discuss a timeline for the transition in order to create the conditions supporting a safe and accepting environment at the school. Finally, Catalyst staff shall train school administrators and any educators that interact daily with the student on the transition plan, timelines for transitions, and any relevant legal requirements.

Sex-Specific Facilities

With respect to all restrooms, locker rooms, changing facilities, or overnight facilities, Catalyst students shall have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity. In any gender-segregated facility, any student who is uncomfortable using a shared facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon the student's request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. This may include the ability to use a nearby private restroom or office, or a separate changing schedule. A transgender or gender expansive student may request to use a separate restroom or changing area, however, no student shall be required to use an alternative restroom or changing facility because they are transgender or gender expansive. Under no circumstance should any student be required to use sex-segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity. School staff who are responsible for supervising student activity in sex-specific facilities are directed to closely monitor such facilities when being used by an identified transgender or gender expansive student in order to foster student safety

Physical Education Classes and Intramural and Interscholastic Athletics

All students shall be permitted to participate in physical education classes and intramural sports in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

Training and Professional Development

The CEO or designee shall ensure that training is provided for all staff members on their responsibilities under applicable laws and this policy, including teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers, security and health and physical education staff.

Information regarding this policy shall be incorporated into training for new school employees. Catalyst shall implement ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying, harassment and discrimination.