# LGBTQ+ Youth Standards of Care

San Diego LGBT Community Leadership Council:
Youth Services & Advocacy Committee
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http://bit.ly/community-leadership-council

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# Executive Summary

LGBTQ+ people have existed as long as people have existed. And LGBTQ+ students, of all ages, have existed in schools as long as schools have existed. What is "new" in our culture is not the existence of LGBTQ+ youth, but the shifts in understanding that are allowing increasing visibility and inclusion of these youth and their families in our school communities and in society at large.

Of course, there is some resistance to this increasing visibility, which unfortunately can result in harmful, sometimes even deadly, practices such as bullying and exclusion of our LGBTQ+ youth. This guide is a collective effort to counter these harmful practices with the positive power of education, and to help all San Diego educators foster a safe, inclusive learning environment for LGBTQ+ students—and, in turn, for every student.

In this guide, you will find a solid foundation of all the information you need to provide a legally-compliant, LGBTQ+-affirming school campus that fosters safety, diversity, and inclusion. Information and research from several leading organizations is incorporated into this guide, so you will see various terms used for LGBTQ+ (from LGBT to LGBTQIAA+). All of these terms are intended to encompass every student who identifies on the spectrum of gender and sexuality diversity.

This guide lays out a set of Standards you can follow to cover the bases of LGBTQ+ student safety and inclusion in your school community, from the legal to the social-emotional. Under each Standard, you will find research-based explanations of the need for that Standard, alongside suggested steps and resources to implement it.

And, infused into all of this crucial information, you will find hope. Hope that this shift in visibility of our LGBTQ+ students can lead to safer and more inclusive schools and communities, leading to more learning and growth, for everyone.

# Introduction

San Diego LGBT Community Leadership Council: Youth Services and Advocacy Committee was formed in 2015 and is a collaborative of San Diego County-based programs providing services to LGBTQ+ youth. **Our goal is to assess the school and community climate for LGBTQ+ students and also to build relationships with school leadership, support staff, and community partners to ensure the most robust and welcoming learning environment.** Every individual who has contributed to the LGBTQ+ Youth Standards of Care document has lived experience in relation to bullying, harassment, or other forms of identity-based mistreatment, either from the perspective of a self-identified LGBTQ+ individual or as an ally to LGBTQ+ communities. Thus, while some of the reasons that led us to contribute to this document are professionally oriented, many of them are personally oriented as well. **We seek to eliminate the unnecessary pain that many of us and/or our peers have withstood while attending academic institutions in San Diego County.** The suffering that results from bias-based bigotry and bullying can be prevented as more people become educated. Education, in relation to supporting LGBTQ+ youth, is imperative. The LGBTQ+ Youth Standards of Care document is for elementary, middle, and secondary school administrators, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) leaders, medical support staff, teachers, school policy shapers, parents, students, and anyone else who wishes to be there for youth in a culturally responsive and policy-informed capacity. **Each section outlines recommendations for best practices and relevant resources that reflect and comply with California Education Codes and laws.** Should you need more information before you begin, we suggest reading GLSEN's Policy Recommendations as a starting resource. If you find yourself with a question that is not answered within this document, we encourage you to contact this committee via the San Diego Pride contact information at the bottom of each page or by contacting any of the collaborators listed.

# *Standard 1: State Legislation and Training*

Provide comprehensive training for all staff, educators, and administrators at all grade levels on LGBTQ+ issues and school safety. Please note that in some school districts, such as San Diego Unified School District, this training is mandatory. This recommendation for training is supported by state legislation, including AB 827 and AB 2246.

## Statement of Need

Informed, comprehensive training will keep your students safer and also help adults to better meet your students' psycho-emotional needs, thus reducing liability issues on school grounds.

## Suggested Steps

Teaching for Justice, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides the following recommendations in Creating an LGBT-Inclusive School Climate: A Teaching for Justice Guide for School Leaders:

*Conduct student training once a year, including age-appropriate discussion of the following:*

- *The importance of diversity (including nonconformity with gender norms) in the student body;*
- *Behaviors that constitute bullying;*
- *The negative impact of bullying;*
- *How students should respond to bullying;*
- *How teachers should respond to bullying;*
- *Disciplinary consequences for students who bully their peers; and the process for reporting bullying.*

*Conduct teacher and administrator training once a year, including the following topics in addition to those above:*

- *Root causes of bullying;*
- *Steps to foster an inclusive educational environment for all students—specifically students who don't conform to gender norms or who might be perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender;*
- *Review of the school's bullying policy, emphasizing the staff's responsibility to respond to all bullying; and disciplinary consequences for school staff who engage in or ignore bullying.*

All public school administrators would do well to review the following California Education Codes and websites to take action in accordance with state-mandated laws.
**California Education Codes and laws that require compliance for educators are listed below:**

- AB 9/CA EDC Article 5.5 Safe Place to Learn Act [234-234.5]/Seth's Law
  *Provides for training on anti-bullying and related procedures. (See Standard 2: Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Safety Concerns.)*

- AB 1266: Pupil rights: sex-segregated school programs and activities
  *Ensures fair access to facilities and name and gender marker changes. (See Standard 7: Name and Gender Marker Changes.)*

- AB 827: Safe schools: Safe Place to Learn Act: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning pupil resources
  *Ensures safe schools for all, including LGBTQ+ students.*

- AB 2246: Pupil suicide prevention policies
  *Provides for suicide prevention training that is inclusive of and pointed to LGBTQ+ needs. (See summary below.)*

**AB 2246 (California Education Code 215)**

As of September 26, 2016, all public schools within the state of California that teach students in grades 7-12 must adopt a model policy on student suicide prevention/intervention, with an eye toward "high-risk groups." This Assembly Bill was put into effect starting with the 2017-2018 school year. AB 2246 states that one of the "high-risk groups" to which the earlier text refers is "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth" (item D). All teachers of students in grades 7-12 must receive suicide prevention training so that they know what to do and what resources to offer (within the spectrum of their specific credential when a student is experiencing a mental health crisis and/or suicide ideation.

