

A Summary of
“Guidance for Issues Concerning the Human Person and Sexual Identity”
by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver

November 7, 2022

1. “Gender ideology redefines the human person. It is incompatible with Christian anthropology and can lead to profound confusion.” Such terms as gender, gender identity, sex, and gender dysphoria – as defined by the American Psychological Association and “*employed by proponents of gender ideology*” – “should not be used uncritically in our schools.” (p. 1)
2. “The following terminology should be used”
 - A. “Sexual identity: Respect for the dignity of the person means...respecting persons in their integrity as embodied male or female from the moment of conception. For this reason, Catholic schools cannot recognize or facilitate a ‘gender transition,’ or grant any accommodation that recognizes or suggests a change in sexual identity....Accommodations, such as wearing the uniform designated for the opposite sex or the use of preferred pronouns are impermissible, as they convey falsely to that child and his or her peers that there has been or could be a change in sexual identity.” (p. 2)
 - B. “Sexual difference: Catholic schools must affirm the importance of sexual difference as the basis of marriage, and as essential to understanding sexual identity and the truth and meaning of human sexuality.” (p. 2)
 - C. “Marriage: Catholic schools at all times must uphold the nature and meaning of marriage as a covenantal relationship between one man and one woman....Catholic schools should take care not to convey any equivalence between same sex or transgender legal unions or relationships and marriage....The truth about marriage is accessible to everyone because it is grounded in the nature of the human person. Promoting and protecting marriage witnesses to the dignity of every person and serves the common good.” (p. 2)
3. Catholic school policies enable children to “grow in virtue and be formed according to the teachings of Christ....Therefore, school policies should reinforce Christian anthropology, including the reality of sexual difference....Christian anthropology is unalterably opposed to many aspects of the gender ideology currently affecting the culture nationally and internationally.” (p. 3)
4. “Pastoral care...works toward the integration of one’s concrete circumstances with objective truth.” (p. 3)
5. “Christian anthropology and gender ideology are incompatible. Christian anthropology refers to the understanding of the person that is grounded in the Creation accounts in Genesis and supported by reason, and that has been developed in the writings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, among others.” (pp. 3-4)
6. “We must...be confident in the truth: Christian anthropology offers a vision of the person that not only is illuminated by faith but also resonates with experience and is rooted in science.” (p. 4).

7. "The Church regards gender ideology as harmful not only to the individual but also to the culture at large." (p. 4)
8. "Schools should avoid validating or affirming the premises of gender ideology, even indirectly, by silence or inaction." (p. 4)
9. "Practically speaking...Catholic schools and religious education programs [should] offer educational presentation on gender ideology for parents—and that schools strongly urge (or even require) all parents to attend....In grades K-6, parents should be informed about the pervasiveness of gender ideology in media and advertising directed toward children." (p. 5)
10. "Teachers should address specific gender ideology topics within planned lessons on Christian anthropology (identifying the conflicts between gender ideology and Christian anthropology), in the context of biology and related sciences, in classes related to chastity, theology or the body, sexuality or marriage, and in discussions of current events." (p. 5)
11. "The student who rejects his or her sexual identity and asserts a gender identity at odds with his or her biological sex...identifies as transgender, queer, nonbinary, gender-fluid, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, or some other identity different from the student's given sexual identity as male or female. A student who rejects his or her given sexual identity might insist that he or she 'is' a person of the opposite sex, or that he or she identifies as something other than male or female. Typically, a student who rejects his or her given sexual identity (male or female) will seek to have others affirm the student's desired identity (transgender, non-binary, queer, etc.). Affirmation might include calling the student by a new name or referring to the student by new pronouns... or the use of plural pronouns ('they,' 'them'). This student also might seek to adopt clothing, mannerisms, and interests that are perceived as 'gender-neutral' or are stereotypically associated with the opposite sex....Such a student or his or her parents might produce a letter requesting an accommodation plan, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, that stipulates gender affirmation...as necessary for the student's success in school." (pp. 5-6)
12. "A Catholic school cannot affirm a student's identity as transgender, gender nonconforming, non-binary, gender-fluid, gender-queer, or any other term that *rejects the reality of the student's given male or female sexual identity*; any asserted identity that rejects the reality of biological sex is incompatible with Christian anthropology....Even if the parents and child express willingness to comply with relevant school rules in the short term, the situation is not workable because the family and the school are working from irreconcilable premises and moving towards incompatible goals. Accordingly, enrollment or re-enrollment of such a student at a Catholic school would not be appropriate." (p. 6)
13. "Situations where the parents are divorced or divided over the question of whether or not to 'affirm' the child's chosen gender identity are particularly problematic, and increasingly common. These situations require additional information, including questions about the influence of the 'affirming' parent, the involvement of social services, medical or psychological professionals, possible custody arrangements or disputes, relevant court orders or legal agreements." (p. 6)
14. "By enrolling a student who openly rejects his or her given sexual identity and seeks to be affirmed in his or her desired identity by peers and the school community, the school compromises its mission and identity in multiple ways: the school's decision is likely to be construed as endorsing the view that a person can be 'born in the wrong body' or can 'change gender' or sex—a view that contradicts Catholic teaching and is simply not true; by validating the student's erroneous belief about him or herself, the school effectively lies to the student and hinders the student's search for the truth; by accepting the student's presentation of him or

