



Our Purpose

The National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS) is the leading advocate for girls' schools, connecting and collaborating globally with individuals, schools, and organizations dedicated to educating and empowering girls.

Our Principles

- We engage the power of many voices to strengthen our schools, communities and world.
- We challenge limits to imagine and explore new possibilities.
- We inspire the next generation to lead with courage, competence, and empathy.
- We prepare girls for lives of commitment, confidence, contribution, and fulfillment.

Our Practice

- Advocacy: We champion the unique benefits of all-girls schools.
- Research: We conduct, sponsor, and disseminate research on issues of importance to girls' education.
- Networking: We connect member schools with each other and to strategic partners to advance our work on behalf of girls.
- Professional Development: We convene international, national, regional, and online forums to exchange best practices for educating girls.

I. Background:

The National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS) provides a vast network of best practices for educating girls to its diverse membership of more than 220 public, charter, international, independent, and religiously-affiliated all-girls schools. In fall 2014, the NCGS Board of Trustees established a task force to develop a position statement and member resources addressing the unique issues facing all-girls schools related to transgender persons.

Transgender is an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the male/man, female/woman, or something else (e.g. gender queer). Gender expression refers to the way a person communicates gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body characteristics.

The below Position Statement (Section II) uses “transgender” as an umbrella term to also take into consideration the following terms*, which are closely related and increasingly addressed by schools:

Biological/Anatomical Sex: *The physical structure of one’s reproductive organs that is used to assign sex at birth. Biological sex is determined by chromosomes (XX for females; XY for males); hormones (estrogen/progesterone for females, testosterone for males); and internal and external genitalia (vulva, clitoris, vagina for assigned females, penis and testicles for assigned males). Given the potential variation in all of these, biological sex must be seen as a spectrum or range of possibilities rather than a binary set of two options.*

Gender Identity: *One’s innermost concept of self as male or female or both or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different than the sex assigned at birth. Individuals are conscious of this between the ages 18 months and 3 years. Most people develop a gender identity that matches their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological or assigned sex. Some of these individuals choose to socially, hormonally and/or surgically change their sex to more fully match their gender identity.*

Gender Expression: *Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. Gender expression also works the other way as people assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms, and other gendered characteristics. Sometimes, transgender people seek to match their physical expression with their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex. Gender expression should not be viewed as an indication of sexual orientation.*

Gender Role: *This is the set of roles, activities, expectations and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Our culture recognizes two basic gender roles: Masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females). People who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender. Other cultures have three or more gender roles.*

Transgender: *Sometimes used as an umbrella to describe anyone whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. More narrowly defined, it refers to an individual whose gender identity does not match their assigned birth gender. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation (attraction to people of a specific gender.)*

Therefore, transgender people may additionally identify with a variety of other sexual identities as well.

Sexual Orientation: Term that refers to being romantically or sexually attracted to people of a specific gender. Our sexual orientation and our gender identity are separate, distinct parts of our overall identity. Although a child may not yet be aware of their sexual orientation, they usually have a strong sense of their gender identity.

Gender Normative/Cisgender: Refers to people whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

Gender Fluidity: Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may even change from day to day. Gender fluid children do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of girls or boys. In other words, a child may feel they are a girl some days and a boy on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately.

The Position Statement takes into consideration students who are:

- in the process of questioning their identity;
- identifying across a flexible range of gender expression; and
- those who have confirmed their gender identity.

*Definitions from [Gender Spectrum](#). For additional gender and sexual orientation terminology, visit thinkagaintraining.com.

II. Transgender Position Statement:

The National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS) believes the education of girls must ensure intellectual and social safety. Forging strong communities built on supportive relationships are hallmarks of all-girls schools. NCGS recognizes that when students transition—or begin to question their gender identity—they remain at the core young people with whom our schools have built trusting and safe relationships. Therefore, NCGS encourages our schools to consider, at every point, the importance of working in a supportive way with students and families **on a case-by-case basis** during enrollment processes and as students identify as transgender within their school communities.

Our schools are also committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all students and protecting each and every student from harassment, bullying, and negative behaviors, based on a student's gender questioning or transgender identity.

As such, NCGS recommends:

- Our schools recognize that each student is an individual with unique needs, skills, and personalities.
- Our schools consider the needs and concerns of each transgender student on an individual basis, as each transgender student is unique.
- Our schools create and maintain an academic community that ensures the healthy development of all students.
- Our schools provide a safe environment where our students may feel comfortable to express their gender identity.
- Our schools approach transgender issues in a way that reflects “seeking to know and understand.”
- Our schools understand that the legal terrain is changing quickly as regards transgender youth and varies state by state, and securing up to date legal opinions relevant for a school’s locale is highly recommended.
- Our schools make decisions, policies, and procedures related to transgender students in alignment and consistent with their mission and diversity statements.
- Our schools communicate with and assist transgender and gender questioning students to monitor and address any bullying or harassment they may be experiencing.
- Our schools familiarize themselves and keep current on the best practices in the industry when working with transgender students, their families, and the school community.
- Our schools consult NCGS resources, read reports, materials, and other articles and participate in professional development activities to remain current on best practices for working with transgender students, their families, and the school community.
- Our schools schedule in-service programs to educate all community members, including staff, students, parents, alumnae, and trustees, on issues related to the questioning of gender identity, transgender issues, and the challenges faced by transgender individuals, including bullying.

When developing student enrollment policies, NCGS recommends:

- Our schools consider whether a student who consistently expresses a gender identity as female should be considered for enrollment, regardless of sex assigned at birth.
- Our schools consider whether a student who identified as female when enrolled who later identifies as a male can remain at the school, and if not, how the school will support and assist him in finding educational alternatives.
- Our schools consider and then determine whether a student who expresses a non-binary gender identity can remain enrolled at the school (neither female nor male).

When developing alumnae name and identity policies, NCGS recommends:

- Our schools develop policies and procedures for working with alumnae who request changes to their gender and/or name on official school documents, such as transcripts, diplomas, charitable gift receipts, etc.