**All public school systems within the state of California that instruct students in grades 7-12 would do well to review the following sites:**

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention — Bring Suicide Prevention to Your School
- California Legislative Information — ASB 2246 Pupil suicide prevention policies
- QPR Institute

  *This is a website dedicated to a nationally recognized, evidence-based suicide prevention methodology.*

- The Trevor Project

  *The Trevor Project is the leading national voice when it comes to suicide prevention and intervention related to LGBTQ+ identified youth. This page of their website offers several resources, including online and in-person CARE (Care, Assess, Respond, Empower) suicide prevention trainings as well as a model school policy which can be edited and implemented at schools.*

# Suggested Resources

**Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Welcoming Schools Starter Kit**
*Includes checklists, a curriculum, and parent management.*

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Teaching for Justice
- **Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students: A Teaching for Justice Guide**
  *Includes checklists, a curriculum, and tough conversations.*

- **Creating an LGBT-Inclusive School Climate: A Teaching for Justice Guide for School Leaders**

# Standard 2: Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Safety Concerns

Implement a timely and thorough response to bullying throughout the district. When possible, use restorative justice tactics to respond to bullying and safety concerns.

## Statement of Need

In 2017, Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law conducted research on disparities in services, protections, safety, and inclusion among school districts and produced the following notable findings in their report, *LGBTQ Youth in California's Public Schools:  Differences Across the State:*

- Across the state, LGBTQ youth reported having less meaningful school participation, lower expectations from adults, fewer caring adult relationships at school, and a lower level of school connection than non-LGBTQ youth.

- LGBTQ youth in rural areas experienced a more negative school environment than LGBTQ youth in urban areas. LGBTQ youth in rural communities reported lower levels of school connectedness, fewer caring adult relationships, and less meaningful participation at school than urban LGBTQ youth.

- Analyses by rural and urban areas … showed that LGBTQ youth were more likely to attend non-traditional schools, which are mostly continuation and alternative schools, than non-LGBTQ youth.

- Overall, LGBTQ youth had lower grades and more school absences in the past year compared to non-LGBTQ+ youth in California. However, there were no significant differences in school performance levels between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ youth in rural and urban areas.

- LGBTQ youth reported higher rates of experiencing victimization in the form of verbal and physical harassment and abuse compared to non-LGBTQ youth. LGBTQ youth also reported feeling less safe at school than their non-LGBTQ peers.

The following laws underpin school efforts to protect LGBTQ+ students:
- **AB 537 The California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000**
  Prohibits discrimination and harassment in schools based on specified categories.

- **SB 1441 Discrimination: state programs and activities: sexual orientation (2006)**
  Adds sexual orientation to the list of protected classes, demanding equal access for state-funded programs, including education.

- **AB 9/CA EDC Article 5.5 Safe Place to Learn Act [234-234.5]/Seth's Law**
  Strengthens existing state anti-bullying laws to help protect all California public school students. Seth's Law requires public schools in California to update their anti-bullying policies and programs, bolster teacher training curriculum, and establish an investigation timeline for managing reports of bullying.

- **AB 1266 Pupil rights: sex-segregated school programs and activities**
  Requires a pupil to be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school programs, activities, and facilities, including athletic teams and competitions, consistent with their gender identity, regardless of the gender listed on the pupil's records.

- **AB 827 Safe schools: Safe Place to Learn Act: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning pupil resources**
  Expands the existing CA EDC 234.1 that requires school districts to notify students, employees, school board members, and the general public about their anti-discrimination and bullying policy. AB 827 expands EDC 234.1, requiring districts to provide information on existing school site resources for supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning pupils, to certificated staff serving any pupil in grades 7-12.

# Suggested Steps

- Build strong connections with LGBTQ+ youth and keep the lines of communication open. It is important for them to know that their families, friends, schools, and communities support them.

- Establish a safe environment at school. Schools should promote a school culture that values all students, where no one is mistreated because they are or are perceived to be LGBTQ+. Sexual orientation and gender identity protections can be added to school policies.

- Protect privacy. Be careful not to disclose or discuss issues regarding a student's LGBTQ+ identity with parents, fellow staff, students, or anyone else without the permission of the youths in question.

- Ensure that bullying instances are investigated fully and taken seriously. Cases in which students engage in violence for self-defense should result in a reprimand that matches the circumstances. (See Standard 4: Reviewing and Revising Disciplinary Policies.)

- Create a gender sexuality alliance (GSA). GSAs help create safer schools. Schools must allow these groups if they have other non-curricular clubs or groups. Even if they do not allow other non-curricular clubs, they may not prevent LGBTQ+ youth from gathering in public spaces. (See Standard 8: Access to Facilities, Programs, and Extracurricular Activities.)

- Educate yourself. Reach out to LGBTQ+ youth in your school, listen to their needs, and advocate for change.

# Suggested Steps

- Ensure that research is being done to assess prejudice in your school. If financial resources are a hindrance, then reach out to external organizations or interested students and faculty members who can help. (See Standard 9: Climate Survey.)

- Be sure that all faculty and staff are educated on issues of sexual diversity as well as on harassment and suicide prevention. (See Standard 1: State Legislation and Training.)

- Provide teachers with in-service trainings to effectively intervene in instances of bullying and harassment. (See Standard 1: State Legislation and Training.)

