



Colorado Military Academy

File AC-E4

Parental Notification Students Disclosing Gender Transition

Purpose

Official staff protocols if a student discloses they are transitioning to a gender other than what is listed in the Student Information System student portal.

Background

Parental Rights

If a child (under 18 years of age) discloses to a staff member that they are considering, or have decided, to transition to a different gender, the legal parents and/or guardians (hereafter referred to as parents) have a right to be informed of their child's intentions.

This is consistent with CMA's vision to build connections and relationships with families.

Additionally, in situations like this, notifying parents is consistent with federal law. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides parents the right to be informed of and to inspect their child's educational records.

Gender is a part of a child's educational record; therefore, parents have a clear legal right to know if their child has requested to transition genders.

Student Rights

For children, choosing to proceed with a gender transition is clearly a life-changing decision which can result in wide-ranging adjustments in a child's life and involve challenging and profound emotions.

Partnering with the child and their parents to provide caring support and to preserve a challenging, content-rich academic program for that child is fully in line with the school's mission.

Conversely, failing to disclose to parents such a fundamental decision, risks compromising trust, connections, child safety, and relationships with that family.

Thus, any effort to intentionally disguise or withhold legally accessible information from parents is not in alignment with the purpose or intent of FERPA laws and is inconsistent with CMA's mission and vision.

Staff Rights

Involving parents in the discussion about gender transition and their child also protects staff.

CMA will not place teachers in a potentially untenable legal position whereby they are expected to refer to a student with one type of pronoun at school and then employ a different pronoun when communicating with parents.

CMA does not condone actions to obscure from parents gender decisions that involve their child.

Neither will school staff prompt gender transition discussions with children, such as asking students to disclose their preferred pronoun. Such information is clearly delineated for staff in the student information system.

Protocols

Teacher

If a student discloses to a staff member that they are considering, or have transitioned genders, then that staff member should take time to acknowledge that disclosure with the student.

Then the student must be informed of the staff member's requirement to notify school administration.

Before the end of the school day, the staff member must notify the appropriate school principal (i.e., middle or high school). The preferred method for notification is through email.

Principal (or designee)

Once notified, the appropriate administrator will conference with the student as soon as is practical.

The administrator will advise the student of the date to which a call will be made home to involve parents in the discussion over gender transition.

If the student reports that he or she has not disclosed gender transition plans with their parent, the administrator will advise the student to initiate that conversation. The administrator will then provide a reasonable period of time for that student to do so.

Follow-up calls or conferences with family to discuss next steps, including decisions about dress code and facility use, will be at the discretion of the school principal.

School Records

If parents agree with their child's plan to transition genders, then the school will act in support of that decision to the greatest extent possible and in accordance with associated laws.

Parents will be advised that the child's legal name or gender cannot be changed in the SIS until court documentation is provided indicating a legal name or gender change. Until that time, the official record maintained by the school will remain unchanged.

However, the student information system provides a *nickname* function, which is not a legal record. The school will update the child's nickname to include any parentally approved changes to the preferred pronoun or nickname.

Once that change appears in the SIS, applicable staff will be notified and informed that they are approved and expected to abide by that pronoun or nickname.

Adult Students

Once a student turns 18 and becomes an adult, certain changes to parental notification and FERPA rights take effect. Situations involving adult students will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Sexual Orientation

This protocol does not apply to student disclosures of their sexual orientation. While gender, pronoun use, and potential name changes can impact daily classroom activities, sexual orientation should not.

In an academic environment, student discussion of their personal sexual orientation should be considered outside the scope of the CMA curriculum, and the teacher should redirect the conversation.

If a student discloses any mental health challenge, including issues with sexual orientation, the staff member should direct that student to a school counselor.