

Welcome & Inclusion at Ascension School

Our mission is to be A Place Apart to connect with God's sacred mystery, celebrating the dignity, diversity, and oneness of all creation. We aim to live out this mission and this ministry by identifying the image of God – *imago dei* - in all people. We follow the greatest commandment – to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31). In all our programs, activities and events, Ascension School is committed to *radical* welcome.

Ascension School celebrates a rich diversity of campers and staff. We believe in the dignity and the intrinsic worth of every human being. We welcome, affirm, support, and seek to adapt for ability and disability, experience, culture, ethnicity, race, sex, national origin, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

We are keenly aware that our welcome can create tension, and that by including some groups, we become incompatible with certain belief systems. We will gladly refer guests, families, and campers to other organizations who can best fit their needs.

Some considerations:

- We acknowledge that some of our buildings cannot accommodate all abilities. We will communicate in advance if we have concern that the requested accommodation cannot be reached.
- We are committed to anti-racism and train staff to be welcoming of all people.
- Campers will not be discriminated against based on their access to healthcare.
- We do not tolerate discriminatory ideologies or rhetoric. Individuals who choose to engage in these behaviors will be asked to leave to preserve a safe environment for all.
- We acknowledge transgender campers/staff/guests require extra consideration and as such:
 - Guests/Staff/Campers use the bathroom that corresponds with their expressed gender. Many, but not all our bathroom facilities are single use. We ask for notification if there is a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason. We will pursue accommodation or communicate if accommodation cannot be reached.
 - During the camp season, campers sleep in lodging areas according to their gender. Note: There is not a “one-size-fits-all” housing policy for transgender or gender non-conforming youth. It is vitally important to openly communicate with the youth about their needs and desires to create the best solution. Some transgender youth may feel more comfortable housing with the gender that correlates with their full-time presentation and identity, others with their biological sex. Again, it is important to work with the youth to create reasonable accommodation.
 - Campers are always supervised while at camp, including within lodging facilities.
 - Camp encourages all guests/campers/staff to change clothes in private areas and discourages nudity or disrobing directly in front of others. We provide pop-up privacy tents in our camp facilities to accommodate campers.
 - All our showers are single occupancy, and each has a private undressing/dressing area where guests/staff/campers can have privacy while changing and showering.
 - Campers are permitted to wear clothing and swimwear in which they feel most comfortable.

- Camp fills staff vacancies and assigns staff lodging/responsibilities based on summer staff applicants self-selected gender.
- When referring to a camper/guest/staff member, staff and campers should use preferred pronouns when not using the person's name.
- It is not required that a parent/guardian inform camp staff that their child is transgender. However, camp prefers that parents/guardians indicate so when they register. Awareness will allow our staff to be prepared so we can put forth our best effort to aid the child in having a positive experience.
- Only the staff noted below will be made aware if a particular camper is transgender. Otherwise, this information will remain confidential.
 - Directors and nurses
 - Other staff that relate directly to the camper – like their counselor
- Staff training will include a session regarding inclusion of LGBTQIA+ campers. This policy will be discussed, along with rationale and training for providing transgender campers (and every camper) with an emotionally and physically safe environment.