- Set standards for respect, student rights, and the responsibility of your school in regard to sexual and reproductive health education. (See Standard 6: Curriculum Inclusion.)

- Engage with the district and with government representatives to promote policies of rights, respect, and responsibility.

- Invite community service providers who serve LGBTQ+ youth into your school.  Establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with them, outlining the services that would benefit your school, and solicit their advice for building a safe environment for LGBTQ+ students. Their presence on your campus increases visibility and validates LGBTQ+ identities, while providing youth with resources. Some schools invite outside organizations to advise their GSAs and/or facilitate discussion groups for LGBTQ+ youth. (See Directory: San Diego County-Based Organizations and Resources.)

# Suggested Resources

Advocates For Youth — *Responding to Harassment of LGBT Youth in Schools: Snapshots from Three Trend-Setting Countries*

California Courts — *Laws and Policies Protecting LGBTQ Youth from Discrimination*

California Safe Schools Coalition

**GLSEN**
- The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth in Our Nation's Schools
- Safe Space Kit: A Guide to Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students in Your School

## Suggested Resources

StopBullying.gov — *California Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies*

UCLA School of Law Williams Institute — *LGBTQ Youth in California's Public Schools: Differences Across the State*
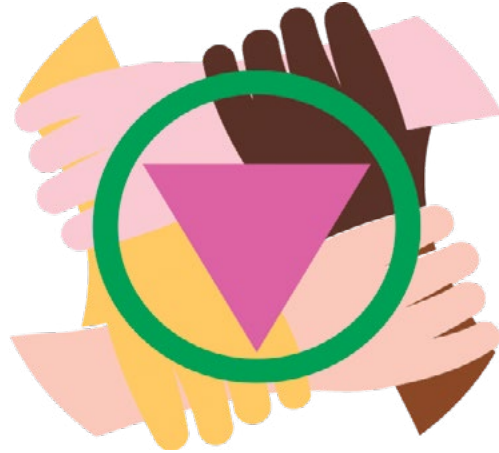
# Standard 3: Reporting Harassment in Real Time

Design, implement, and promote a real-time electronic reporting system for bullying and safety concerns. Reporting should include options for text, email, and phone responses, and should be available to both students and guardians.

California law AB 9, otherwise known as Seth's Law, requires that all schools immediately design and implement such reporting methods. When possible, use restorative justice tactics to respond to bullying and safety concerns.

## Statement of Need

California law mandates that all public school students should have equal rights and opportunities. However, many LGBTQ+ students suffer bullying in California schools and report that teachers, administrators, and other staff do not properly address the bullying that they witness. The consequences can be devastating and can include deficits to psychological health, absences, decreased academic achievement, and suicidal ideation.

## Suggested Steps

- Create policies and procedures for real-time electronic reporting of bullying and harassment based on perceived sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity, to be disseminated widely throughout the school site and known to all staff, students, and parents.

- Train and require staff to intervene in instances of bullying and harassment pursuant to EC 200 and 220 and Government Code (GC) section 11135. (See Standard 1: State Legislation and Training.)

- Adopt a Uniform Complaint Procedure for receiving and investigating complaints. A Uniform Complaint Procedure is a signed statement against educational programs for violation of state or federal laws.

- Review process for the Uniform Complaint Procedure to include timelines of processes, presentations of evidence, corrective actions, and rules for compliance as well as a process to repeal the findings.

- Adopt a specific process for receiving and investigating complaints of bullying, including a requirement that school personnel intervene if they witness bullying.

## Suggested Resources

**ACLU** — *AB9: Seth's Law: New Tools to Prevent Bullying in California Schools: California Education Code Sections 234, 234.1, 234.2, 234.3 and 234.5: A Fact Sheet from the ACLU of California*

**California Legislative Information** — *California Education Code: Article 5.5. Safe Place to Learn Act [234 - 234.5]*

**San Diego County Office of Education**
- Administrative Regulation 1312.3, Uniform Complaint Procedures
- Annual Notification of Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) 2019-2020

**StopBullying.gov**

**San Diego Unified** — *School District Administrative Procedure No. 6381, Bullying and Intimidation (Student-to-Student, Adult-to-Student)*

# Standard 4: Reviewing and Revising Disciplinary Policies

Regularly review and revise disciplinary policies with regard to how these policies disproportionately affect LGBTQ+ youth, especially LGBTQ+ youth of color. Examples include gendered dress codes and discipline of LGBTQ+ students for displays of affection.

## Statement of Need

**GLSEN found in their research report, Educational Exclusion: Drop Out, Push Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline among LGBTQ Youth:**

- **Two in five LGBTQ students reported receiving detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension and/or expulsion from school.** LGBTQ Black/African American, LGBTQ Hispanic/Latino, and LGBTQ Multiracial students; LGBTQ students experiencing homelessness; and LGBTQ students with disabilities experienced higher rates than others.

- **Compared to cisgender LGBTQ students, transgender students were more likely to receive school discipline and over three times as likely to report that they might not complete high school.** Among LGBTQ students, the most common reason cited for not planning to graduate high school or being unsure if they would graduate was an unsupportive or hostile school environment.

- **Bullying, harassment and absenteeism may contribute to high rates of discipline.** Among LGBTQ students, higher levels of victimization were associated with higher rates of school discipline, potentially because bullying incidents put LGBTQ students in greater contact with school authorities. Lack of safety resulted in many LGBTQ students missing school, putting them at risk for disciplinary sanctions for truancy. Students who had missed school because of feeling unsafe or uncomfortable were more likely to have been disciplined at school than those who had not (54 percent vs. 34 percent).

