



LGBTQA+ Inclusion Policy

United Church of Christ Beliefs

Open and Affirming declaration:

We recognize, celebrate and give thanks for the many diverse gifts of God among us. We declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming facility of the UCC, welcoming into full participation in the Body of Christ persons of every race, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic origin, physical and mental ability, economic status and nationality. We joyously pledge ourselves to be an Open and Affirming facility, providing a safe welcome for a diverse people.

La Foret Promise

We affirm the above from our UCC partners, and additionally declare that we fully welcome those of all religious traditions and those who practice no religion. We celebrate and do our best to accommodate bodies of all shapes and sizes. All are welcome whether they share our beliefs or not, but respect and compassion are our highest values. Because of these policies and those held by the United Church of Christ, visitors may encounter many diverse beliefs and values during their stay. We will not tolerate any harassment or bullying due to any of these differences or others not listed.

Assumptions

To explain plainly some things that we take for granted about camps and events at La Foret: This policy is written for the whole of the camp community, campers, counselors and staff. There are co-ed cabins. In all cabins, modesty is expected. Counselors will never change in front of campers, and campers will not change in front of counselors. Most often, campers do not change clothes in front of each other, either. Staff and volunteers are trained to know our standards of safety and guidance. Any activity intended to arouse is totally prohibited, period.

Why Policy for LGBTQ Inclusion Matters

It is an essential part of our mission in creating programs, especially for youth, that we teach each individual's wholeness, worthiness and goodness in God's sight. Valuing, listening to and working with LGBTQ+ individuals is aligned with this mission and is important to La Foret's staff.

According to national Non-Profit, The Trevor Project, In 2019:

- 39% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months, with more than half of transgender and non-binary youth having seriously considered
- 71% of LGBTQ youth in the study reported discrimination due to either their sexual orientation or gender identity
- 98% said a safe space social networking site for LGBTQ youth would be valuable to them.

The Sanctuary of La Foret is for everyone. We will do our best to meet you where you are and make sure you feel safe while you are at camp.

Terms to Know:

Trans: Transgender. An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Non-binary: An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do.

Gender identity: One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression: External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

Examples of what we mean by Pronouns:

She, her, hers

He, him, his

They, them, theirs (as a singular pronoun)

Ze or zie (pronounced like "Zee"), replaces she, he, they

Hir/hirs (pronounced like "here"), replaces her/hers, him/his, or them/theirs

Some people don't use pronouns, and would like their names to be used instead (i.e. "Mel just left to go visit Mel's parents.")

Providing for the Needs of Trans and Non-Binary Campers

We seek to positively affirm campers identities whenever possible, and we know that restrooms and cabin assignments contribute to this. As much as possible, accommodating trans and non-binary campers will be addressed in an individualized manner. La Foret and our representatives will do as much as we can to make campers comfortable while being honest and realistic about facility or programmatic limitations. Please know that we hope to offer solutions that are safe, comfortable and welcoming for all, and sometimes our physical space,

adult ratios, resources and policies have to be taken into consideration to figure out what we might be able to offer. Our healthcare staff will refer to human anatomy when necessary rather than using gendered descriptors to ask questions or provide care.

When you complete camp registration for your child, we ask that you confirm all information with your camper, especially name, gender, and cabin preference. In the case that a camper arrives with a gender identity that does not match their registration and requests being assigned a cabin that matches their gender identity, staff will do everything possible to make the camper comfortable, and assess the need for guardian notification and permission on a case-by-case basis.

Gender assigned at birth, physical characteristics, or presentation will not decide use of gender specific spaces. Trans individuals may select any available restroom. Cabin assignments will be made based on gender identity, with requests taken into account for camper's comfort and safety. In the case of non-binary gender identity, campers will be asked to select a cabin gender in which they will feel most comfortable for that session. When possible, we aim to provide an opt-in cabin for "all genders," including allies, so that an easy and stress free choice can be made. Just like all other cabins at La Foret, they will be fully supervised and have staff present and organizing activities at all times. Campers who identify as gay or who are attracted to the same gender are welcome to register for the cabin that corresponds to their gender identity, or to opt-in to an all genders cabin. All expectations about respect, modesty, civility, and good boundaries apply, no matter what cabin or bathroom a camper is using. All expectations about romantic and physical contact apply, no matter what cabin a camper is assigned to (any behavior intended to arouse is not appropriate at camp, no matter who is involved).

We do our best to keep an appropriate adult ratio in each cabin that corresponds to the gender identities of the campers who will stay there. All camp staff and volunteers submit to a background check and boundary training. We welcome staff and loyal, valuable adult volunteers of all gender identities and sexual orientations, and we find we are much richer for it.

Whenever possible, any campers who have a need or desire for increased privacy for any reason will be provided access to an alternative restroom or area to shower or change in privacy. No one will be required to use an alternative restroom because they are trans.

Names and Pronouns

Campers always have the right at La Foret to be addressed by their preferred names and pronouns. We encourage all staff and campers to introduce themselves with or write their pronouns on their nametags. Inadvertent slips or unintentional, honest mistakes in the use of preferred names or pronouns might occur, and we will do our best to create a space where correction and apologies are standard in these cases. We understand the importance of referring to campers by their correct name and pronouns and will not tolerate abusive or

demeaning misuse of these identifiers. Staff and volunteers will assume that a camper's gender identity and sexual orientation is confidential and campers may choose to share information about themselves at their own discretion.

Harassment/Discrimination/Intimidation-Free Environment

La Foret prohibits harassment, discrimination, and/or intimidation on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identify, race, color, ancestry, national origin, disability, marital status, socio-economic status, body size/features, or religion. La Foret takes all reasonable steps to prevent harassment from occurring to or by campers and staff, and these and other actions that create an intimidating or hostile environment are not permitted: Threats, degrading comments, epithets, or slurs; Derogatory photographs, drawings, language, or gestures; Sexual harassment, including leering, making sexual gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual language (whether considered positive or negative); Physical contact such as unwanted touching, assault, impeding, or blocking movements. Sexual harassment can occur between people of any sex/gender and will be taken seriously in every case.

Conflict Resolution, Code of Conduct, Discipline

Whenever discussing a situation such as behavior or discipline with an LGBTQ+ camper or their family, we will focus on the conduct of that situation, and not on any assumptions regarding the individual's gender identity.

Records

To the extent that La Foret is not legally required to use an individual's legal name and gender marker on camp documents, the name and gender by which the individual identifies will be used. In situations where it is required by law or third-party funders to report an individual's legal name or gender marker (e.g. criminal background checks, sex offenders' check, medical information), this information should be collected and effort should be taken to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information. Registration forms will be designed to accurately and sensitively document gender/sex and preferred names. When a preferred name is provided, it will be used at all times during the camp experience.

Resource Staff for LGBTQ+ Campers

While all of our staff and volunteers are trained to listen to and assist campers, if you have special requests or considerations, or questions about our policy and procedures, our Director of Transformational Programs, Rev. Logan Bennett is available to help make sure campers are comfortable and safe above all else. Our Camp Nurse, MaryEllen, is a well-informed and confidential resource as well, and is the staff person who distributes medications to campers while they are at La Foret. Please note that ALL camp staff are mandatory reporters, and are legally required to report any reasonable cause to know or suspect abuse or neglect of a camper.