

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH TRANSGENDER STUDENTS AT SBS

Our Mission:

Stoneleigh-Burnham School is an academic community that fosters an international perspective. We inspire girls to pursue meaningful lives based on honor, respect and intellectual curiosity. Each student is challenged to discover her best self and graduate with confidence to think independently and act ethically, secure in the knowledge that her voice will be heard.

Our Statement on Diversity:

In an age where global communication, travel and cultural blending are a part of everyday life, the dynamics of difference require awareness, sensitivity and thoughtful engagement. Exploring pluralism, diversity and our common humanity is essential to understanding and learning.

Stoneleigh-Burnham School is committed to diversity and the development of an educational environment that fosters mutual respect, responsibility and empathy in our school and in the world. We value the presence of individuals whose differences include, but are not limited to, age, ethnicity, gender expression, learning style, nationality, physical ability, political views, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

It is expected that all members of our community – students, parents, faculty, staff and administration, and trustees – keep their minds and hearts open to difference as a source of strength and means of growth for the entire community. Further, it is expected that our commitment to diversity will be reflected in all areas of school life, including curricular and co-curricular activities. We recognize that fulfilling this mission is an ongoing process that requires open dialogue.

Massachusetts Law: An Act Relative to Gender Identity

(Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011), effective July 1, 2012

In part:

No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Stoneleigh-Burnham School Guidelines

At this stage of our understanding of both the law and our mission, Stoneleigh-Burnham School is comfortable with the following guidelines to help a transgender student at our school:

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

- We are single gender, not single sex; we are therefore not gender blind, but we are sex blind. As a girls' school, we will continue to educate female students at our school.
- How a student identifies in the admissions process will dictate for us whether or not we will entertain that student's application. (see above)
- Assuming transparency on the family's part, i.e. that they are forthcoming about their child identifying as female, we will engage in conversation about treating that student as we would any other applicant to our school. We will further entertain her application without discrimination.
- In the Admissions process, a conversation must take place with the director of admissions, head of school, dean of students and school counselor to create the plan for how all parties will work through issues as they may arise. For instance, the family and the student must understand that the School will not necessarily grant every wish of the student, hoping to treat this student like any other in the school in terms of social and academic expectation. At the same time, our anti-bullying policy should be made clear so that the family also understands to what degree we will support the student in the face of any unkind words or actions on the part of other students or adults in our community. As stated in our Diversity Statement, we encourage and expect all members of this community to keep their hearts and minds open to difference.

TRANSITIONING AFTER ADMISSION

- Each situation will be treated as unique in order to confer the greatest degree of respect possible upon the transitioning child.
- A female who identifies as male and chooses to begin the transitioning process before the start of his senior year will likely be counseled to seek a coed environment.
- If the transitioning student is a senior, we will likely allow that student to continue and graduate from the School. Consideration of rooming assignment, bathroom use, athletic choices (in the case of someone starting hormones) and so on will be made in collaboration with the family and the School and in alignment with current law.
- In the event of a student identifying as female who has been admitted to the School and has begun the transition process, the School will collaborate with the student and her family around rooming assignment and bathroom use, athletic choices, and so on.
- Who at the School is informed of the student's decision will be determined in conversation between the student, her family and the Head of School. The creation of this "response team" will deal with issues as they arise. These issues might include, but not be limited to:
 - Pronoun use
 - Bathroom and locker room use
 - Dormitory assignment
 - Confidentiality and medical privacy
 - Sports participation
 - School activities and field trips
 - Conflict response and where to go to seek help
 - Dress code
 - Transition support needs, if any
 - Counseling and other student or family support

- Other student or family concerns
- Safety protections from harassment and bullying
- Healthcare services and facilities
- The Board of Trustees will be notified in any case of a transgender student.

STUDENT RECORDS

- When a current student has transitioned, the sex, name change, transition, medical and mental health treatment concerning gender reassignment, and so on will remain a part of the in-house student record, but the information will be considered highly confidential information, accessible only to the “response team.”
- Assuming an SBS graduate or former student has transitioned to male, has legally changed his name, and uses male pronouns, the School will alter the transcript to reflect those changes upon request from the graduate.

Conclusion:

Stoneleigh-Burnham School will consider any mission appropriate and academically able candidate who identifies as female. Further, the School will work to support a transitioning or other non-cisgender student to the best of its ability and in collaboration with the student and her family.

We will engage in ongoing professional development for our faculty, staff and students and Trustees around issues relating to sexuality and gender diversity, as well as other areas of diversity, in an effort to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all our students.