- **Anti-LGBTQ discriminatory policies and practices may also contribute to high rates of discipline.** Over half (56 percent) of LGBTQ students experienced some form of anti-LGBTQ discrimination at school, and these students were more likely to have received school discipline than those who did not experience discrimination (48 percent vs. 32 percent). Almost one in ten students (9 percent) even reported being disciplined specifically because they were LGBTQ.

- **Victimization, absenteeism and discrimination may also increase LGBTQ students' risk of contact with the justice system.** LGBTQ students who reported high levels of victimization, absenteeism or discrimination were more likely to have been involved with the justice system as a result of school discipline. The likelihood of this involvement was five times higher for

- **LGBTQ students experiencing homelessness than for those who lived with a parent or guardian.** Transgender students and LGBTQ students with disabilities were also more likely to have been involved with the justice system due to school discipline.

**Restorative Justice Practices & LGBTQ Youth:**

LGBTQIA students are often targeted in instances of bullying and more recently, with a heightened degree of urgency for school systems to address these acts of aggression, students who are DOING the bullying are often disciplined with more draconian responses (suspension, expulsion, etc.) vs more reparative ones. And even though the students being bullied may be BIPOC LGBTQIA, there are also students who are perpetrating the bullying against LGBTQIA students that may be BIPOC as well. When considering this dynamic, taking draconian measures against students who bully may, in fact, be contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.

We must respond to bullying, and simultaneously, school administrators should prioritize restorative pathways for youth who are perpetrating harm so that these same youth who are bullying move toward embracing communities of care, climates of inclusion, and social-emotional competencies that affirm ALL students.

Where possible when addressing anti-LGBTQ+ acts of harassment or bullying consider using Restorative Justice Practices (RJP) approaches. **An RJP approach considers the possibility of helping the person who caused the harm to learn about how and why their actions are harmful.** However, there are important factors to consider before engaging in a restorative approach to repairing harm. The following must **all** be true before proceeding with a restorative approach. If any **one** of the following are not true it is not recommended to use RJP processes to repair harm. In fact, doing so may cause more harm. A primer context for RJP work can begin with a reading of this document which provides some background information regarding RJP work. Feel free to copy and paste from this document to use in the standards of care doc as you wish. From what I recall from our phone conversation you already mentioned the school-to-prison pipeline. If this is going to a wider audience than San Diego, I would recommend talking about the trends nationwide in regards to the disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsion among Black and Brown youth. Here's one nationwide source to start with.

**All of the following must be true to proceed with an RJP process:**
  1. The person harmed must consent. Without consent to proceed, RJP process is not possible.
  2. The person causing harm must take responsibility for the harm they have caused (this may require mentoring and coaching).
  3. There is access to an experienced harm circle facilitator.
  4. There is someone to follow-up with the person who caused the harm with a reparation plan (this may involve learning, reading, or other lessons)

**Nonetheless, it is critically important to consider restorative practice pathways when formulating policies and protocols for disciplinary responses. If "the hammer" or "zero tolerance" are a school system's default measures, then the "school-to-prison pipeline" is and will continue to be a foregone conclusion for our youth who are causing the harm. Statistically, our BIPOC youth are met with greater forms of harsh punishment than the general population for similar or identical infractions. This document strongly recommends that school systems engage in systemically restorative work in order to disrupt this persistent and very real form of systemic racism.**

## Suggested Steps

- Champion legislative change at all levels, including and especially at the state level.

- Establish a space on campus for LGBTQ+ students to go for support and advocacy. This space should be separate from the discipline office.

- Institute policies and procedures for students to appeal unfair disciplinary actions.

## Suggested Resources

**ACLU** — *LGBTQ Students: Letters for When You're Fighting Discrimination*

**GLSEN**
- Educational Exclusion: Drop Out, Push Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline among LGBTQ Youth
- LGBTQ Students Face Unfair School Discipline, Pushing Many Out of School

**Human Rights Campaign: Welcoming Schools** — *An Overview of Laws & Policies that Support Safe and Welcoming Schools*

**National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments** — *Addressing the Root Causes of Disparities in School Discipline: An Educator's Action Planning Guide*

**U.S. Department of Education** — *U.S. Departments of Education and Justice Release Joint Guidance to Help Schools Ensure the Civil Rights of Transgender Students*

# Standard 5: Policy Communication

Create and disseminate a simplified, brief, administrative circular or bulletin, which outlines LGBTQ+ laws, policies, and procedures for all staff and educators to reference, including when bullying incidents occur and have been reported.

## Statement of Need

Schools and districts with direct and instructive LGBTQ+ administrative circulars that outline laws, procedures, policies, and resources have safer communities. Circulars set the tone for professional staff that LGBTQ+ inclusion and support are of value. San Diego Unified School District has provided some district-wide administrative circulars, which sites should be aware of, and adhere to, as they are updated. Your school may require more site-specific guidance.

## Suggested Steps

- Familiarize yourself with national, state, county, and district-wide laws/policies/education codes specific to LGBTQ+ inclusion and protection.
- Review the existing school board or administrative bulletins. If none exist, then petition your school administration or board to create one.
- Ensure that bulletins address the evolving, intersectional, and site-specific needs of your school's LGBTQ+ youth.
- Solicit advice from the legal department in creating or implementing site-wide bulletins or guidelines in overlooked areas.
- Consider forming an LGBTQ+ advisory council or have an LGBTQ+ resource officer to assess and advocate for updated, site-specific bulletins. (See Standard 11: Dedicated Staff.)
- Ensure that bullying and harassment bulletins specifically include provisions for LGBTQ+ students.

