

What To Do When...

Your student tells you they want to be referred to by a certain pronoun?

Say "ok".

It's no big deal. The experience is similar to your student telling you their favourite colour is blue now.

Student: *Hey Ms Grundy, I've been thinking of using the 'they' pronouns.*

Ms Grundy: *Ok, cool / Sure / Alright*

You refer to your student using the wrong pronoun?

Immediately correct yourself with no change in intonation.

Even when they're not around?

Yes.

Ms Grundy: *What she's trying to say, I mean, what he's trying to say...*

I don't want to look stupid.

You will only look stupid if you don't correct yourself.

The experience of having the correct pronouns used on the student is validating, empowering, and humanising.

You find out from someone else that your student is transgender and is using a different name to what you have been calling them?

Ask them in private.

Ms Grundy: *I want you to feel comfortable in class and at school. I've heard your mates call you Archie, what would you like me to call you in class?*

I'm afraid I will forget. I have so many names to remember!

Your student will respect that you are trying.

Ms Grundy: *I want you to feel respected and validated, but I think I might slip up a few times, I hope you can forgive me when I do.*

Your student uses an identity term you are not familiar with?

Ask.

Otherwise, Google is your best friend.

Ms Grundy: *Hey so I know you identify as an omnisexual genderqueer person, what does that entail?*

You are being called out by a student?

Apologise.

Remember that the person who is calling you out is on your side. Respect your student's experience and acknowledge that your student has had more experience than you have in this area.

Ms Grundy: *It would be different for trans people.*

Student: *Ms Grundy, you can't call trans people "trannys".*

Ms Grundy: *Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know. Thanks for calling me out on that.*

You feel your student is being over-sensitive?

Do not say that they are being sensitive.

Through their actions, they are telling you that it matters greatly to them, even though it may not matter as much to you.

Ms Grundy: I can see that this matters a lot to you.

You witness homophobic teasing or bullying?

Focus on the offender.

Ensure students understand that discriminatory remarks and behaviours will not be tolerated. Do not single out targeted student.

Student: *What a fag. / That's so gay.*

Ms Grundy: *Reggie, that's not on. You know it's against school policy to be discriminatory.*

Student: *Yea that's hot. [referring to a lesbian couple]*

Ms Grundy: *Reggie, that's not a nice thing to say. Women are not objects.*

Remember, it is highly likely there is another student who is closeted and also struggling with their feelings.

Do not assume that everyone is straight or cis-gender.

You feel this is just too much?

Google.
Respect.
Empathise.
Ask.
Try to understand.

Remember:

- LGBTQIA+ issues are not alphabet soup
- Do not use a label on a person unless they identify with it
- A trans person does not need to 'look Trans'
- Language is constantly evolving

Glossary

LGBTQIA+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and Other marginalised orientations and gender identities.

Straight: A sexual orientation that refers to an attraction towards people of the opposite gender.

Cis-gender: A gender identity that coincides with a person's assigned sex at birth.

Helpful Services

Minus18
minus18.org.au

QLife
qlife.org.au
1800 184 527

Queerspace @ Drummond Street Services
ds.org.au/our-services/queerspace/
03 9663 6733

Headspace Frankston
03 9769 6419

Beyond Blue
beyondblue.org.au
1300 224 636

STEPPING UP FOR OUR
LGBTIQ COMMUNITY
monash.edu/ally



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with themes identified by the 2017 students of the Embrace Group at Sandringham SC