

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Support Protocol for LGBTQ+ Students

Consistent with [Board Policy JBB](#), this support protocol is a tool designed to facilitate discussions with LGBTQ+ students to help ensure they are safe and supported at school and in school-based activities in Baltimore City Public Schools. Additional resources are available on the City Schools website at this link: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/student-fair-practices>. If you have any questions or concerns at any point in the process, please reach out to City Schools' Equal Educational/Employment Opportunity and Title IX Compliance Unit at eeo-titleixcompliance@bcps.k12.md.us or 410-396-8542.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Legal Name (Last, First, MI): _____

School: _____

Grade: _____ Student ID # _____

What is the student's preferred or chosen name? _____

Gender Identity? Male Female X (unspecified/non-binary)

What pronouns does the student use in school? _____

FAMILY SUPPORT

Is the student's parent/guardian aware of the student's gender identity/gender expression/sexual orientation? Yes
 No

Support Level: None 1 (Low) 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (High)

If parent/guardian support is low, what considerations must be addressed in implementing this plan?

What will be the process for supporting the student in their interactions with family members?

What will be the process for periodically checking in with the student and/or family members?

SAFETY, SUPPORT, AND WELLNESS

Who will be the student's "go to" adult(s) at school?

If a "go to" adult is not available, what should student do?

What other plans can be put in place so that the school and student can work together to respond if the student is feeling unsafe? How will the student signal their need for support?

What other issues should be considered/addressed regarding the student's wellness and well-being?

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

What, if any, considerations need to be addressed regarding bathroom/locker-room use?

What, if any, considerations need to be addressed regarding physical education/athletics?

What, if any, considerations need to be addressed regarding extracurricular activities?

What, if any, considerations need to be addressed regarding field trips?

Are there lessons, units, or content during the school year to consider for planning and support purposes (health curriculum, swim unit, social justice units, name projects, dance instruction, etc.)?

Are there other school activities during the school year to consider for planning and support purposes (e.g., Pride events, school dances, promotion/graduation ceremonies, etc.)

COMMUNICATION PLAN

How public or private will information about this student's gender identity/gender expression/sexual orientation be?

Does the student wish to share with all adults and all students? If not, identify categories of students/staff to whom information about the student's gender identity/gender expression/sexual orientation may be disclosed:

What other ways will the school need to anticipate privacy needs of the student? How will they be handled?

SUPPORT PLAN REVIEW

All plans should be monitored, reviewed on an ongoing basis, and updated as needed. How will this plan be monitored, reviews, and updated over time?

Form completed by City Schools staff (print name) _____ Date _____

Distribution: Copy 1/ School Confidential folder (in principal's office)
Copy 2/ EEO & Title IX Compliance Unit, 200 E. North Avenue, Room 208; 410-396-8542

- *Baltimore City Public Schools does not discriminate in its employment, programs, and activities, based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy or parenting status, family structure, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), veteran status, genetic information, age, immigration or citizenship status, socioeconomic status, language, or any other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations, as outlined in Board Policies JBA, JBB, JICK, ACA, ACB, and ACD. [Link to Full Nondiscrimination Notice.](#)*

Utilizing the *Support Protocol for LGBTQ+ Students* – Guidance for Baltimore City Public Schools Staff

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners has adopted [Policy JBB \(Sex-Based Discrimination – Student\)](#), which commits Baltimore City Public Schools (“City Schools”) and its staff to “support students’ participation in their school environment consistent with their gender identity and gender expression.” Consistent with Policy JBB, the LGBTQ+ Student Support Protocol is a tool designed to help facilitate discussions with students to:

- Help ensure that students are safe and supported at school and in school-based activities;
- Help students think proactively about how to navigate relationships and situations that may arise at school;
- Promote equal access and equal opportunity for students to participate in school programs and activities; and
- Provide a roadmap for support from school staff to ensure that students feel safe and included in school, resulting in a more positive and successful school experience.

The LGBTQ+ Student Support Protocol is not intended as a standalone document; ideally, it should be one tool among many for supporting LGBTQ+ students. It is not a requirement that students and staff complete the plan in order to receive supports.

It is critical that the development of a support protocol be **student-initiated** and **student-led**.