## Suggested Resources

**Los Angeles Unified School District Reference Guide —** *Sex-Specific and All-Gender Single and Multiple-User Restrooms*

**San Diego Unified School District —** *Student Information Name and Gender Change Request for Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Nonconforming Students*

**Teaching for Justice —** *Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students: A Teaching for Justice Guide*

# Standard 6: Curriculum Inclusion

Begin to implement an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum in all classes and grades, consistent with the local, state, and federal education standards (see SB 48/ FAIR Education Act). This pertains to all applicable subjects, including comprehensive sexual health education.

## Statement of Need

In 2004, the California Safe Schools Coalition surveyed 2,400 LGBTQ+ youth and found the following:

- Individual students feel safer at school when LGBT issues are included in the curriculum; this is true for LGBT students and for their straight peers.

- School climates are safer when LGBTQ issues are part of the curriculum.

- Students were half as likely to report LGBT bullying in schools where the majority of students reported learning about LGBT issues.

- Many California school districts already include LGBTQ issues in the curriculum, and many more are interested in doing so.

We highlight the need for a regular audit of LGBTQ+ curriculum inclusion and representation. Schools can support their faculty in creating inclusive and safe classrooms for LGBTQ+ youth, which can lead to measurably improved learning outcomes for all students, a more positive school climate, and higher success rates for LGBTQ+ individuals.

## Suggested Steps

- **Develop a K-12 school curriculum audit. Consider evaluating for the following topics:**
  - ° Study of LGBTQ+ history (figures, movements, and contributions).
  - ° Examples that reflect LGBTQ+ family representation.
  - ° Information on LGBTQ+-inclusive sexual and reproductive health.
    (See below for a summary of the California Healthy Youth Act.)
  - ° Literature featuring LGBTQ+ characters and/or written by LGBTQ+ authors.
  - ° Bullying awareness.

# Suggested Steps

- **Check for the topics above in your school's offerings:**
  - Trainings for school staff
  - Textbooks
  - Lesson plans
  - Reading lists
  - School library collections
  - Holiday celebrations
  - Social events
  - Memorial recognitions
  - Field trip destinations
  - Classroom decorations
- **Record audit results for public records. Analyze the data gathered.**
- **Report and share out findings to all stakeholders.**
- **Offer support in program- and curriculum-planning to any area of deficit.**
- **Monitor progress of program and intervention implementation with the use of benchmark data. (See Standard 10: Benchmarks.)**
- **Bring staff and students together to recognize opportunities for inclusion.**
- **Practice identifying and responding to teachable moments. Incorporate relevant holidays, recurring topics that have an LGBTQ+ component, and ways to bolster visibility on campus.**
- **Link LGBTQ+ curriculum and visibility efforts to anti-bullying efforts.**
- **Support staff efforts to implement learning about LGBTQ+ topics and issues.**
- **Provide space, resources, and encouragement. Recognize those efforts in front of the team and/or in front of students.**
- **Engage your GSA or LGBTQ+ space in selecting and celebrating important dates:**
  - ◊ GLSEN No Name-Calling Week (January)
  - ◊ GLSEN Ally Week (End of September)
  - ◊ National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (February 7)
  - ◊ National LGBT Health Awareness Week (Last Week of March)
  - ◊ International Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31)
  - ◊ GLSEN Day of Silence (April 17)
  - ◊ International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (May 17)
  - ◊ Harvey Milk Day (May 22)
  - ◊ LGBTQ+ Pride (June)
  - ◊ Celebrate Bisexuality Day (September 23)
  - ◊ Asexuality Awareness Week (October-November — dates vary every year)
  - ◊ Intersex Awareness Day (October 26)
  - ◊ World AIDS Day (December 1)

# Suggested Steps

**The California Healthy Youth Act** has five primary purposes:
- To provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect their sexual and reproductive health from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and from unintended pregnancy
- To provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, marriage, and family
- To promote understanding of sexuality as a normal part of human development
- To ensure pupils receive integrated, comprehensive, accurate, and unbiased sexual
- health and HIV prevention instruction and provide educators with clear tools and guidance to accomplish that end
- To provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to have healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors

# Suggested Resources

**ACLU: California Healthy Youth Act Sexual Health Education Toolkit** — *LGBTQInclusivity Requirements and How They Interact with Parental Opt-Out*

**American Medical Student Association** — *Resources for Gender and Sexuality Curriculum*

**California Department of Education**
- **Social Content Review**
- **California's Health Education Initiatives: Frequently Asked Questions about the California Healthy Youth Act and the 2019 Health Education Framework**

**California Legislative Information** — *Chapter 5.6 California Healthy Youth Act [51930-51939]*

**Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender History** — *Making the Framework FAIR: California History-Social Science Framework Proposed LGBT Revisions Related to the FAIR Education Act*

**Gender Spectrum** — *Integrating Gender Diversity into Everyday Curriculum*

**GLSEN**
- **Advocate for Inclusive & Affirming Curriculum**
- **Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Classroom Resources**
- **LGBTQ-Inclusive Sexual Health Education**

**Healthy Teen Network** — *Gender, Sexuality, & Inclusive Sex Education*

# Suggested Resources

History Unerased: *Putting LGBTQ History In Its Rightful Place — The Classroom*

Live Out Loud — *Lesson Plans*

Stonewall.org.uk — *Creating an LGBTQ-inclusive secondary curriculum*

University of Arizona — *Creating Inclusive Classrooms*

Welcoming Schools — *Lesson Plans to Support LGBTQ Inclusive Elementary Schools*

# Standard 7: Name and Gender Marker Changes

Align school records with a student's gender identity while respecting their privacy. Name and pronoun change processes should be easy for students to understand and use.

## Statement of Need

Students may feel unsafe if they are forced to explain their identities to staff or substitute teachers. Therefore, name and gender alignment can relieve anxiety in situations like class roll-calls. When students can easily change their names and pronouns in the school's electronic system, staff and teachers can address them correctly.

