



Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders
30 Winter Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617.426.1350 or
800.455.GLAD(4523)
Fax: 617.426.3594
Website: www.glad.org

Rights of LGBTQ Youth in Rhode Island

(Updated May 3, 2012)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Youth have rights. Know your rights! If you have questions or need help, just contact GLAD's Legal InfoLine. A friendly volunteer will assist you 1-on-1. It is free and totally confidential. You can contact us by phone, live chat or email; just go to <http://www.glad.org/rights/infoline-contact>.

IF YOU ARE A STUDENT

LGBTQ youth have the right to attend school in safety and free from discrimination and harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

- LGBTQ youth must have equal access to and be allowed to participate on equal terms in all school programs, including extracurricular activities.
- Schools must keep LGBTQ youth safe from bullying, harassment and violence by teachers and staff, or other students. Bullying is defined as: written, verbal or electronic expression (i.e. cyber-bullying through the use of technology, such as emails or social media) or physical act or gesture directed at a student that:
 - causes physical or emotional harm or reasonable fear of harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
 - creates a hostile educational environment;
 - infringes on the right of the student to participate in school activities; or
 - materially and substantially disrupts the education process.
- Schools must adopt an anti-bullying plan by June 30, 2012 and copies of the plan must be made available to students and parents and should be prominently displayed on the school's website.
- Schools must respect the gender identity of transgender students, including using appropriate names and pronouns, and allowing transgender students to wear clothing consistent with their gender identity.

- LGBTQ youth have the right to be open about their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
- Students have the right to form extracurricular groups, such as Gay-Straight Alliances on the same terms and with the same privileges and resources as all other extracurricular groups.
- LGBTQ youth have the right to express themselves on issues relating to sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
- Public schools which receive federal funds may not discriminate on the basis of sex. Sometimes the harassment of a gay or transgender student will be sexual harassment, which is forbidden by the federal law known as Title IX.
- Students have the right to learn about LGBTQ issues and must have access to information and resources about LGBTQ issues and people, regardless of objecting school officials or parents.

IF YOU ARE IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

LGBTQ youth have the right to safe and appropriate placements in the child welfare system, free from discrimination and harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

- LGBTQ youth have the right to be free from harassment and abuse based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression in foster care placements. This means that youth should be protected from both physical and emotional harm in their placements, and should be placed with caretakers who will ensure their safety and wellbeing outside the home.
- LGBTQ youth have the right to be open about their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
- Transgender youth have the right to be identified by the name and pronouns that accord with his or her gender identity and to wear clothing consistent with his or her gender identity.
- LGBTQ youth have the right to be free from religious indoctrination that condemns or disparages their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

LGBTQ youth have the right to equal treatment and to access appropriate services for their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression while in the child welfare system.

- LGBTQ youth must have access to appropriate medical or mental health care, and should not be forced to undergo improper or disreputable services damaging to their wellbeing, such as reparative or conversion therapy.
- LGBTQ youth should be treated equally to heterosexual and gender conforming youth, including with regard to age appropriate displays of affection.
- LGBTQ youth should have access to supportive materials and resources.

IF YOU ARE IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

LGBTQ youth have the right to safe and appropriate placements in the juvenile justice system free from discrimination and harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

- LGBTQ youth are entitled to protection from physical, emotional or sexual abuse by other youth or facility staff.
- A facility's response to harassment or violence against an LGBTQ youth cannot be to move the LGBTQ youth to a more restrictive facility or to isolate the LGBTQ youth.
- LGBTQ youth cannot be segregated or classified as sex offenders based on myths that LGBTQ youth will prey on other youth.
- LGBTQ youth have the right to be open about their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
- Transgender youth have the right to be identified by the name and pronouns that accord with their gender identity and to wear clothing consistent with their gender identity.

LGBTQ youth have the right to equal treatment and to access appropriate services for their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression while in the juvenile justice system.

- LGBTQ youth must have access to appropriate medical or mental health care, both for general services and for any medical services that may be unique to LGBTQ youth.
- LGBTQ youth should not be forced to undergo improper or disreputable services damaging to their wellbeing, such as reparative or conversion therapy.

- LGBTQ youth may not be disciplined for engaging in age-appropriate romantic or sexual conduct that would not be punishable between two different-sex youth.
- LGBTQ youth have the right to be free from religious indoctrination by facility staff that condemns or disparages their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

That’s a lot of rights!! If you need help sorting this out, have questions or a situation you need help with, GLAD is here to help. Just go to <http://www.glad.org/rights/info-line-contact> and contact GLAD’s Legal InfoLine or call our toll-free number, 800-455-GLAD (4523). A friendly volunteer will assist you—it’s free and confidential. We just want to help you know your rights and know what to do if someone isn’t respecting them.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Other Toll-free Hotlines

- Hotline for LGBTQ youth in foster care- 1.866.LGBTeen (542.8336)
- Youth Talkline (ages 23 and under)- 1.800.246.PRIDE
- Fenway Peer Listening Line- 1.800.399.PEER

General Youth

Youth Pride, Inc.

742 Westminster Street

Providence, RI 02903

ph: 401.421.5626

info@youthprideri.org

<http://www.youthprideri.org>

PFLAG

PFLAG Greater Providence

500 Angell Street #212

Providence, RI 02906

ph: 401.751.7571

pflagprovidence@verizon.net

<http://www.pflagprovidence.org>

PFLAG South/ Central Rhode Island

110 Brook Spring Drive

Warwick, RI 02889

ph: 401.219.0265

info@pflagscri.org
<http://www.pflagscri.org>

Schools

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network)

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10004
ph: 212.727.0135
glsen@glsen.org
<http://www.glsen.org/>

GLSEN Massachusetts

31 Heath Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
ph: 617-536-9669
glsenmassachusetts@glsenmassachusetts.org
<http://chapters.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/massachusetts/home.html>

Other Legal Resources

Office of the Child Advocate of Rhode Island

John O Pastore Center
57 Howard Avenue, 4th Floor
Cranston, RI 02920
ph: 401.462.4300
www.child-advocate.ri.gov

Office of Court Appointed Special Advocate

Rhode Island Family Court
J. Joseph Garrahy Judicial Complex
One Dorrance Plaza
Providence, RI 02903
ph: 401.458.3330
<http://www.courts.ri.gov/Courts/FamilyCourt/Pages/Court%20Appointed%20Special%20Advocate.aspx>

ABA Center on Children and the Law

740 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
ph: 202.662.1720
ctrchildlaw@americanbar.org
<http://www.abanet.org/child/>