



## WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

### **Supporting Transgender Students**

In support of its purpose and fundamental principles, Westridge acknowledges a specific responsibility to students who question their gender identity while at Westridge School. Westridge faculty and administration will work to support these students personally, socially, and academically. It is the view of the school administration that students who question and/or change their gender identity are welcome to stay at Westridge and that the best interests of these students and the community are addressed through inclusive, mission-driven practices. If Westridge is no longer the appropriate school, the administration will support students and their families in finding a school that better meets their educational needs. At the core of our approach are two things that each of us holds equally dear: the safety of every one of our students, and the commitment to the unique and powerful benefits that arise from an institution committed to girls' education.

### **Transgender Student Policy**

Westridge School reaffirms its purpose as a girls' school specifically designed for girls, committed to fostering a learning environment and community that is focused around the needs, common experiences, and voices of young women. In addition, Westridge also reaffirms its mission to create a community that is characterized by supportive relationships, inclusive practices, and respectful actions.

With regard to an enrolled student who no longer identifies as a girl, the Administration will work with the student and the student's family to address continued enrollment, taking into account the best interests of the student and the school community.

**Guidelines regarding support and confidentiality of transgender students:** Westridge reaffirms its responsibility to support all students and to work with them when any personal issues or problems may arise. Just as it has a responsibility to support students who are questioning any aspect of their identity, at any grade level, Westridge will support students who are questioning their gender identity and/or identifying as male. The school has well-established student support teams and practices - advisors, deans of student life, the director of health and wellness, the student learning support specialist, the director of school counseling, division directors and the assistant head of school – who work closely with one another, with students and their families, and when deemed necessary, seek the guidance of external professionals. A list of resources for supporting transgender students will be available to community members.

Westridge does not intend for any student to be denied continued enrollment based on a change in gender identity and asserts that there is no inherent reason to question the

continued enrollment of any trans student in good standing. We do recognize, however, that it is not uncommon to find that when students become open about their identity, they feel a co-ed school might be a better fit. In that case, we will work with the family to help them find the school that provides the best fit for the student.

Should a student confide in a trusted adult on campus regarding questions around gender identity, the conversation can and should remain confidential between the student and the adult. If a student publicly and regularly identifies as male (e.g. asks to be referred to by male pronouns), then the division director or other appropriate administrator will begin a conversation with the student regarding whether parents are aware and will seek to have a conversation with both student and parents to put a plan in place to best support the student. This conversation can include considerations such as the student's age, personality and emotional state, the level of family support, and other specific needs of the student.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and legal guidelines assert that a student's transgender status, legal name or sex assigned at birth is confidential medical information and protected personally identifiable information. Therefore, the School will not disclose to any individuals in the community the gender identity status of any student without the student's and parent's express permission. All medical information is also protected.

### **Additional Guidelines**

**Athletics:** California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) rules and guidelines apply to high school students and state that a student who identifies as male will not be eligible to compete on girls'/women's athletic teams.

**Language:** Westridge will preserve its identity as a girls' school. As is currently the practice, female pronouns and references will be used in formal settings and publications, and as a regular and accepted part of the school culture. In classrooms and more informal settings, the school will strive to support a student's preference regarding name and pronoun use.

**Legal Names:** A student's legal name will appear on all official school records. This includes transcripts and diplomas. If a student's name is legally changed while enrolled, then records will be amended accordingly. If an alumna's name is legally changed, records will be amended accordingly, upon request.

The school and its Board of Trustees are committed to reviewing and revisiting the Transgender Student Policy and guidelines each year, regarding issues of admission, retention, and support for transgender students, as this topic continues to develop within our society.