

Guide for
***INCLUSIVE
SUPPORT OF
ALL STUDENTS***



Orange County
Public Schools



About This Guide

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) personnel increase students' sense of belonging in a safe, healthy, and inclusive learning environment. All students are entitled to equal rights, privileges, and opportunities in our schools. These guidelines are designed to help all personnel foster a welcoming, affirming climate where every student feels valued.

Parents/legal guardians and families are essential to the success of our students and the health of our communities.

It is important for school leadership and personnel to follow and understand OCPS School Board Policy KB entitled [Parent Involvement in Education](#) regarding parental involvement and engagement when navigating the unique needs of our youth.

It is essential to ensure that any changes or modifications in services or monitoring for students are made with parental consent. This helps ensure that parents/legal guardians are informed and engaged in their child's education and well-being.

Nov. 8, 2023

Guide by Topic

Topic	Educational Setting Explanation
Bullying & Harassment	<p>OCPS School Board Policy ADD entitled Safe Schools prohibits bullying and harassment and provides that all students and employees be entitled to a safe, secure, equitable, harassment-free, and bullying-free school experience regardless of their status under the law.</p> <p>Recognizing that LGBTQ+ students often face discrimination, stigmatization, bullying, and worse, the policy reflects the school district's compelling interest in ensuring that students have a positive, productive, and safe learning environment.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>Although we encourage communication between the home and school, employees are not required to notify a parent if they become aware of, or a student discloses information regarding their sexual orientation and/or gender identity without related concerns about the student's health, safety, or well-being.</p> <p>If a parent/legal guardian requests information from an employee about their child's sexual orientation and/or gender identity and the employee has that knowledge, they are obligated to share, unless a reasonably prudent person would believe that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect, as the law defines those terms.</p> <p>Students should be encouraged to speak with their parents/legal guardians about sensitive and personal information.</p>

Guide by Topic

<p>Dress Code</p>	<p>All students may dress in ways that are consistent with their ethnic heritage, culture, and/or gender identity or expression, while still abiding by the District’s dress code policy contained in the Code of Student Conduct. This includes time during school and while attending any school sponsored events and functions (e.g., proms and dances). If a parent/legal guardian requests to know if his or her child dresses in a manner, which is not reflective of the student’s biological sex at birth, such information must be disclosed to the parent/legal guardian.</p>
<p>Topic</p>	<p>Educational Setting Explanation</p>
<p>Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)</p>	<p>Under federal law, middle and high schools that allow any clubs to meet on campus must grant equal access to all student groups and organizations to meet, including GSAs and other similar type clubs.</p> <p>Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs are non-curricular, student-led organizations in secondary schools, allowing students to meet and discuss common interests. GSA clubs are allowed to meet on school campuses.</p> <p>All OCPS clubs require parental permission in order for students to be a member. GSA clubs can have guest speakers. Any non-club members that attend a guest speaker presentation must have parental permission.</p> <p>During GSA club meetings, students can be affirmed by having participants use their preferred names, pronouns and titles. GSA meetings are extra-curricular and parental permission forms have been signed.</p> <p>GSA clubs may promote events (ex. Pride Parade) in the same manner other clubs advertise events, including posters.</p>

Guide by Topic

Topic	Educational Setting Explanation
Names and Pronouns	<p>A parent/legal guardian, or student of legal age, may provide a preferred name by completing the Parent Authorization Form. After a parent/legal guardian or student of legal age completes the parent authorization form, the student shall be referred to by the preferred name provided.</p> <p>Staff are not required to use non-biological pronouns for students, but for those students whose parents have given permission, staff who chose to, are able to do so.</p>
Official Documents	<p>Parents/legal guardians, or students who are age 18 or older, can request changes to school records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) if those records are deemed “inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy.” Schools will only change official student records with legal documentation.</p>