- The school principal (or designee), in consultation with a school psychologist, social worker, or school counselor, should use this form to develop a collaborative plan with a student who seeks support related to gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation, such as a student who seeks to be identified as non-binary, transgender, or gender-non-conforming. This includes students who seek to change their legal name or use a chosen or preferred name consistent with their gender identity.
- While the support plan should be consistently implemented by all school staff, each student’s needs should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- All plans should be monitored, reviewed on an ongoing basis, and updated as needed.

If the student’s parent/guardian is supportive, they should be included in the development of the plan. Prior to contacting a parent/guardian, the principal (designee) should speak with the student to ascertain the level of support the student either receives or anticipates receiving from home. In some cases, LGBTQ+ students may not openly express their gender identity at home because of safety concerns or lack of acceptance. Matters of gender identity and expression can be complex and may involve familial conflict. If this is the case, school staff should support the development of a student-led plan that works toward inclusion of the family, if possible, taking safety concerns into consideration, as well as student privacy, and recognizing that providing support for a student is critical, even when the family is non-supportive. In such cases and others where additional support is required, the school principal (designee) should reach out to the Equal Educational/Employment Opportunity and Title IX Compliance Unit (“EEO and Title IX Compliance Unit”), which will consult with the Schools Office, Whole Child Support Office, and/or the Equity Office, as appropriate.

Please follow these step-by-step instructions when using the LGBTQ+ Student Support Protocol:

1. When a student contacts a City Schools staff member and requests support around issues of gender identity and gender expression, the staff member should reach out to the principal/designee, with the student's consent.
2. The principal/designee should schedule a follow-up meeting with the student, in consultation with a school psychologist, social worker, or school counselor.
3. At the meeting, the LGBTQ+ Student Support Protocol should be used to guide discussion, taking into consideration the student's age and comfort level discussing specific aspects of the Protocol. Please note on the Protocol if the student is uncomfortable participating/discussing.
 - In **Section 1**, "*Student Information*," discuss whether the student wishes to identify a preferred or chosen name, gender identity, and pronouns. This will help determine how to ensure that members of the school community are referring to the students appropriately.
 - City Schools recognizes the right of students to be referred to by their chosen or preferred name and by the pronouns that correspond with their gender identity.
 - If the student has a preferred or chosen name and/or gender identity, make sure you discuss whether the student would like to identify them in Infinite Campus. Preferred names and gender identity designated in Infinite Campus will be used on ALL City Schools documents except for the official student records (student record card, transcript, and diploma). It is important to consider the implications of parents/guardians seeing a student's preferred name/gender identity on City Schools communications.
 - For information on changing student names (both official student records and in Infinite Campus), see the guidance available at <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/student-fair-practices>.
 - **Section 2**, "*Family Support*," helps assess the level of home support for the student's gender identity. This information is crucial to determine next steps and address any safety considerations. For more information about engagement of parents/guardians, see the previous page.
 - **Section 3**, "*Safety, Support, and Wellness*," helps identify "go to" adults for the student who can provide support at school. This section also facilitates wellness and safety planning.
 - In **Section 4**, "*Participation in School Activities*," consider ways to promote access to school-based activities. Please note that Board Policy JBB states that students can use restrooms and other school facilities that correspond with their gender identity.
 - In **Section 5**, "*Communication Plan*," discuss with the student how they would like the school to communicate about their gender identity.
 - A student's personal information, including gender identity, should not be disclosed to staff or other students without the student's consent.
 - Consider with the student the possibility that communicating their gender identity broadly at school might mean that their family and neighbors also become aware of this information. Help students plan for that possibility.
 - In **Section 6**, "*Support Plan Review*," develop a plan to monitor the protocol document. Remember that this is a living document, and it should be reviewed and updated regularly, as the student's gender journey progresses. For example, home support can also change over time, which makes it important to have regular check-ins.
4. Consider referring the student to community and school resources, such as those listed on the City Schools' website at this link: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/student-fair-practices>.
5. The completed plan must be maintained in a secure location by the principal (designee). Do not put the plan into the student's cumulative or confidential files. A copy should be confidentially transmitted to the EEO Unit.

This LGBTQ+ Student Support Protocol was developed in consultation with LGBTQ+ Cross-Functional Team, comprised of individuals from across City Schools offices and schools, as well as external stakeholders.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to City Schools' Equal Educational/Employment Opportunity and Title IX Compliance Unit at eeo-titleixcompliance@bcps.k12.md.us or 410-396-8542.

