

# SCUSD LGBTQ+ Distance Learning Guide for Educators

Teachers and school staff are a lifeline for many students including LGBTQ+ students. Given that LGBTQ+ students are currently isolated, your role and assistance is critical and very valuable to them. The purpose of this tool is to provide guidance and support as you continue to be a role-model and champion for LGBTQ+ students.

## Impact of Crisis on LGBTQ+ Students

COVID-19 has serious implications for the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth. LGBTQ+ youth have been found to be at significant increased risk for depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicidality. An unintended consequence of physical distancing is potential loss of social connections that protect our LGBTQ+ students from suicidality<sup>1</sup>.

The most recent Human Rights Campaign (CRC) Youth Report in collaboration with CTA, ACSA, and the PTA reveals persistent and serious challenges for LGBTQ+ youth in California. More than 1700 LGBTQ+ youth were surveyed and the following results are key to creating safe, affirming, and welcoming schools during distance learning<sup>2</sup>:



More than **78%** of LGBTQ students in California felt depressed or down in the past week<sup>20</sup>

**50%**

have been teased or bullied because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>34</sup>



**84%** of LGBTQ youth in California rated their average stress level as a 5 or higher on a ten-point scale<sup>17</sup>

**34%**

have been electronically bullied during the past 12 months (through email, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites or texting)<sup>35</sup>



**93%** of LGBTQ students in California report they have trouble getting to sleep at night<sup>21</sup>

**45%**

indicated feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, letting people down and/or not being a good person within the past week<sup>18</sup>

## Your Role Now

As an educator teachers and school staff are vitally important to provide support, guidance and a safe place for LGBTQ+ students who are at higher risk during the pandemic. In the next few weeks and months it is going to be important for educators to maintain safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students so they not only participate in distance learning but also stay safe and feel supported.

<sup>1</sup> [IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 FOR LGBTQ YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION](#)

<sup>2</sup> [California LGBTQ Youth Report](#)

## Checklist for Educators:

- ❑ **Create safety and visibility** : Help LGBTQ+ students feel connected, affirmed and supported by ensuring there are visible signs in Zoom backgrounds such as [posters](#), [materials](#), stickers, flags that are LGBTQ affirming.
- ❑ **Normalize use of pronouns**: During times of uncertainty, it is even more important to normalize use of pronouns. Ensure you normalize pronoun sharing by adding your pronouns in your zoom classroom. Also help to create a safe space for students to share their pronouns in class.
- ❑ **Provide social and emotional support that results due to social distancing**: There is a loss of social connections that protect LGBTQ+ youth (GSAs, extracurriculars).
- ❑ **Establish trust with LGBTQ+ students**: Use gender-inclusive and non-heteronormative language in Zoom classrooms such as “students” instead of “boys and girls” and “family” instead of “mom”: or “dad”. .
- ❑ **Identify LGBTQ+ students who need additional support**: Your ability to connect or students to resources now can make all the difference. With LGBTQ+ drop in centers closed and clubs no longer operating normally help connect students to our Connect Center, School GSA advisor, community organizations to assist in navigating isolation and loneliness.
- ❑ **Connect with students who struggle with privacy at home**: It is important to know students may face minimal privacy access at home. Try to confirm a private virtual connection when students are not supported at home to check in with them about family dynamic and assisting with self-care strategies.
- ❑ **Address LGBTQ cyberbullying**: LGBTQ+ students are at higher risk for cyberbullying during distance learning. As an educator you have the ability to stop negative anti-LGBTQ language and behavior. In addition, you also have the ability to educate about LGBTQ terminology, history and current events.<sup>3</sup>
  - ❑ Simple quick responses to stop Anti-LGBTQ comments:
    - ❑ “Remember, we don’t use put-downs in this class”
    - ❑ “Do you know what gay means?”
    - ❑ “It’s not OK at this school to use ‘gay’ disrespectfully in a negative way”
    - ❑ “Using the word ‘homo’, ‘queer’, ‘dyke’ in a negative way to joke around is not OK. These are hurtful words and can impact people who hear them”
    - ❑ “It doesn’t matter who said it, I don’t want to hear that kind of language again.”

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<sup>3</sup> <https://neaedjustice.org/2020/04/23/in-response-to-covid-19-a-checklist-to-support-lgbtq-students-during-distance-learning/>

# 2020 DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT LGBTQ+ STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

## Local Resources:

### **SCUSD CONNECT CENTER**

SCUSD's Connect Center LGBTQ staff offers students, families, school staff and community professionals a centralized source of information, and support regarding issues facing LGBTQ students that attend SCUSD schools. Services include information/referral, short-term counseling, policy development, advocacy, and Safe Zone training for school communities. All services are confidential and are provided free of charge.

**Referrals:** <https://www.scusd.edu/pod/make-referral-connect-center>

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(916) 643-2345

### **Trans Families Sacramento/PFLAG Sacramento (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)**

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

### ***Meetings***

The Sacramento PFLAG/Trans Families Sacramento support group meets the third Tuesday of each month from 7:30 - 9:30 P.M. at Saint Mark's United Methodist Church, 2391 Saint Mark's Way, Sacramento CA 95864 on the second floor of the Education Building.