## Suggested Steps

Keep all administrative documentation with the student's name and gender marker confidential. As stated in the School Success and Opportunity Act (AB 1266):

• It is **NOT** necessary for the site to receive legal name change paperwork in order to change the name/gender marker in school site software (e.g. PowerSchool, Aries).

• It is **NOT** necessary for the student to have parent/guardian permission to make the change.

• If the student does not have parent/guardian support for the change, the school social worker should go over a gender support plan with the student to establish the best ways to protect their privacy as well as problem-solve other situations.

## Suggested Resources

American School Counselor Association — Creating an LGBT-inclusive School Climate

California Department of Education — *Frequently Asked Questions: School Success and Opportunity Act (Assembly Bill 1266)*

Human Rights Campaign — *Schools In Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools, Chapter Four*

San Diego Unified School District — *Student Information Name and Gender Change Request for Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Nonconforming Students*

# Standard 8: Access to Facilities, Programs, and Extracurricular Activities

Ensure that facilities and programs are accessible to all students and affirm their gender identities. Gender-neutral restrooms should be available to everyone. Educate staff and facilitate inclusive extracurricular activities and clubs for LGBTQ+ students.

## Statement of Need

Concerns regarding safe campus access for LGBTQ+ students extend beyond restrooms. Transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students may experience anxiety navigating a multitude of sex-separated facilities. Programs such as overnight field trips, sports teams, and school dances can present barriers for LGBTQ+ students. These activities may be major social events in a student's life, and transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students should be encouraged to participate in them.

Students who are engaged in activities outside of the classroom are more likely to succeed in school. According to the report, Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California (2019):

• Transgender students' lack of perceived key developmental supports and safety at school explains a significant proportion of the differences in how transgender students and nontransgender students describe their school engagement, academic performance, and mental health. The analyses indicate that after the key school supports and safety measures used in this analysis were adjusted such that transgender students perceived their schools to be equally as safe and equally as supportive as non-transgender students perceived their schools to be:
  ° disparities in school connectedness are eliminated;
  ° disparities in mental health, academic motivation, and middle school academic performance are reduced by 50 percent; and
  ° disparities in school absences and high school academic performance are reduced by between 25 and 30 percent.

• Differences in reported school supports and school safety explain much of the disparities across sexual orientation groups. The analysis suggests that if gay, lesbian, and bisexual students experienced the same perceived levels of developmental supports and safety at school as straight students:
  ° disparities in school connectedness would be reduced by between 90 and 100 percent; and
  ° disparities in mental health, academic motivation, and academic performance in school would be reduced by half.

These results suggest that schools could play a role in significantly improving the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ students by offering spaces and activities that affirm their identities.

# Suggested Steps

**Overnight field trips:**

Explicitly state expectations for student conduct. Make a plan together with transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students regarding sleeping arrangements. Protect and prevent harassment or discrimination for these alternative accommodations. In the case of communal showers, recognize that some students may wish for more privacy. In that case, make an effort to locate single-stall or more enclosed showering facilities at the location to make available to both cisgender and transgender students (cisgender is defined as someone whose assumed gender matches the gender they were assigned at birth).

**Sports teams:**

Many states, including California, have adopted eligibility rules which explicitly permit transgender students to participate in school sports consistent with their gender identities (See AB 1266 School Success and Opportunity Act).

There are unfounded beliefs that transgender students, mainly transgender girls, will have an unfair advantage in sports. Although these beliefs may need to be addressed, it is important to note that they are grounded in sex stereotypes. This focus on the differences between natal males and females fails to recognize the larger diversity in how children develop physically, and discriminates against transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students. Trans students are no more of a safety risk when participating in sports than any other athlete, as rules are designed in order to protect student-athletes of all sizes and skill levels.

Educate coaches on how to spot bullying behaviors and/or discrimination, and how to intervene. (See Standards 1: State Legislation and Training and 2: Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Safety Concerns.) Coaches are also encouraged to have a private, sensitive conversation with LGBTQ+ athletes at the beginning of each season to see if they have any special needs or concerns.

Ensure that students can use locker rooms based on their gender identity. Access to locker rooms may also present a concern and/or safety issue to trans, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students and athletes alike. It is important that all students have the ability to access private changing rooms, regardless of whether they are transgender or cisgender.

**School dances:**

LGBTQ+ students should be able to purchase tickets for any events where couples are encouraged to attend, such as dances. All students should also have the option of purchasing single tickets.  It may be important to LGBTQ+ students to be able to participate in school traditions such as dances and elected roles like homecoming king or queen. The opportunity for students to participate in these traditions can be influential and affirming to their social education. There is an increasing number of schools where students have voted for their transgender classmates. Discreetly check when LGBTQ+ students are nominated to homecoming or prom court, to make sure the selection is serious and not a cruel joke. Have staff members on hand to ensure the safety of LGBTQ+ nominees.

# Suggested Steps

**Gender and sexuality alliances:**
Support GSA or similar clubs by providing strong advisors, safe places to meet, and activities with backing from the administration. Have principals or other top officials attend at least one GSA (or similar club meeting per year to show support and have a safe, meaningful dialogue with its members.

## Suggested Resources

ACLU — *LGBTQ Students: Letters for When You're Fighting Discrimination*

Changing the Game
*A documentary about three high school athletes who identify as transgender.*

GSA Network

Human Rights Campaign — *Schools In Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools*

San Diego Unified School District — *District Statement on Rights of Transgender Students*

WestEd.org — *Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California*

# Standard 9: Climate Survey

Establish a standardized survey that is administered annually to students, in order to determine the current school climate around safety, bullying, and harassment for LGBTQ+ youth.