herself as 'transgender' or any other identity at odds with the student's biological sex, the school is likely to confuse other students, staff, and families about the truth of the human person and the dangers of gender ideology, and to give scandal to the community at large." (p. 7)

15. For "a student who is confused about or struggling with his or her sexual identity" "the school should be explicit about the school's mission; the Church's teachings on the person and concerns about gender ideology; relevant school policies (dress codes, facility use, etc.); the expectation that the parents and child will work towards an integrated sexual identity (aligned with bodily reality); the expectation that the parents and the child will commit to abide by school policies (including social media use*) for the duration of the student's enrollment....(*The school should make clear that in addition to complying with the school's on-campus rules, the child also should not 'come out' on social media, e.g., express a social media identity at odds with biological sex.)" (pp. 7-8)
16. "Schools should not communicate acceptance of explicit 'gender non-conforming' or 'gender-bending' behaviors that aim to communicate an identity message. For example, a boy who wears feminizing makeup to class or wears a dress on a non-uniform day is perceived to be making an identity statement." (p. 8)
17. "How should a Catholic school respond if an enrolled student asserts an identity at odds with the student's biological sex, e.g. identifies as transgender, gender nonconforming, or non-binary, etc.? ...The school's response should consider factors such as how consistently and openly the student is asserting the new identity, whether the student's asserted identity is common knowledge among the student's peers or others in the school community, the degree to which the parents are aware of the situation, whether the parents endorse the student's asserted identity, and whether the parents and student are willing to continue to comply with the school's relevant policies (e.g., uniform or dress code guidelines, as well as behavioral expectations according to his or her biological sex)." (p. 9)
18. "The school should ensure that both parents and student are aware of the kinds of situations in which the student's continued enrollment would become untenable. For example: if the student or parents do not comply with the school's relevant policies (e.g. the student refuses to abide by the dress code or the parents insist that the student be allowed to use opposite sex bathrooms or be addressed by pronouns that match the new identity but are at odds with the student's biological sex); the student 'comes out' or otherwise openly asserts a desired identity at odds with his other biological sex, either on social media or within the school environment; or the parents endorse or publicize the student's asserted identity, either informally, on social media, or through media channels." (p. 9)
19. "In no situation should the school recognize encourage, endorse, or facilitate a student's 'gender transition.'" (p. 10)
20. "How should a school respond if a student or the student's parents ask members of the school community to address the student using personal pronouns at odds with the student's biological sex? The school must refuse this request. Personal pronouns refer to the person and correspond to the truth about the person's identity as male or female....By asking others to use those pronouns, the student is asking others to affirm something (the asserted identity) that is not true. The school must insist that staff and students comply with the school's policy both officially and informally, for the sake of consistency. (In other words, a teacher must use the student's actual pronouns both inside the classroom and in less formal contexts (e.g., informal conversation or social events))." (p. 10)

