



Guidance for Municipal Police Training Committee Creating a Safe and Supportive Academy Setting

June 1, 2024

The Municipal Police Training Committee strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all student officers can thrive and succeed in its academies. The Municipal Police Training Committee prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation and ensures that all student officers have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and training.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity

An Act Relative to Gender Identity (Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011),¹ which became effective on July 1, 2012, amended several Massachusetts statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of specified categories, to include discrimination on the basis of gender identity. The Municipal Police Training Committee has modeled this guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [Guidance for MA Public Schools Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment - Student and Family Support \(mass.edu\)](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/guidance-for-ma-public-schools-creating-a-safe-and-supportive-school-environment-student-and-family-support)

All student officers need a safe and supportive academy setting to progress academically and developmentally. This guidance is intended to help Academy Directors and staff take steps to create a culture in which transgender and gender nonconforming student officers feel safe, supported, and fully included. The guidance sets out general principles based on the law and addresses common issues regarding transgender and gender nonconforming student officers.

Definitions

Gender expression: the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, or mannerisms.

Gender: is often defined as a social construct of norms, behaviors and roles that varies between societies and over time. Gender is often categorized as male, female or nonbinary.

Gender identity: as defined in part at G.L. c. 4, § 7, is "a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth ..."

Gender nonconforming: a term used to describe people whose gender expression differs from stereotypic expectations. The terms "gender variant" or "gender atypical" are also used.

Nonbinary: is a term that can be used by people who do not describe themselves or their genders as fitting into the categories of man or woman. A range of terms are used to refer to these experiences; nonbinary and genderqueer are among the terms that are sometimes used.

Sex: An assignment that is made at birth, usually male or female, typically based on external genital anatomy.

Sexual orientation: a person's emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to people of the same sex, different sex, or any sex.

Transgender: A term used to describe an individual whose gender identity or gender expression is different from their sex assigned at birth.

Understanding Gender Identity

Gender Identity is a person's experience of their own gender; a person's innermost concept of self as masculine, feminine, a blend of both, another gender(s), or none. This is not always corresponding with biological sex or gender assigned at birth.

Transgender individuals are those whose assigned birth sex does not match their internalized sense of their gender (their "gender-related identity"), and gender nonconforming individuals are those whose gender-related identity does not meet the stereotypically expected norms associated with their assigned sex at birth.

The responsibility for determining a student officer's gender identity rests with the student officer. A student who has identified as a gender and/or requested they be referred to with specific pronouns should be respected and referred to in the manner requested.

Many transgender individuals experience discrimination, and some experience violence. Some environments may feel safe and inclusive, and others less so, challenging a person's ability to live consistently with one gender identity in all aspects of life. It is possible that a biologically male student officer with a female gender identity who lives as a female does not express her female gender identity all the time.

We all have a responsibility to treat all individuals with respect and dignity and to provide an inclusive, equitable and safe learning environment.

Names and Pronouns

The use of an individual's name may differ from a person's legal name. Pronouns refer to the set of third-person pronouns that an individual uses that represent their gender identity. For example: (She/Her), (He/Him), (They/Them).

Correctly using an individual's name and pronouns is one of the most basic ways to show respect for their gender identity. This is an important step in creating an environment in which individuals feel safe and supported.

For more information on pronouns, please see: <https://www.mypronouns.org/>

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Records

A student officer's assigned birth sex, name change for gender identity purposes, or any other information of a similar nature, regardless of its form, that is part of the individual's student officer's training record is confidential, and must be kept private and secure, except in limited circumstances. *See MPTC's Standard Operating Procedure for Privacy and Confidentiality of Law Enforcement Training Records.*

Transgender and gender nonconforming student officers may decide to discuss and express their gender identity openly and may decide when, with whom, and how much private information to share.

Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Changing Facilities

All individuals including staff and student officers are entitled to have access to restrooms, locker rooms and changing facilities that are sanitary, safe, and adequate, so they can comfortably and fully engage in their program and activities.

All individuals including staff and student officers may access the restroom, locker room, and changing facility that corresponds with the individuals gender identity, regardless of the individual's assigned birth sex. Individuals should never be denied access and are entitled to privacy while using these facilities.

When possible, individuals who are uncomfortable using a sex-segregated restroom should be provided with a safe and adequate alternative, such as a single "unisex" restroom.

Other Gender-Based Activities, Rules, Policies, and Practices

As a general matter, all gender-based policies, rules, and practices should be evaluated and only maintained if they have a clear and sound educational purpose. Gender-based policies, rules, and

practices may have the effect of marginalizing, stigmatizing, and excluding students, whether they are gender nonconforming or not.

Whenever student officers are separated by gender during programs and activities or are subject to an otherwise lawful gender-specific rule, policy, or practice, student officers must be permitted to participate in such activities or conform to such rule, policy, or practice consistent with their gender identity.

Education and Training

In furtherance of a safe and supportive learning environment for all student officers, education and training regarding gender identity, LGBTQ+ and matters related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion should be incorporated into the curriculum, and staff professional development.

As with other efforts to promote a positive learning environment, it is important that staff become familiar with the gender identity law, regulations, guidance, and related resources, and that they communicate and model respect for the gender identity of all student officers and staff.

Physical Requirements

Student officers may wish to test as they live or alternatively test under the requirements of the gender identity they feel most comfortable doing so.

Experienced or Witnessed Discrimination

A student officer should report complaints of discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic violence/sexual assault/stalking, workplace violence, and/or retaliation to both the Academy Director and the student officer's municipality and/or agency. MPTC will work in conjunction with the student officer's municipality/agency.

Conclusion

This guidance cannot anticipate every situation and the needs of each transgender or gender nonconforming student officer should be assessed and addressed on a case-by-case basis. MPTC will continue to provide assistance, support, and resources as we work together to create a safe and supportive learning environment for our student officers.
