



Supporting LGBTQ Students Learning During COVID-19

Equality NC is dedicated to connecting educators, families and students with the most up-to-date resources supporting inclusive education in K-12 schools and distance learning. Many North Carolina schools have opened [exclusively virtual](#) and others have selected a hybrid model in line with [state standards](#). Distance learning has caused LGBTQ students to be exposed to potentially unsupportive families without access to in-person support groups which can cause [decreased mental health outcomes](#). It is imperative for educators and school staff to apply in-person tools for inclusive school climates to virtual spaces as a way to fully support LGBTQ youth in distance learning.

Did you know?

- More than 1 in 4 LGBTQ students (28%) and approximately 3 in 5 (57%) transgender students were prevented from using their chosen name or pronouns in North Carolina schools.

Source: GLSEN National School Climate Survey 2017, North Carolina Snapshot

- Seventy-two percent of transgender and gender expansive youth report hearing their families make negative comments about LGBTQ people.



- Only 36% of all gender-expansive youth have families who show support for them by getting involved in the larger LGBTQ and ally community.
- Only 23% of all gender-expansive youth feel like they can definitely be themselves at home.
- 64% of all gender-expansive youth say their families make them feel bad about their identities

Source: Human Rights Campaign 2018 Gender Expansive Youth Report

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What you can do

Honor Names & Pronouns - Communicate your name and pronouns to help normalize the use of many pronouns. Communicate your pronouns when you introduce yourself in conversations, in your social media bios and add your pronouns to virtual classroom names.

- **Correcting when you misgender** - Quickly correct yourself, and move on. Avoid over-apologizing. Ask consent before correcting others
- **Create autonomy in digital rooms** - Ensure students have access to rename themselves and update their pronouns. Acknowledge student information systems might be prepopulating this data causing unintentional outing to happen. Make efforts to know your students well.

Use Gender Inclusive Language - Put effort to shift your language to support a gender-diverse culture. Shifting language in gender-inclusive ways is easier than you may think. When young people hear inclusive language, they feel safer.

Examples of gender-inclusive language:

- *Folks, folx, or everybody instead of guys or ladies/gentleman*
- *First-year student instead of freshman*
- *Sibling instead of sister/brother*
- *Child instead of son/daughter*
- *Kiddo instead of boy/girl*
- *Partner or sweetie instead of girlfriend/boyfriend*



LGBTQ-Inclusive Virtual Culture - Use virtual backgrounds and digital classroom hub resources to show visible signs of pride online. Include your pronouns in your name in virtual classrooms. Incorporate LGBTQ-inclusive books and lesson plans into class work and curriculum.

Social Support - With clubs and sports postponed, engage digitally in social spaces with peers. Attend live discussion groups, dance parties, and virtual hang outs. Have

access to and save phone hotlines in your phone contact to share quickly. [Head here](#) to see our virtual mental health support guide for LGBTQ youth.

Screen Free Time - 20/20 rule - for every 20 minutes on screen, divert your attention to a non-digital device for 20 seconds. Include breaks to go outside and get plenty of water during the day.

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Student Services Support - Students have the right to access wrap around student services during distant learning. Offer virtual office hours where students can connect 1:1 to seek support and resources. Recommend and honor [Gender Support Plans](#) for students on their gender journey.

Meal Distribution

Most school districts will continue to serve meals for students as they reopen for fall or begin remote learning. Most will also have different plans to serve meals from the plans they used during the summer or during school closures last spring. You can check your local [food bank](#) or [food pantry](#) for additional resources. If your school or organization provides after school care to children ages 18 and younger, you may be eligible to receive healthy meals and snacks for your students that are reimbursed through a federal nutrition program. Check your school or district's website, social media, and direct communications for the latest information on how meals are available for your students.

Check out NoKidHungryNC.org/covid19 for more information.

Professional Development

Bring Equality NC to your campus to facilitate professional development to educators, administrators and school staff to establish safer, more LGBTQ inclusive classroom environments.

Professional Development Modules

- Supporting LGBTQ-Inclusive Classrooms
- Gender Diversity and Equity
- Race, Gender & Bias: a community conversation

Student Workshops

- Developing GSAs and Building a Vision
- Resisting Systems of Oppression
- Direct Action Training

Request a virtual training: email rebby@equalitync.org or visit equalitync.org/youth-policy.

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Anti-Racism Resources

Equality NC is committed to fusing racial justice throughout all of our programming, messaging and work as a nonprofit. As the oldest statewide organization in the country dedicated to LGBTQ rights, we are committed to embodying an intersectional approach to our activism and to uplifting voices of color whenever possible.

We believe that this country was built on the labor of people of color whose voices have been historically shut out or erased in the interests of upholding structural white supremacy — even within the LGBTQ movement itself. Equality NC is committed to centering those most marginalized by power and privilege in our work and honoring the legacy of our radical ancestors who laid the foundation for the larger equality movement today.

Equality NC upholds this commitment to racial justice through coalition building with a multitude of [community partners](#). Use these intersectional resources during the school year to incorporate anti-racism work into everyday learning.

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