## Statement of Need

There is a need for a yearly survey of the school climate surrounding LGBTQ+ youth. The results will show areas of strength and opportunity for the well-being of LGBTQ+ students. By administering annual school climate surveys, educators will be able to see measurable outcomes of their programs and interventions, as well as LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of the campus environment. This data will justify action and inform policy-making to foster more inclusive educational settings for youth.

## Suggested Steps

Develop a school climate survey that addresses the following: safety, LGBTQ+- inclusive curriculum, LGBTQ+ representation in sexual health education, availability of LGBTQ+ books in the school library, access to the use of gender-affirming facilities, availability of Gender Sexuality Alliances or Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) on campus, and LGBTQ+ competency training for school staff. Consider having separate surveys for students, caregivers, staff, and district administrators in order to achieve a comprehensive picture of school climate and culture.

**Consult the GLSEN Local School Climate Survey for guidance on how to develop your school's questions.**

- Elicit LGBTQ+ student engagement in constructing a competent school climate survey.
- Assess your climate survey for LGBTQ+ representation and areas of intersectionality.
- Ensure equity in accessing the school climate survey.
- Collect and analyze data from the school climate survey responses.
- Report and share findings with all stakeholders.
- Offer support in program planning and intervention development in regard to the school's area(s) of deficit when supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students.
- Monitor intervention implementation and overall progress, using benchmark data. (See Standard 10: Benchmarks.)
- Reassess and revise the school climate survey for the following year to measure the outcomes of programs and interventions.

## Suggested Resources

ASCD — *Educational Leadership: The Challenge of Assessing School Climate*

California Department of Education — *California Healthy Kids Survey*

Colorado Education Initiative — *Measuring School Climate: A Toolkit for Districts and Schools*

GLSEN — *Local School Climate Survey*

GSA Network — *Conducting a School Survey*

National Education Association — *Supporting LGBTQ Youth*

**National School Climate Center**
- *School Climate Measurement and Analysis*
- *Shared Leadership Across Contexts*

Pride Surveys International Survey Associates — *What Is a School Climate Survey?*

# Standard 10: Benchmarks

Use the first climate survey described above to establish a baseline, from which you can measure annual progress goals for safety and improvement.

## Statement of Need

Benchmarks record progress, encourage accountability, and motivate efforts to create lasting change. It is critical that school staff involve LGBTQ+ students in the interpretation of school climate survey data. This collaborative analysis will lead to measurable steps in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of interventions. These students can help assess the potential of proposed goals and identify critical connections that staff might overlook.

## Suggested Steps

**The following are questions to consider when assessing survey results:**
- Can you identify areas of concern and discordant data among respondents?
- What subgroups are most targeted? Are respondents members of more than one subgroup?
- How do you use current strengths and challenges to focus on future planning?
- How do you connect feedback with current school data to make informed decisions?
- What did your students and staff feel most positive (and negative) about in the following areas:
  - ° Safety (emotional, physical, bullying, substance abuse, emergency readiness).
  - ° Environment (physical, instructional, physical health, mental health, discipline).
  - ° Engagement (cultural competence, relationships, school participation).
- What are the critical areas that you need to address?

**As written in the Summary of NIRN's Stages of Implementation:**
- ° Do new policies need to be written to reflect the upcoming changes?
- ° Do existing staff members have the expertise to implement the identified solutions, or are new hires, such as an LGBTQ+ district-level advocate, necessary?
- ° What are the resources necessary for implementing training? Who will deliver training? When and where will the training(s) be delivered? How will staff and stakeholders be incentivized for attending trainings?
- ° How will the effectiveness of trainings be measured and how will ongoing learning be supported?
- ° Are your physical space, infrastructure, equipment, and allocated time adequate?
- ° Can you seek out additional funding streams to cover any long-term costs?
- ° What outcome measures will be monitored, and how will progress be tracked? (GLSEN provides free data analysis assistance — see the link below.)
- **What are the benchmarks? How will you know that your outcomes are improving?**

- What is the timeframe for improving each critical area, including who will be responsible for creating and implementing the intervention and disseminating results to staff?
- How do you plan to effectively share the results?

## Suggested Resources

GLSEN — Local School Climate Survey

Massachusetts School Administrators' Association — The School Leader's Tool for Assessing and Improving School Culture

National School Climate Center — School Climate Measurement and Analysis

**U.S. Department of Education:** Office of Safe and Supportive Schools: National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
- Data Interpretation Guide
- Data Interpretation Worksheet
- Program Implementation

# Standard 11: Dedicated Staff

Establish at least one dedicated full-time staff position, such as an LGBTQ+ affairs officer. This staff member would be LGBTQ+-competent and experienced in training educators regarding LGBTQ+ issues and supporting/advocating for LGBTQ+ youth.

## Statement of Need

There are two possibilities for creating a dedicated staff member position. One is a student affairs officer approach rooted in student/community education and support. The second is a compliance officer approach, rooted in driving the implementation of LGBTQ+ inclusion and education for staff and students. This might require multiple staff to assume partial responsibility for tasks, depending on funding and logistics. A dedicated LGBTQ+ affairs officer or staff member collaborates with others to cultivate visible supports and a vibrant, connected community of LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies. The officer helps to guide the expansion of LGBTQ+ climate research and coordinates efforts to foster an inclusive, student-centered environment in which tailored support is available for LGBTQ+ youth. Furthermore, the officer oversees initiatives and professional development that prepare staff to serve students of all sexual orientations and gender identities, with excellence.

