



Gender-Inclusive Housing at Camp Frequently Asked Questions

Revised June 2022

Q: Why offer gender-inclusive housing?

A: In the Episcopal tradition, our Baptismal covenant calls us to “strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being.” In every aspect of camp life, we seek to create a Christian community that takes these promises seriously. Our inclusion statement, which you can read in full in your family handbook, details some ways that Claggett leadership is committed to upholding this commitment to LGBTQ+ campers, including:

- Examining and changing practices and systems that operate on the assumption of binary gender and heterosexuality
- Supporting transgender and gender-expansive campers’ right to use the lodging spaces and bathrooms that are appropriate for them.

Claggett camps are fully affirming of LGBTQ+ campers and staff as people made whole and beloved in the image of God. We are committed to offering gender-affirming practices because of this belief, and more broadly because of our responsibility to support young peoples’ mental health.

Some statistics from The Trevor Project’s 2021 Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health:

- 42% of LGBTQ youth have seriously considered attempting suicide in the last year
- 50% of trans and non-binary youth have considered attempting suicide in the last year; 20% attempted suicide

Significantly:

- LGBTQ youth who have access to spaces that affirm their identity are at a significantly lower risk of attempting suicide.

Gender-inclusive practices allow young people to enjoy all that camp has to offer--when young people know that they are seen and accepted for who they are, they can put their focus on growing their faith & spirituality, building new skills and friendships, without having to focus on if they can safely exist in the camp space. Dorm time is an important social element of camp, and we want every camper to experience the fun and joy of a dorm community.



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Q: What does safe, non-gendered housing look like?

A: A gender-inclusive dorm will be assigned for sessions based on the number of campers signed up. This dorm will be partially separated from other camper housing, using one wing in Powell Hall. A bathroom and staff room will be adjacent to the gender-inclusive dorm.

- **Supervision:** at least three counselors will be assigned to the gender-inclusive dorm, representing multiple genders. Staff housing will be adjacent and semi-private (in keeping with our Safe Church policy that adult sleeping spaces are separate from youth sleeping spaces). During the night, staff will be located in an adjoining room with the door open. It is Claggett's policy that counselors are physically present to supervise all unstructured time in dorms during the day.
 - At camp, one of our primary norms is the "Rule of Three:" at all times during a camp session, we stay in groups of three or more people, at least one of whom is a counselor. This policy is in place at all times in all Claggett dorms.

- **Changing and bathrooms:** All changing will be private in gender-inclusive housing. While campers in single-sex dorms may change in shared space or choose to use a bathroom or shower stall for privacy, campers in gender-inclusive dorms must change clothes in a private stall. Temporary curtained changing stalls will be set up in these dorms to facilitate this. All toilets and showers are fully private, including a separate private changing area for each shower.



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Q: How can I sign up for gender-inclusive housing? How can I make sure my child is signed up for single-sex housing?

A: On your registration paperwork, you will see a new question that says: “Please select the housing option you prefer. (You will have an opportunity to request a specific roommate on your campwise portal.)” The options will be as follows:

- all- girls housing is most appropriate for my camper
- all- boys housing is most appropriate for my camper
- gender-inclusive housing is most appropriate for my camper
- My camper is equally comfortable in same-gender or gender-inclusive housing

Campers will be assigned to the sleeping space that is marked as most appropriate for them. If you select “equally comfortable,” your camper may be assigned to either a dorm with others of their gender or to gender-inclusive housing, based on bed spaces and balance. **A minimum of 3 campers who either selected this housing option or selected “equally comfortable” are required in order to maintain a gender-inclusive dorm for a given week. We will not assign or move campers to gender-inclusive housing without express permission from their parent/guardian.** If a camper asks to move to gender-inclusive housing during the session, we will contact their parent/guardian to request permission.

Q: My camper is transgender or nonbinary, but feels most comfortable in single-sex housing. Is this okay?

A: Yes! The goal of gender-inclusive housing is to ensure that every camper has access to a sleeping space that’s right for them. Regardless of your camper’s dorm assignment, they can be assured that we will use the name and pronouns they wish to be called by.

Q: My camper is not transgender or nonbinary. Can they still register for gender-inclusive housing?

A: Yes! The gender-inclusive dorm is exactly that: inclusive of all genders. Our intention is not to create a separate space only for LGBTQ+ campers, but also for all who wish to support inclusive housing. This is also why there is an option to select “equally comfortable” at registration.



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Additional Questions and Information

Q: How will counselors be assigned to dorms?

A: Counselors are asked before the start of the camping season which dorms they are comfortable leading and sleeping in just like campers. A single gender dorm will be led by a counselor of that gender. A mixed gender dorm will have three or more counselors of different genders. All our staff aged 18 and older undergo police record checks and multiple reference checks.

