

DOJ Gives Maryland School District One Week to Stop Hiding Gender Transitions From Parents

The Justice Department's civil rights chief sent a letter to a Maryland school system Wednesday demanding it stop withholding information about students' gender transitions from their parents, giving the district seven days to comply or face litigation.

Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon addressed the letter to Anne Arundel County Public Schools, arguing the district's practice of concealing gender-identity information violates the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the federal law that gives parents the right to access their children's school records.

"By categorically withholding '(i)nformation about a student's gender identity' from parents except where 'legally required,' AACPS appears to have adopted a blanket, district-wide practice of nondisclosure untethered to FERPA's enumerated exceptions," Dhillon wrote. She said parents had been "denied access to their child's full record" and "denied a hearing to correct the record."

"Comply with the law or face us in court," Dhillon wrote separately on X.



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The letter follows a joint announcement last week by the Justice Department and the Department of Education that the

two agencies would partner to investigate school districts accused of concealing student gender transitions from parents. The Education Department's Student Privacy Policy Office said it opened its inquiry into Anne Arundel County after parents discovered a school had used male pronouns to refer to their daughter without telling them.

Under Anne Arundel County's current policy, students may use any name or pronoun they prefer at school, regardless of their sex, without parental approval. Staff are directed to loop in a student's family when developing a support plan, unless officials determine there is "a genuine safety concern for the student's physical, emotional, or mental health safety." The policy also classifies gender-identity records as confidential medical information, to be disclosed only when legally necessary.

Dhillon's letter gives the district seven days to rescind the policy, turn over records to affected parents, and inform staff they may no longer withhold gender-identity information without legal justification. Failure to meet the deadline, the letter states, could result in litigation and jeopardize the district's federal funding.

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