**The mission of the LGBTQ+ affairs officer(s) is to do the following:**
- Cultivate a vibrant, connected community of LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies.
- Collaborate on student education initiatives, connecting bullying and bystander policies with programs that result in improved community outcomes.
- Serve as a resource for staff and partners confronting environmental, safety, and engagement concerns on behalf of LGBTQ+ students.
- Navigate name and gender marker change processes, serving as a resource to students (with or without parent permission), parents, and staff.
- Provide support and mentoring for LGBTQ+ students as they progress through their studies and advocate for their own needs in the community.
- Expand, track, and report LGBTQ+ climate assessment and interventions.
- Ensure compliance with laws and educational codes affecting LGBTQ+ students.
- Engage staff, school board, and administration in enacting policies and programs to meet your school's diversity and equality goals.
- Develop and maintain information, reference, and source materials on LGBTQ+ related topics.

## Suggested Steps

**Assess the possibility of having at least one dedicated full-time staff member or current staff member(s) with the capacity, passion, and knowledge to serve as the LGBTQ+ officer.**
- Outline job description for the LGBTQ+ officer and notify staff of assigned or hired officer(s).
- Ensure that the chosen officer(s) serve(s) on a variety of relevant committees (policy, student support, other services, and assessments for LGBTQ+ students).
- Identify staff that can assist in the implementation of LGBTQ+ support and advocacy.

## Suggested Resources

**American School Counselor Association** — T*he School Counselor and LGBTQ Youth*

Association of **International Educators (NAFSA)** — *Supporting LGBT International Students*

**GLSEN** — *Safe Space Kit: A Guide to Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students in Your School*

**University of Massachusetts Amherst** — *School Counselor Advocacy with LGBT Students: A Qualitative Study of High School Counselor Experiences*

# Appendix: Supporting LGBTQ Students Virtually

Consider additional needs LGBTQ+ students may have while adjusting to distance learning and quarantine.

## Statement of Need

The need for direction on how to support LGBTQ+ students in a virtual setting became paramount on March 13, 2020, when schools shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic and all learning moved to an online platform. When schools closed their doors, many LGBTQ+ students lost access to their safe spaces, safe adults, and social support. Remote education was an option for many before the COVID-19 pandemic, and even after the quarantine is lifted, students who continue with distance learning will benefit from these recommended strategies.

## Suggested Steps

In response to schools closing due to COVID-19 and moving to distance learning, the Human Rights Campaign and the National Education Association came together to create a checklist for educators and allies to best support LGBTQ+ students. This document:

- Emphasizes the importance of offering identity-affirming experiences through distance learning.
- Reiterates that confidentiality and privacy are critical for LGBTQ+ youth learning at home who do not have supportive families and environments.
- Provides practical ideas that educators could use.

The GSA Network also created a virtual GSA handbook on how to host a GSA remotely and explained the rights that LGBTQ+ students have while learning online. Some strategies for educators to best support LGBTQ+ students through distance learning include:

- Having LGBTQ+-affirming visuals in the background for virtual classrooms, such as posters, stickers, flags, signs, and Zoom backgrounds to show visible allyship.
- Creating spaces for students to share their pronoun and chosen name, if comfortable.
- Using gender-inclusive and non-heteronormative language, such as saying "students" instead of "boys and girls" or "family" instead of "mom and dad."
- Sharing online LGBTQ+ resources, including crisis support for LGBTQ+ youth (e.g. The Trevor Project).
- Allowing GSA meetings to meet virtually to connect LGBTQ+ students with their peers and alleviate the isolation and loneliness that LGBTQ+ students feel during distance learning.
- Allowing the option for LGBTQ+ students to turn off video/sound during live online instruction to increase privacy and lessen anxiety around gender dysphoria.

## Suggested Resources

GSA Network — *Virtual GSAs in Action: Digital Organizing Toolkit*

Human Rights Campaign and National Education Association — *In Response to COVID-19: A Checklist to Support LGBTQ Students During Distance Learning*

The Trevor Project

# Directory: *San Diego County-Based Organizations and Resources*

**TransFamily Support Services**
- Address: 12463 Rancho Bernardo Rd. #218, San Diego, CA 92128
- Phone: 858-304-0085
- E-mail: info@transfamilysos.org
- Website: www.transfamilysos.org

**San Diego Pride**
- Address: 3620 30th Street, San Diego, CA 92104
- Phone: 619.297.7683
- E-mail: info@sdpride.org
- Website: sdpride.org

**GLSEN San Diego County Chapter**
- E-mail: sandiegocounty@chapters.glsen.org
- Website: www.glsen.org/chapter/san-diego-county

**Mental Health America of San Diego County**
- Address: 4069 30th Street, San Diego, CA 92104
- Phone: 619.543.0412
- Website: mhasd.org

**North County LGBTQ Resource Center**
- Address: 3220 Mission Ave Suite #2, Oceanside, CA 92058
- Phone: 760.994.1690
- E-mail: info@ncresourcecenter.org
- Website: www.ncresourcecenter.org

**Our Safe Place — San Diego Youth Services, YMCA, South Bay Community Services**
- Address: 2220 Broadway, San Diego, CA 92102
- Phone: 619.525.9903
- Website: sdyouthservices.org/services/our-safe-place

**PFLAG San Diego County**
- Phone: 888.398.0006
- E-mail: info@pflag.com
- Website: www.pflag.com

**San Diego LGBT Community Center**
- Address: 3909 Centre Street, San Diego, CA 92103
- Phone: 619.692.2077
- Website: thecentersd.org

LGBTQIA+ Youth Services & Advocacy Committee, part of the San Diego Community Leadership Council
http://bit.ly/community-leadership-council

LGBTQIA+ Youth Standards of Care Authors:
TransFamily Support Services • San Diego Pride • San Diego LGBT Community Center
North County LGBTQ Resource Center • GLSEN San Diego • PFLAG San Diego County
Mental Health America of San Diego County • Our Safe Place - YMCA, SBCS