

Guidelines for Gender Inclusion at Deerfield

- Deerfield seeks to affirm students of all genders.
- Deerfield’s admission process recognizes gender diversity and welcomes applicants of all genders.*
- Deerfield educates students about gender through its academic, residential, inclusion, and leadership programs.
- Deerfield seeks to have students of all genders feel safe and supported on campus—including in classrooms, dorms, the dining hall, and during co-curriculars.
- Deerfield’s housing policies respect all genders. In our efforts to accommodate the housing needs of each student, we rely on Student Life’s knowledge of Deerfield and our students, and we apply our best judgment in a process that is individualized and consultative of both parents and students. As appropriate, special attention will be dedicated to accommodating students who have unique needs.
- Deerfield provides access to restrooms that align with students’ gender identities.
- Deerfield, in accordance with NEPSAC policy, provides access to locker and changing rooms that align with students’ gender identities.
- Deerfield provides access to a broad range of support services for students across the gender spectrum, including individual counseling, affinity group support, referral to specialists off-campus, and our regular advising system.

* Our application offers three options: female, male or self-identify with space provided to elaborate on the latter. One of three essay prompts asks students to “describe a facet of your identity of personal story that is essential to who you are and will strengthen the Deerfield community.”

Gender Inclusion Efforts at Deerfield by Year

In keeping with our broader efforts at inclusion and following the Board of Trustees approval of the Strategic Plan for Inclusion, Deerfield Academy has undertaken numerous gender inclusion efforts in recent calendar years. These initiatives are ongoing, and they are evaluated regularly to ensure they continue to meet the goal of recognizing, supporting, and affirming students of all genders.

2015

- Deerfield's board unanimously approved the Strategic Plan for Inclusion, which offered the following vision, *"In 2021, Deerfield Academy is a community that values and affirms the distinct identities and differences of each person...including age, socio-economic status, gender/gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and ability."*

2016

- The Student Life Symposium focused on gender. It included 10 gender-related events and speakers over the course of the academic year.
- The full school community participated in gender workshops with a particular focus on the transgender experience.
- Contemporaneously, a member of the school community transitioned publicly.
- Same-gender couples sought—and continue to seek—guidance for adherence to Visitation policies.
- Recognizing their presence on our campus, the handbook refers explicitly to same-gender couples in its Visitation policy.

2017

- The Gender and Consent Working Group (GCWG) was founded with the specific charge of breaking down divides among genders and working toward an inclusive and welcoming campus culture for all. Under the guidance of Grade 9-10 Dean, they continue to meet monthly and coordinate gender-related programming on campus.
- Under the leadership of Deerfield's Director of Athletics, the NEPSAC approved its first transgender policy.
- A section titled "Gender at Deerfield" was added to the Student Handbook. It reads:
 - *Deerfield welcomes and seeks to affirm students of all genders. Gender Support and Gender Communication Plans, which outline options available to gender non-conforming and gender-expansive students, are available in dorms, the Health Center, and with advisors. We aim to treat students according to their gender identity and to apply policies accordingly. Acknowledging the constraints of our remaining gender-binary structures, the Academy strives to make thoughtful and supportive accommodations for gender-nonconforming and gender-expansive people.*

2018

- An openly gay student began serving as a proctor in The Village.
- In compliance with NEPSAC's new policy, Deerfield's new athletics complex offered gender-inclusive locker rooms when it opened in October.

2019

- In close collaboration with the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA), Deerfield designated all single-unit restrooms across campus as "gender-inclusive." In addition to that signage, a list of all such facilities is shared with the school community each fall.
- Members of senior leadership attended NAIS's Gender Inclusion Workshop along with 150 teachers and administrators from other schools.
- All members of senior staff received gender inclusion training at their late-summer retreat.
- All faculty and titled student leaders received similar training on the opening days of school.
- Deerfield began to offer Gender Support and Gender Communication Plans to ensure alignment of community members behind a student's gender status.
- Introduction of the new Health curriculum for all 9th graders provided additional opportunity for students to explore the changing gender identity landscape.

Each year:

- Deerfield begins to address gender—specifically at Deerfield and in the world more broadly—at meetings with students in the opening days of school. Spaces are held for boys, girls, and those who identify outside the binary. The tone in those settings is positive and supportive with an emphasis on camaraderie and shared experience. Starting in 2019-2020, these gender meetings expand to three times over the course of the academic year, once each term.
- On DAinfo, the Academy's database, community members have the option of selecting the pronouns by which they would like to be referred.
- Once called the Gay-Straight Alliance, Deerfield's Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) offers weekly meetings and an affinity space for gender-expansive students. The GSA also promotes gender inclusion and awareness through school meeting presentations.