



## Safer Schools Guide

College is more than choosing a major— it's choosing a place where you can live, learn, and exist without shrinking any part of who you are. This guide is designed to help you explore colleges through the lenses of safety, affirmation, and support, so you can make informed decisions about where you'll feel respected and able to thrive academically, socially, and personally. Use it as a starting point to compare schools, plan visits, ask thoughtful questions, and identify campuses that show real, consistent commitment to ensure that you feel seen, safe, and supported.

### Housing & Facilities

Where you live and spend time across campus shapes your daily sense of safety, comfort, and belonging.

#### **What to Look For:**

- Gender-inclusive or gender-neutral housing options
- The ability to choose housing that aligns with your identity
- All-gender or single-stall restrooms across campus—not just in one building
- Housing policies that clearly include gender identity and expression

#### **Questions to Ask:**

- *Are gender-inclusive housing options guaranteed or limited?*
- *When and how do I request housing accommodation?*
- *Are these options available to first-year and transfer students?*

### Policies & Campus Systems

Strong policies show if inclusion is built into the institution and not just promised.

#### **What to Look For:**

- Non-discrimination policies that clearly include gender identity and expression
- The ability to use your chosen name and pronouns in campus systems (class rosters, ID, email)
- Simple, clear processes for updating names and gender markers
- Systems in place to address bias, harassment, or discrimination

#### **Questions to Ask:**

- *Can I use my chosen name and pronouns across campus systems?*
- *What happens if I experience misgendering or discrimination?*
- *Are these policies applied consistently across all departments?*

### **Health & Wellness Support**

Health and wellness services reveal whether a campus is prepared to support your physical and mental well-being in affirming, meaningful ways.

#### **What to look for:**

- Medical and mental health services that are gender-affirming, either on campus or through referrals
- Providers trained in trans and non-binary care
- Counseling services familiar with trans and non-binary experiences

#### **Questions to ask:**

- *Does student health offer or refer for gender-affirming care?*
- *Are counselors trained in trans-affirming practices?*
- *What support exists if care is not provided directly on campus?*

#### **Consider:**

- Are these services accessible without excessive barriers or costs?
- Is support proactive, or only offered after a problem arises?

### **Community, Culture & Belonging**

Campus culture shows whether inclusion is lived day to day through community, relationships, and shared responsibility.

#### **What to look for:**

- LGBTQ+ or gender & sexuality resource centers
- Active student organizations for trans and non-binary students
- Peer mentoring, leadership opportunities, and community programming
- Visible support from faculty, staff, and campus leadership

#### **Questions to ask:**

- *Are there active student communities I can connect with?*
- *How does the campus respond when harm or bias occurs?*
- *What do current students say about their experiences here?*

#### **Ask Yourself:**

- Do I see people like me represented and supported here?
- Would I feel comfortable asking for help during a difficult moment?
- Does this campus feel affirming in practice, and not just in language?

### **Training & Accountability**

Training and accountability indicate whether inclusion is actively practiced, reinforced, and taken seriously.

#### **What to Look For:**

- Faculty and staff who receive regular training on gender inclusion and LGBTQ+ support
- Clear, easy-to-find ways to report concerns, bias, or harm
- Signs that the school listens to students and makes changes based on feedback

#### **Questions to Ask:**

- *Are professors and staff trained to support trans and non-binary students?*
- *If a student raises concern, what happens next?*

#### **Considering a Transfer?**

Transferring to a new school can affect both your campus experience and your financial aid. Before committing, take time to confirm:

- Whether inclusive housing, health care, and campus support options are available to transfer students
- How your financial aid package or institutional scholarships may change after transferring

Before accepting a transfer offer, connect with your Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis student advisor to review:

- How transferring may affect your eligibility for your current Foundation award
- Whether cost of attendance still makes sense without creating an unmanageable funding gap or increased loan borrowing

Schedule an appointment with your student advisor to discuss options and help you look beyond your offer letter to understand your true cost and make an informed, sustainable decision.

You deserve a campus where your safety, identity, and well-being are not negotiable. Trust what you observe, ask questions, and remember that support is available as you navigate these decisions.

**For additional assistance please contact us:  
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