Q: How will counselors be trained in gender inclusive practices?

A: Counselors receive training in supporting LGBTQ+ campers, both in a specific training session aiming to educate them on gender/sexuality and the needs of LGBTQ+ youth, and through continuing conversation throughout training and the summer as specific situations arise. We take this approach with all diversity and inclusion matters including race and socioeconomic status, and ability as well as sexuality: counselors receive a basic informational training and are asked frequently throughout the summer: “How might this affect campers who are _____? How could we make this situation safer for campers who _____?”

Q: How will my camper’s privacy be maintained in the dorm?

A: Dorm spaces will have private changing stations and dressing rooms attached to showers so that all campers can change privately. While campers in any dorm may always choose to change privately, it will be required in gender-inclusive dorms.

Q: Will campers be allowed to switch bunks once they arrive at camp?

A: No. Campers will not be permitted to switch housing assignments without the permission of their parent/guardian.



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Q: *Won't gender-inclusive housing encourage romantic relationships?*

A: It's normal for young people to develop romantic feelings for each other, and of course this can happen at camp. However, it is important to remember that single-sex housing does not deter the possibility of romantic interests, as not all campers are attracted to the opposite gender. Regardless of dorm assignments, two Claggett norms are always in place to prevent inappropriate sexual contact, and to encourage campers not to define their camp experience by romantic feelings or relationships:

- **The “Rule of Three:”** It is built into our culture, among both campers and staff, that two people are never to be alone together at camp. Even for simple errands such as retrieving a forgotten item, everyone at camp goes by threes, and at least one counselor must be present. During group activities and unstructured time such as dorm time, campers are to be accounted for and visible to staff at all times unless they are changing, bathing, or using a private bathroom stall, in which case each individual is entitled to privacy. This rule is to protect safety of campers and staff in many ways, including prevention of inappropriate sexual behavior.
- With all campers, we also establish the norm that ***at camp, we are not here to pair off*** (or, in casual parlance, “no hanky-panky”). Outside of physical and emotional safety concerns, we encourage young people not to let their camp experience be defined by a romantic relationship, which can close them off to developing other friendships and being engaged with the larger community. We believe that age-appropriate conversation about healthy relationships is important in addition to logistical boundaries that prevent inappropriate contact--regardless of gender and attraction.



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Q: Won't creating gender inclusive spaces encourage more kids to change their gender?

A: There are no medical or psychological studies that support this claim. Further, most campers will be so focused on their own camp experience that they may not even notice changes to create gender-inclusive practices. We will continue to refer to our dorm spaces as “second floor,” “third floor,” “Farmhouse and Porch,” etc. Many campers, regardless of gender, want a private place to change, and all campers deserve safety, privacy, respect for their body and belongings and a place to sleep at night where they feel safe and respected.

Q: What if my camper has questions or concerns about these practices before or during camp?

A: A core tenet of camp is that young people should be encouraged to ask questions, that their curiosity should be taken seriously and in good faith. If your camper has a question about our gender inclusive practices prior to camp we are happy to speak to them or you in whichever way they feel most comfortable. If they have a question during Camp they can ask their counselor, the chaplain, or another member of the camp staff, who will happily answer their question to the best of their ability. We are happy to answer questions about how we make these practices work, to clarify misunderstandings, and even to share why we chose to offer gender-inclusive housing. In all our conversations we operate with the understanding that trans*, non-binary and queer campers are loved and valuable, and that we will do our best at Claggett to ensure that they know this to be true through our actions and not just our words.

Q: Allowing my child to be housed with someone of the opposite gender is against my religious or cultural beliefs. Will this be taken into account when making cabin assignments?

A: Yes. All of our regular dorm options will still be available, and our gender-inclusive housing is only opt-in. We will assign campers to whichever type of housing you and your family request.



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Q: What resources do you have to learn more about gender-affirming practices at camp and in the Episcopal church?

A: Take a look at this the list below:

- Why are gender inclusive policies so important - a video by Chris Rehs-Dupin from Transplaining - please note that this video includes hard statistics and may be tough for younger campers or campers who are trans*, non-binary or queer to hear: [Transplaining Introduction](#) Find @Transplaining on Instagram for more information and resources!
- The Trevor Project Canada has great resources about what gender identity is, exploring your own gender identity and how to be an ally to trans* and non-binary people all designed for youth specifically: [Gender Identity – The Trevor Project](#)
- The Trevor Project also has counselors that youth can access if they want to talk to someone about their gender identity or sexual orientation
- Learn about The Episcopal Church's stance on gender, sexuality and sexual orientation here: [LGBTQ – The Episcopal Church](#)