

# New Year; New Me

By: Azure Platter

Coming back to school is hard for everyone, but it's even harder when you're trans. Being trans means different things to different people. To some, being trans is being transgender, not the gender assigned to them at birth, their AGAB, but the opposite binary gender. But to others, being trans means not being cisgender. It means being nonbinary, genderfluid, genderflux, or any other number of non-cisgender genders. Coming back to school when you're trans for some can be very hard. Whether it be not knowing how teachers and other students will react or having to reintroduce yourself to every teacher you have just so you're not dead named (being called a name you don't identify with any longer), to the fear of being laughed at for using they/them pronouns or neo-pronouns like ze/zir or ae/aer.



These feelings are not universal to all trans people. Some people are excited to come back to school as it's the only way they can be open about themselves. For some trans people, they can't be themselves at home. They're "in the closet" and hiding who they are from their parents and siblings. But these individuals can be out to their friends and their teachers instead. This makes school their social and mental safe haven. But even for those people that prefer being themselves freely at Oak Hills, it can be scary. As detailed, school can spell any number of anxieties and stressors, especially for trans folks. School's scary for some and liberating for others. But there are ways to help ease that anxiety if you are a part of the affected community.

First, take a deep breath and calm down. Remember, you don't have to come out if you're not ready. If you don't feel safe or comfortable, you don't have to do it. You can come out to certain teachers and not others. You can tell your friends but choose not to tell others. It's your choice and no one can take that away from you. There are plenty of ways to tell your teachers your name and pronouns. You could email them, I find this method is helpful when you know the teacher and are anxious about how they're going to react. If you're not a human-shaped bundle of anxiety, you could always just tell them, face to face, on the first day of school. This year all teachers have seating charts, and that makes it super easy to tell your teacher "hey, I go by this name and use these pronouns" and they can write it down on their seating chart and that's the end of it, they may ask you how to pronounce the name but that really will be all.

Here at Oak Hills, teachers are really open and friendly about name changes and using different pronouns. I have never met a teacher who refused to use someone's preferred pronouns or change their name on their roster. If you're anxious about a teacher, you don't have to tell them. You can wait until later in the year, or just don't tell them at all. It's your choice. This is always going to be your choice, you should never feel pressured to come out to someone. No one has a right to your private information.

If you're worried about a teacher using the wrong name when emailing home, just let them know. Email the teacher or ask them in person, "Hey, if you email my parent, can you use this

name?" and that's the end of it. Teachers here are really nice and accepting of LGBT students. There is nothing to fear. Take a deep breath and remember to be yourself because you deserve to live your truth.