PFLAG support group meetings in Elk Grove are held on the first Wednesday of each month from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at Elk Grove United Methodist Church, 8986 Elk Grove Blvd (in Old Town), Elk Grove, CA. Child care is available at this meeting.

**Website:** [www.pflagsacramento.org](http://www.pflagsacramento.org) <http://www.sactgc.org/transfamilies/>

**Warmline:** (916) 978-0410

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### **The Gender Health Center**

Gender Health Center is focused on providing an accessible therapy and counseling program for the gender variant community. They are interested in developing a collaboration with other agencies that are committed to addressing the full spectrum of issues specific to the transgender community in a positive approach for getting people to understand that there is a better life when gender identity issues are addressed in a safe and supportive environment.

**Website:** <https://www.genderhealthcenter.org/>

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### **The Sacramento LGBT Community Center**

The Sacramento LGBT Community Center works to create a region where LGBTQ+ people thrive. They support the health and wellness of the most marginalized, advocate for equality and justice, and work to build a culturally rich LGBTQ+ community.

**Website:** <http://saccenter.org/>

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### **Rainbow Kids**

Rainbow kids is a group of families who gather together for support, education, and community to help raise their transgender, gender variant, gender non-conforming or gender questioning children (4-18 years old) in a supportive and loving manner. They recognize that every child and every family has their own journey and has different levels of acceptance and beliefs.

**Website:** <https://sites.google.com/site/sacramentoarearainbowkids/>

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### **National Resources:**

#### **National Center for Transgender Equality**

The National Center for Transgender Equality is the nation's leading social justice advocacy organization winning life-saving change for transgender people.

**Website:** <https://transequality.org/>

#### **Transgender Law Center**

Transgender Law Center changes law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression.

**Website:** <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/>

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#### **Gender Spectrum**

Gender Spectrum's mission is to create a gender-inclusive world for all children and youth. To accomplish this, we help families, organizations, and institutions increase understandings of gender and consider the implications that evolving views have for each of us.

**Website:** <https://www.genderspectrum.org/>

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#### **The Trevor Project**

The Trevor Project operates the only accredited, nationwide, around-the-clock crisis and suicide prevention helpline for LGBTQ+ youth. This organization hosts workshops for individuals working with LGBTQ+ youth, as well as a web-based Trevor Support Center through which LGBTQ+ youth and allies can find answers to frequently asked questions, and explore resources related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Website:** [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

**Support Center:** <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/trevor-support-center>

**Trevor Lifeline:** (866) 488-7386

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### **Family Acceptance Project**

For the first time, researchers have established a clear link between rejecting behaviors of families towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adolescents and negative health problems in early adulthood.

*Supportive Families, Healthy Children Booklet*

Key information from FAP research on how families can help support their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children. The booklet is available online.

**Website:** <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications>

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### **Trans Student Educational Resources**

Trans Student Educational Resources is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment.

**Website:** <http://www.transstudent.org/gender>

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### **Brown Boi Project**

The Brown Boi Project is a community of people working across race and gender to eradicate sexism, homophobia and transphobia and create healthy frameworks of masculinity and change.

**Website:** <http://www.brownboiproject.org/>

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### **GSA Network**

GSA Network is a next-generation LGBTQ+ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains queer, trans and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities.

**Website:** <https://gsanetwork.org/>

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### **GLSEN: The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network**

GLSEN is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual

orientation or gender identity/expression. Electronic versions of reports and all other GLSEN research reports are available online.

- *2007 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBT youth in our nation's schools.*
- *Inside California schools: The experiences of LGBT students.*

Website: [www.glsen.org/research](http://www.glsen.org/research)

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## Child Well-being Check

You may be one of the few adults that can check in on your student during this time, and you play an important role in supporting their well-being.

- Is the child missing scheduled video meetings or office hours? Are you unable to connect with them via phone?
- Have you heard or seen anything concerning on video, such as screaming, unsanitary housing conditions, or young children alone or being cared for by other young children?
- Does your student appear tired, sad, nervous, disruptive, angry, etc. in video meetings, email exchanges, or phone calls?

If you answered yes to any of these questions or you are concerned about a student for any reason:

1. If you believe the student or family needs support please reach out to your school counselor or offer the family a referral to the [Connect Center](#) or your school site [Student Support Center](#).
2. If you believe child abuse or neglect is occurring, follow SCUSD Mandated Reporter - Suspected Child Abuse Guidelines ([see Annual Employee Notifications 19-20](#)). Section 11166 of the Penal Code requires any "childcare custodian" to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse, to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone (916-875-KIDS), and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident. See the [Sacramento County Child Abuse resource list](#).

3. Always take signs of suicidal feelings, thoughts, behaviors, or plans very seriously. Potential signs may include verbal statements, written content, artistic expressions, social media postings, etc . Any staff who are concerned that a student is showing warning signs of potential suicide risk or self-injury must immediately follow the 2020-21 Suicide Prevention Procedures