21. "If a student or student's parents ask for a formal name change in the school records, because the student already has changed his or her name legally....the situation would seem unlikely to be a good fit, as parents who are willing to support a child's desire to legally change his or her name to facilitate a new identity at odds with his or her biological sex, are unlikely to agree to the parameters recommended in 4(c) above." (p. 11)
22. "If a student asserts an identity at odds with biological sex (e.g., identifies as transgender, gender non-conforming, gender creative, or gender fluid, etc.) and requests to wear the uniform of the opposite sex because it matches his or her new identity, how should the school respond? Schools should not permit a student to wear the uniform appropriate for the opposite sex....If the school consents to a uniform change, the school would be implicitly affirming the student's erroneous identity, and effectively encouraging the student to continue down a path that is harmful and unhealthy." (pp. 11-12)
23. "May a student use the bathroom or changing facility of the opposite sex, on the basis that it matches his or her desired or asserted identity? No. Students must use changing or bathroom facilities in accord with their biological sex....Allowing a student who asserts an identity at odds with biological sex to use facilities reserved for the opposite sex may create the impression that the school is validating the student's belief that he or she has fundamentally changed 'who' he or she is. In reality, a person's biological sex cannot change." (p. 12)
24. "What about clubs for LGBTQ-identified students or 'gay-straight alliances'? May Catholic schools recognize these clubs? ...Catholic schools should not fund, support, permit, or grant official recognition to groups that emphasize or encourage students to embrace an LGBTQ identity (rather than embracing their primary identity as a child of God); promote or support an unchaste lifestyle; view same-sex sexual relationships as analogous to or a form of marriage; encourage LGBTQ activism in opposition to the teachings of the Church on marriage, human sexuality, and gender identity; affirm transgender, gender nonconforming, gender creative, or non-binary identities (or any other 'identities' that reject an alignment with biological sex); or encourage students to 'come out' as LGBTQ." (p. 13)
25. "May a Catholic school allow a same-sex couple to attend school dances as a couple? No. *A Catholic school cannot validate a same-sex student 'couple' without undermining its mission and identity....*Allowing same-sex couples to attend school dances as romantic partners sends the erroneous message that same-sex romantic relationships are 'the same as' opposite-sex romantic relationships—it also normalizes those relationships, conveys approval or affirmation of those relationships, and undermines the school's ability to help students understand complementarity, which is at the foundation of marriage....*The romantic relationship itself is not ordered towards authentic sexuality, which is designed to be male-female in the context of marriage, and can never fulfill the Gods design for romantic and sexual relationships.*" (p. 14)
26. "May a Catholic school enroll a child whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) identify as gay or lesbian or who present themselves as part of a same-sex couple? ...Enrolling a child under these circumstances is likely to lead to intractable conflicts. *A Catholic school cannot treat a same-sex couple as a family equivalent to the natural family without compromising its mission and Catholic identity and causing confusion about the nature of marriage for all students enrolled.* If teachers and administrators were to treat a same-sex couple as if their relationship—and the situation of two mommies or two daddies—were no different from the mom and dad couples of other families, then it would not be surprising for other students to assume that same-sex couples are 'just the same' as other couples and having two mommies or two daddies is no different from having a mother and a father." (pp. 14-15)

27. "If a child of a same-sex couple is enrolled, the school should make clear that it can recognize a couple that is a mother and a father for the child, but cannot recognize 'two mothers' or 'two fathers' as a family structure. For purposes of registration, school directories, or other forms, a same-sex couple should be instructed to list one mother (or one father). The other adult may be noted elsewhere as an additional emergency contact, but not listed as another parent. The school should seek a commitment from the couple that they will respect the identity and mission of school by avoiding public displays of affection at school functions and exercising discretion about their living situation. The school also should be clear that parents whose objective living situation contradicts the teachings of the faith might face some limitations on their involvement in the school." (p. 15)
28. "An adult who decides to transition is acting contrary to the truth of Christian anthropology and thus is not suited to teach in a Catholic school or to carry out the school's mission in any capacity. His or her continued employment would cause significant confusion and give grave scandal to the school's students, and the rest of the Catholic community." (p. 16)
29. "'What if a teacher or staff member decides to go through a same-sex 'marriage' ceremony, or is openly living in a same-sex relationship? In this situation, the teacher or staff member is openly engaging in behavior opposed to the teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage and human sexuality, and thus is unsuited for teaching or serving in the Catholic school.'" (p. 16)
30. "What if a teacher or staff member decides to become an LGBTQ ally or advocate? The language of 'ally' or 'advocate' in this context has been co-opted to mean affirmation of an identity that is 'LGBTQ,' as well as support for gender ideology and the culture surrounding the LGBTQ movement. As a result, those terms should not be used in a Catholic school.... Staff should be aware that secular LGBTQ organizations and even some ostensibly Catholic organizations (such as Dignity, New Ways Ministry, and Equally Blessed) actively oppose Church teaching regarding sexuality and marriage; secular or faith-based LGBTQ organizations that encourage people to be an 'LGBTQ ally or advocate' actively encourage young people to embrace an identity based on sexual orientation or gender identity....The Catholic approach, in contrast, embraces one's identity as a son or daughter of God, with a given biological sex and sexual desires ordered to conjugal love. An authentic ally or advocate supports the Catholic approach." (pp. 16-17)
31. "Teachers need to be cautioned against indiscriminate use of materials from secular educational websites, as these materials may undermine Christian anthropology and Catholic teachings. For example, materials from the Human Rights Campaign 'Welcoming Schools' program, or materials from Southern Poverty Law Center's 'Teaching Tolerance' website are not suitable for use in a Catholic school." (p. 17)