

Gender Neutral Bathroom Best Practices



Starting in 2016, the National Speech & Debate Association began marking gender neutral restrooms for attendees of the National Tournament. Based on feedback from coach caucuses in 2016 and 2017, the NSDA is working to create resources that support tournaments to better meet the needs of attendees and create a more meaningful, inclusive space for attendees.

Below are suggested best practices for gender neutral bathrooms at speech and debate tournaments.

- **Communicate in advance the location of these bathrooms.** For Nationals, we use the Tournament Book and Tournament App to communicate this information. For invitationals, consider posting it in the tournament invite. If you have a tournament program, please include it there, as well in a prominent location. Mark the location(s) on tournament maps to help individuals identify where to go and how to find them. If you have any public announcements at the start of the tournament, consider including the information there.
- **Ensure that the restrooms have appropriate signage.** Even if individuals do not see the communication prior to the tournament, they should be able to identify the restroom based on the signs you place. Additionally, labeling these restrooms is a sign to others about the values of the tournament. Your signage should go over existing signage if you are using a restroom that is gendered.



- **Consider the location of the gender neutral restrooms.** Whenever possible, try and make the restrooms in a centralized location that is easy to locate. Post signage about where to find the gender neutral bathroom next to gendered, multi-occupancy restrooms to help students find a restroom easily.
- **Whenever possible, work to include more than one restroom.** Single locations can cause lines and potentially delay the tournament. One per floor would be ideal.
- **Commonly, tournaments identify single stall restrooms.** At schools, these can be found in teachers' lounges, administrative offices, or a school clinic.
- **Avoid placing a restroom in a location that would require students to walk through a round to utilize the facility.**

- **Communicate to the custodial and administrative staff so know they how the bathroom will be used.** This can be help ensure the restrooms are kept stocked and cleaned since they may be used more frequently than normal. Single stall restrooms that are typically designated for “men” may not have appropriate disposal bins for menstrual products. Tournament personnel should rotate through and monitor this as well to be sure signs have not been torn down and that custodial has worked to keep the bathroom stocked.

Additional resources

Title: Gender Neutral Bathrooms

Link: <http://transwellness.org/resources/educational-materials/gender-neutral-bathrooms/>

Summary: *This resources provides background information about gender neutral bathrooms as well as answers to frequently asked questions.*

Title: Everybody’s Gotta Go: The Importance of Restroom Access

Link:<http://www.teachingtransgender.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Everyones-Gotta-Go-Lesson-11-Teaching-Transgender-Toolkit.pdf>

Summary: *This resource is a guide for individuals who are leading dialogue about gender neutral restrooms. The materials provide support for talking through concerns. The goal of the resource is to “help participants gain knowledge, build empathy and reduce antitransfender prejudice.”*

Title: The Importance of Gender Neutral Bathrooms

Link: <http://www.universityobserver.ie/student-voices/the-importance-of-gender-neutral-bathrooms/>

Summary: *This article was published by a trans student who expresses reasons why having gender neutral bathrooms are important.*

Title: Transgender People Need Safe Restrooms

Link:

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/masen-davis/transgender-people-need-safe-restrooms_b_3492067.html

Summary: *This article offers insights into the work that has been done to implement policy changes in the area of gender neutral bathrooms.*