Guide by Topic

Topic	Educational Setting Explanation
<p>Overnight Field Trips</p>	<p>Field trips are an integral part of the learning process in many areas of education. All students are guaranteed the right to be afforded an equal opportunity to participate in all school sponsored social and/or extracurricular activities when the student is otherwise qualified to participate.</p> <p>Reasonable accommodations must be made to allow all qualified students to attend and participate in a safe and equitable manner.</p> <p>School personnel shall work with transgender students and the student's parent/legal guardian to identify appropriate accommodations. This should be handled delicately, respectfully, and on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>Restrooms & Changing Facilities</p>	<p>When using multi-user restrooms and locker rooms, students shall use ones that correspond to their biological sex at birth. If a student enters a restroom that is designated for the opposite sex, and refuses to leave when asked by a school employee, they will be subject to discipline according to the OCPS Code of Student Conduct.</p> <p>Staff will ensure both the dignity and safety of all students. In addition to multi-user restrooms and locker rooms, schools will accommodate students to make facilities available such as single-user restrooms and/or locker rooms.</p> <p>Single-user restrooms and changing facilities are for any student requesting additional privacy and do not require special permission to access them.</p>

Guide by Topic

Topic	Educational Setting Explanation
School Dances	<p>Schools will allow same-sex couples to attend school-sponsored proms and dances. All students may dress in ways that are consistent with their ethnic heritage, culture, and/or gender identity or expression.</p> <p>Any student may be nominated for Homecoming/Prom King, Queen and Court regardless of their gender.</p>
Single-Sex Classes & Activities at School	<p>Students can be separated by sex in class for topics such as Human Growth and Development. Parents/legal guardians are able to exempt their children from the teaching of reproductive health or any disease, including HIV/AIDS (per Fla. Stat. §1003.42).</p> <p>Parents/legal guardians who wish to exempt their child from participating in reproductive health and disease instruction, including instruction relating to HIV/AIDS, can make a written request to their child's school principal. Visit your child's school website for principal contact information.</p>

Guide by Topic

OCPS Frequently Asked Questions from Staff On Recently Enacted Changes to the Law	
Can I be fired for being an open member of the LGBTQ+ community?	<p>No. OCPS cannot fire an employee for being an open member of the LGBTQ+ community.</p> <p>Further details: Title VII Civil Rights Act and United States Supreme Court decision in Bostock v. Clayton County., Georgia, 207 L. Ed. 2d 218 (2020).</p>
Can I have a picture of my spouse and/or family on my desk?	<p>Yes. The state of Florida clarified in response to a lawsuit that LGBTQ+ employees can put a family photo on their desk and can refer to themselves and their spouse (and their children). Those actions are not “instruction”, which they are defining as the action, practice or profession of teaching.</p>
What classroom instruction is allowed related to sexual orientation and gender identity?	<p>State law prohibits instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity in grades kindergarten through 8.</p> <p>Similarly, there may not be instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in grades 9 through 12 unless such instruction is required by state academic standards as adopted in Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., or is part of a reproductive health course or health lesson for which a student’s parent/legal guardian has the option to have his or her student not attend.</p>

Guide by Topic

OCPS Frequently Asked Questions from Staff on Recently Enacted Changes to the Law

Can I have a rainbow sticker, banner, or flag in my classroom, or wear a rainbow lanyard?	Yes. The mere wearing of an “Ally” lanyard or rainbow symbols on clothing or in classrooms, or the display of “safe space” stickers or flags in the classroom are not “classroom instruction” as defined by the State of Florida.
Can a student mention LGBTQ+ issues in their classwork?	A student may mention LGBTQ+ themes in their classwork if the student is allowed to address any theme they want as part of their classwork. The state of Florida has said that typical class participation and schoolwork are not ‘instruction,’ even if a student chooses to address sexual orientation or gender identity. The work must be graded the same as all other subject matter.





Leading students to success

 @OrangeCountyPublicSchools  @ocps_official
 @ocpsnews  YouTube OrangeCountyPublicSchools

The School Board of Orange County, Florida, does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other reason prohibited by law. The following individuals at the Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Center, 445 West Amelia Street, Orlando, Florida 32801, attend to compliance matters: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer & Title IX Coordinator: Keshara Cowans; ADA Coordinator: Jay Cardinali; Section 504 Coordinator: Tajuana Lee-Wenze. (407.317.3200)