



Supporting Transgender Youth in PE: Creating Inclusive & Affirming Spaces

65%

65% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported experiencing discrimination based on their gender identity within the past year (Nath et al., 2025).

56%

56% of transgender students report feeling unsafe at school because of their gender identity (Kosciw et al., 2020).

38%

38% of transgender and nonbinary youth find their home to be gender-affirming (Nath et al., 2025).

92%

92% of transgender students shared that their PE teachers failed to step in when transphobic behaviour occurred (Williamson & Sandford, 2018).

Transgender is a term that describes a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth (Meadows, 2022).

Coping Strategies

How Trans Students Navigate Unsafe PE Spaces

Affirming Identity Through Activity Choice

Some students gravitate toward activities that align with how they experience their gender (e.g., dance vs team sports).



Forced Gendered Participation

Some students endure discomfort when forced into gender-segregated teams or changing rooms with no alternative (Sykes, 2009).



Advocacy & Resistance

Non-binary students, in particular, may challenge discriminatory practices, though it can be emotionally exhausting (Saenz-Macana et al., 2024).

Avoidance & Opting Out

Some students disengage by skipping class, sitting out, or using illness/injury to avoid discomfort (Saenz-Macana et al., 2024).

Timing & Privacy Adjustments

Many use facilities at off-peak times or in isolation to avoid exposure and anxiety (Saenz-Macana et al., 2024).



Clothing Adjustments

Transgender students may modify PE uniforms by layering, using compression wear, or choosing looser items (Saenz-Macana et al., 2024).

Prioritize Student Choice



Broaden Activity Choices



Gender-Inclusive Changing Options



Mixed-Gender Activities



Affirm Names & Pronouns



Cultivate Allyship



Foster an Inclusive PE Environment

What Can I Do?

