

Requests to Use Preferred Names

Student engagement and success is directly impacted by safe and inclusive environments. When students feel affirmed and secure, their ability to learn is enhanced. This is true of all students, especially those who belong to marginalized communities.

Students' preferred names are individual choices and are often deeply connected to students' identities and sense of belonging. Preferred names may include a shortened version of a legal name, the use of a middle name, or a completely different name that reflects who they are.

Part of ensuring all students experience a safe and supportive environment means allowing students or their parent(s)/guardian(s) to submit an official request to enter their preferred name in the Student Information System (SIS), either verbally or in writing.

Once a request has been made and a student's preferred name has been changed in the SIS, it will be used on all school documents*, such as report cards. Students' legal names will still appear on official documents**. This choice reflects Nova Scotia's commitment to safe and inclusive schools.

Students in grades primary to 6 will be required to have their parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to the SIS name change, and students in grades 7 to 12 will be able to change their preferred names if the student has the capacity of consent.

Students' legal first and last names will always appear in the demographic page in SIS. If a preferred first name is not specifically requested, the legal first name will remain on all documents.

***School documents may include:**

- report cards
- Individual Program Plans (IPPs)
- suspension notices and letters
- adaptations
- large-scale assessments and examinations
- specialist reports
- consent forms
- permission slips
- class lists
- attendance records
- referrals for school-based supports and services
- sports and drama club lists
- honor roll list
- student schedules
- bussing lists
- letters to parents
- school-based health care plans

****Official documents** are documents issued under statutory authority, or created by or used in, an official capacity by government departments, agencies, statutory authorities, or health care providers.

Official documents may include:

- academic transcripts
- provincial high school diplomas
- registration forms
- copy of school incident reports where litigation may be possible
- referrals to external agencies (e.g., mental health)

Official documents from authorities that may be referred to, may include:

- passports
- birth certificates
- Youth Criminal Justice records
- all legal documents (e.g., custody and access orders, probation orders, child protection referrals, restraining orders, health care reports and records)

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. 2014. *Guidelines for Supporting Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Students*. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia. https://studentservices.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/Guidelines%20for%20Supporting%20Transgender%20Students_0.pdf