



Holly Jordan, Hillside High School (Durham NC) and SafeSchoolsNC

Dos and Don'ts for Working with Transgender Students

Do

- Add "Name you want to be called" and "Pronouns" to student info sheets at the beginning of the semester.
- Call the student (and all students) by the name and pronouns they prefer. This is the quickest way to help a transgender student feel safe and welcome.
- If you make a mistake in name or pronoun, correct yourself, but don't make a big deal about it.
- Correct other students in your classroom if they use the wrong name or pronoun.
- When you have a substitute, leave a roster that includes the student's preferred name.
- To the extent it is appropriate, be a good listener to students.
- Take transgender students and their concerns seriously, even if you do not understand the concern or why it is important to them.
- Remember that for a trans student to use the bathroom they are currently allowed to use and feel safe in (single stall), they often have to go out of their way in the building and might be rushed or late to class. Work with the student to come up with a fair and caring solution to this issue.
- Be aware of the increased possibility of teasing or bullying the student might encounter. Use classroom management strategies that discourage and shut down these behaviors.
- Identify adult allies and supports in your school building who can help answer your questions about how to support your student.
- Remember and acknowledge that being transgender is not the only identity marker for trans students. Engage with them about other topics and interests, just like you would any student.

Don't

- "Out" a transgender person to anyone (students or adults) without their express permission.
- Assume an individual's sex or gender identity based upon their appearance.
- Conflate any behavior problems the student might have with their transgender identity.
- Ask (or allow students to ask) transgender people about their body, genitalia, or sex lives in any situation where you would not ask a cisgender person about their body, genitalia, or sex life.
- Place labels on any student. Mirror their self-identification and language instead.
- Question a transgender person's identity or their assessment of whether an incident was transphobic; it is very likely that they are more practiced than you in recognizing transphobia and its impact on their life.