

# 10 POLICIES FOR LGBTQ INCLUSION

Want to make your athletic department more LGBTQ-inclusive?  
Here are the 10 policies every program should have.

**(1)**  
**LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE  
NONDISCRIMINATION  
POLICY**

Athletic departments should have a written nondiscrimination policy that explicitly covers “sexual orientation,” “gender identity,” and “gender expression.” This can be accomplished by adding these classes to existing nondiscrimination protections or inserting a stand-alone clause to existing policy materials.

**(2)**  
**DEPARTMENTAL  
LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

Athletic departments should explicitly ban/condemn homophobic, transphobic, and/or anti-LGBTQ conduct by players, coaches and athletic administration in all athletic activities. This can be accomplished by a stand-alone clause or by including LGBTQ protections in existing departmental harassment policies. These codes of conduct should outline potential consequences for engaging in behaviors that violate the code of conduct, including clear mechanisms to report and address the violation.

**(3)**  
**TEAM  
LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

Individual teams should be encouraged to create Codes of Conduct that clearly state an expectation to promote respect towards LGBTQ people. These Codes of Conduct should clearly outline potential consequences for engaging in behaviors that violate the code of conduct and be directly communicated to all team members at the start of the season.

**(4)**  
**INCLUSIVE  
FAN CODE OF  
CONDUCT**

The department’s commitment to inclusion, respect and safety should extend to members of their fan community. Fans, like players and coaches, should not be subjected to discriminatory language and behavior by those on the field or in the stands. These values and expectations should be communicated to fans via the school’s official fan code of conduct. In addition, the fan code of conduct should outline potential consequences for engaging in behaviors that violate the code of conduct, including clear mechanisms to report and address the violation.

**(5)**  
**LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE  
MEDIA  
COMMUNICATIONS**

Athletic departments should ensure all media communications and recruiting materials (media guides, community outreach, team camp brochures, etc.) include a nondiscrimination language/clause. Members of the athletic department who are in most frequent touch with the media should have LGBTQ-specific media training.



**(6)**  
**INCLUSIVE  
TRANSGENDER &  
NONBINARY  
ATHLETE POLICIES**

Athletic departments should have a clear and well-written policy regarding the participation of transgender and non-binary athletes. If you are an NCAA-governed school, this policy should be consistent with the NCAA guideline for transgender athletes. However, athletic programs not governed by the NCAA or any other governing body with a preset trans-inclusion policy should set policies that reflect inclusion, respect, and fairness. Many trans sports advocates support allowing transgender athletes to self-identity and participate on the sports team consistent with their gender identity.

**(7)**  
**INCLUSIVE  
DRESS CODES**

All dress code policies should be gender neutral to allow for different forms of gender expression. An example of a non-inclusive dress code is one that would require women to wear skirts or dresses to events where professional dress is required. A best practice is to simply outline the type or style of clothing that will not be accepted as professional attire rather than dictate which clothes people should wear based on sex assigned at birth.

Excellent LGBTQ-inclusion policies will be ineffective if these policies are not adequately communicated to the people they impact. Therefore, having timely trainings is essential for creating LGBTQ-inclusive environments.

**(8)**  
**TEAM  
LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

As a best practice, these trainings should:

- Be held at least once a school year
- Be mandatory for all coaches, players, and staff
- Review all LGBTQ harassment policies and team Codes of Conduct
- Cover allyship best practices

Athletic departments should also maintain up-to-date LGBTQ-inclusion resources that are readily available to coaches, players, and staff throughout the year, in between trainings.

**(9)**  
**REPORTING**

Have a clear and visible reporting mechanism for reporting incidences of racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic conduct and harassment. These policies should allow for anonymous reporting, have clearly stated timelines for action, outline a non-exhaustive list of disciplinary actions, be visible, published in student-athlete handbooks, and distributed during orientation.

**(10)**  
**FACILITIES**

Schools should make every effort to allow athletes to use the bathrooms and changing facilities in which they feel most comfortable and safe. At a minimum, schools should provide private changing spaces and showers in the men's and women's locker rooms to accommodate transgender, nonbinary, and other individuals who desire privacy. Players, coaches, and staff also should be permitted to use the facilities consistent with their gender identity. These policies should be communicated clearly in the student handbook.