



# Be an Ally to Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students

The identities, experiences and needs of transgender and gender-nonconforming people are often overlooked in schools. As an Ally to trans and gender-nonconforming (TGNC) people you can do your part to make sure that all students, including TGNC students are safe and respected in school. These ideas are still good to practice even if you don't know any transgender or gender-nonconforming students at your school. Showing you have a supportive environment for all students is important, and makes the school safer!

## Ask, Don't Assume

Names aren't the only way we refer to people. Preferred gender pronouns, or PGPs, are pronouns that an individual personally identifies with. Asking PGP's is a way to respect each person's unique identity. They can include:

- She/her/hers
- He/him/his
- Zie/hir/hirs (pronounced "zee/here/heres")
- They/them/theirs
- Or all or no pronouns

Start off each GSA meeting by asking each person to introduce themselves using their name and PGPs. Don't just ask people that you think might be TGNC; ask PGPs of everyone equally to be a true Ally!

## Respect All Gender Identities & Expressions

Allies to transgender and gender-nonconforming students recognize that there are infinite ways that gender can be expressed. Allies accept this diversity of gender expression and gender identity. Be careful not to tell people to act more masculine or feminine. Allow all people to express themselves freely!

## Challenge Gender Assumptions

Your school is filled with gender! Whether it's the types of sports offered, the colors of the bathrooms, even pictures on school posters, gender is everywhere! Begin to challenge the gender images in your school. Talk with people in your GSA about how gender assumptions can affect students.

## Buddy-up!

Transgender and gender-nonconforming students can be uncomfortable in gender-exclusive spaces, like locker rooms and bathrooms. Buddy-up! Accompany your friends in spaces that may be unsafe.

## Be Supportive

To be a great Ally you need to be informed. Learn more about transgender and gender-nonconforming people. Recognize that every person is different and has a unique experience, identity and needs. While trans and gender-nonconforming students may want or need support, it's always good to check in with your friends about how they would like to be supported.

**NOTE:** Transgender people are people whose gender identity is not aligned with their sex assigned at birth and/or whose gender doesn't conform with traditional or societal gender norms. Gender-nonconforming people have gender characteristics that do not conform to traditional or societal norms.