

## CONNECTIONS DAY SCHOOL

# **TRANSGENDER & GENDER NON-CONFORMING STUDENTS POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

This policy is designed to create a safe, comfortable learning environment for all students, and to ensure that every student has equal access to all school programs and activities. This policy sets out guidelines for Connections Day School (CDS) to address the needs for transgender and gender non-conforming students.

This policy cannot anticipate every potential situation that might occur with respect to a transgender or gender non-conforming student, and the needs of each transgender or gender non-conforming student must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, the goal is to ensure the safety, comfort, and healthy development of the transgender or gender non-conforming student, all while maximizing the student's social integration and sense of belonging, and minimizing any kind of stigmatizing of the student.

### **DEFINITIONS**

The definitions identified here are not comprehensive, and are not meant to label students. They are intended to assist in understanding this policy and the obligations of CDS staff to follow through with the identified rules, boundaries and expectations.

- Gender Identity – refers to a person's psychological identification as male, female, both or neither, regardless of the sex assigned at birth. This includes a student's gender-related identity, appearance, expression or behavior.
- Transgender Students – refers to students whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.
- Gender Non-Conforming Students – refers to students whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations, such as "feminine" boys, "masculine" girls, and students who are perceived as androgynous.
- Preferred Name – refers to the name with which a student identifies and prefers others to use.

- **Transition** – refers to the personal process a transgender student undergoes to begin to live as their self-identified gender. This may include some or all of the following cultural, legal and medical adjustments: telling one’s family, friends, and/or classmates; changing one’s style of dress, changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly some form of surgical procedure.

## **GUIDANCE & BEST PRACTICES**

**Student Transitions:** If a student is interested in transitioning during the school year, the student’s academic and clinical team at CDS, along with a representative from the hometown school district will hold a meeting with the student and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to explore this possibility prior to making any school-related changes. The team will discuss a reasonable timeline for the transition in order to create conditions to support a safe and accepting environment at the hometown school. Finally, the team shall train any school staff that interacts directly with the student on the transition plan, timelines for transition and any relevant legal requirements. Should the student and/or their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) request changes to the original timeline or conditions that were created at the first meeting, the student’s team must hold another meeting with the student and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) prior to making any changes.

**Confidentiality:** CDS staff shall not discuss a student’s transgender status with anyone other than the student and the student’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s), unless the information is necessary in order to provide accommodations for the student, ensure the student’s safety, or if the student has given written consent.

**Names & Pronouns:** Transgender and gender non-conforming students at CDS will be addressed by their preferred names, and by the pronouns corresponding to their preferred gender identity (with parental/guardian approval to do so). A legal name or gender change is not required, and the student need not change his or her official school records. While staff members or students may make inadvertent or honest mistakes in the use of preferred names or pronouns, the intentional or persistent refusal by staff members or students to respect a student’s gender identity and preferred names and pronouns will be considered a violation of this policy.

**Restroom Accessibility:** Students will have access to the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity, regardless of the student’s sex assigned at birth. This access shall be presented as an option for the student, but not a

requirement. This option is also available to the student when on community outings, and students will be accompanied by a staff member to the restroom to ensure their safety

**Gender Segregated Activities:** To the best extent possible, CDS staff will reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by gender – and maintain only those practices that have a clear and sound educational purpose. In situations where students are segregated by gender, students should be offered the option to participate in the group that corresponds to their gender identity.

**Official Records:** CDS maintains records that include a student’s legal name and legal gender. However, to the extent that the schools are not legally required to use a student’s legal name and gender on other school records or documents, the school shall also include the name and gender preferred by the student. Administrative staff at CDS will change a student’s official records to reflect a change in legal name or gender upon receipt of court documentation that such a change has been made, or through amendment of state or federally-issued identification.

**Discrimination & Harassment:** It is the responsibility of CDS staff to ensure that transgender and gender non-conforming students have a safe school environment. This includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment or violence are given immediate attention (i.e., investigation the incident, taking appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff members with appropriate resources). Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person’s actual or perceived transgender or gender non-conforming status are to be handled in the same manner as other discrimination or harassment complaints.

**SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you would like any further information, or have any questions or concerns, please contact CDS Administration at:  
**847.680.8349**