



New Westminster Secondary School

We recognize and acknowledge the Qayqayt First Nation and all Coast Salish peoples on whose traditional and unceded territory we live, we learn, we play and we do our work.

Important Information – Please Translate

這是一份重要資訊 — 請找人為您翻譯 这是一份重要信息 — 请找人为您翻译

Mahalagang Impormasyon - Paki salin sa sariling wika

Thông tin quan trọng - Xin tìm phiên dịch

ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ-ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰੋ/ਕਰਵਾਓ

महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी - कृपया अनुवाद करें

Información importante - Por favor traducir

重要な情報-翻訳してください

중요한 정보 - 번역 부탁드립니다

معلومات مهمة - الرجاء الترجمة

Frequently Asked Questions: Multiuser Universal Washrooms

1. What is a universal washroom? Why do we need multiuser universal washrooms?

A universal washroom is a washroom facility that individuals of any gender identity and accessibility need can use. NWSS currently has 5 universal washrooms for 2100 students. ***Students have repeatedly expressed concerns about the lack of available facilities to adequately meet the diverse needs of our school population.***

Many public buildings and areas within New Westminster, such as recreation centers and Queen's Park, have already installed multiuser universal washroom facilities. With the installation of multiuser universal washrooms, ***students at NWSS will be provided with options for the bathroom spaces they feel are safe and best suited to their needs*** while allowing single-user universal washrooms to be used by those with diverse accessibility needs.

NWSS will be converting one pair of washrooms on the first floor to universal washrooms as a pilot project. These washrooms will open for use beginning in September, 2022.

2. Will there still be gender specific washrooms available at NWSS?

Yes, there will be! The plan is to convert one set of washrooms on each floor at NWSS into multiuser universal washrooms beginning with the first floor in September, 2022. There are currently two full sets of washrooms on each floor, so those who want or need to use gender specific bathrooms will still be able to access gendered washrooms on every floor. ***The most important thing is that all members of our NWSS community have equally accessible options to choose from!***

3. Will multiuser universal washrooms pose a safety concern for cisgender students? What if a student doesn't feel comfortable sharing a washroom with people of other genders?

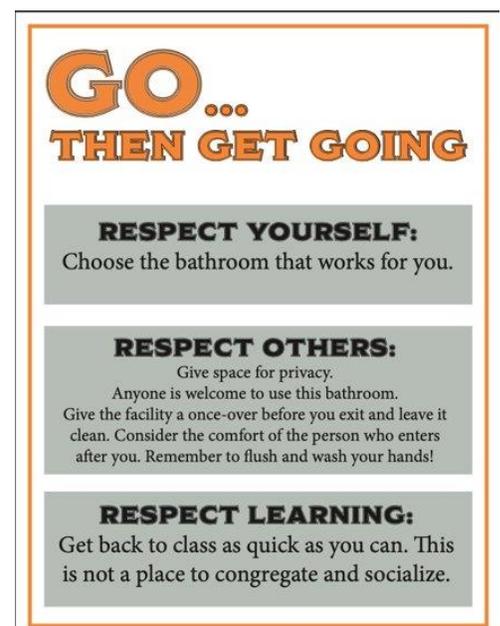
Ensuring the comfort and safety of all students in the NWSS community is always a priority. Allowing students to use the washroom facility that best aligns with their gender identity and needs does not compromise the safety of cisgender students.

- Gender specific washrooms do not deter unsafe and inappropriate washroom use, just as universal washrooms do not encourage such behaviour.
- As the multiuser universal washrooms will become a higher traffic area in comparison to the existing single user universal washrooms with a locking door, the universal washrooms have the potential to be a safer environment as any potentially inappropriate washroom behaviour can be more frequently monitored and consequently stopped.
- We are increasing supervision across all washroom spaces and we will take action when students violate the safety policies within any washroom space
- It is important to highlight that the mere presence of a transgender or gender non-conforming student in a washroom does not violate or actively pose a concern to NWSS's safety policies; their simply being in the washroom does not make another student unsafe.

Our trans and gender non-conforming students are usually the most unsafe in gender specific washrooms as they can often be the targets of verbal and sometimes physical aggression when using the gender specific washroom facility that other students feel they do not belong in.

Comfort, on the other hand, is a very different issue to tackle. Students may not feel comfortable in a space for any number of reasons, particularly in washroom spaces.

- We understand that washrooms are a very private space for students, and some students may not feel comfortable sharing a washroom with people of other genders.
- There may also be a concern about the possibility of students seeing one another's genitalia in a universal washroom facility.
- This concern, much like the concerns about the safety of cisgender students in all-gender washrooms will be mitigated by **increasing supervision** across all washroom spaces as well as **educating students** on and **reinforcing expectations** surrounding appropriate bathroom behaviour and etiquette.
- One of the key expectations includes respecting and honouring the privacy of other students using all washroom facilities.
- We are also aware of many students choosing to use the single-user universal washrooms as changeroom options due to a lack of diversity in changeroom facility options. With the installation of multiuser universal washroom spaces, students will be able to make use of these spaces and changeroom facilities if necessary.



GO... THEN GET GOING

RESPECT YOURSELF:
Choose the bathroom that works for you.

RESPECT OTHERS:
Give space for privacy.
Anyone is welcome to use this bathroom.
Give the facility a once-over before you exit and leave it clean. Consider the comfort of the person who enters after you. Remember to flush and wash your hands!

RESPECT LEARNING:
Get back to class as quick as you can. This is not a place to congregate and socialize.

- As all our washroom facilities in the building include individual stalls with locking doors, should a student need to make use of a washroom stall as a changeroom, they will be able to change in private.

NWSS will still have gender specific washroom facilities available on every floor for students to use.

The goal is to ensure that NWSS remains a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all staff and students. This involves making sure that all members of the school community, regardless of gender identity are given the opportunity and right to choose the washroom facility that best suits their needs and comfort.

4. Are universal washrooms a special privilege for the small transgender and gender non-conforming community at NWSS? Why should NWSS spend money on creating facilities for such a small population?

A 2021 Ipsos poll across 27 countries found that 4% of youth identify as transgender/non-binary/not male or female. That is at least 80 students at NWSS.

- Peeing in peace is not a privilege – it is a right. Many trans and gender non-conforming people may avoid using gender specific public washrooms out of fear or anxiety surrounding their safety and having to “choose” between using the facility that aligns with their gender identity or using the facility that their perceived gender may dictate.
- Avoiding washroom use can lead to severe health issues, such as dehydration, potential kidney stones, bladder infections or UTIs depending on how a student may manage not having access to a safe and comfortable washroom option.
- Providing a washroom option that does not ask students to choose between the binary gender identification, but rather the “ingredients” in the facility that may best suit their needs, increases washroom accessibility and safety for students of all genders.
- Universal washrooms are not just for trans and gender non-conforming students to use – multiuser universal washrooms are open and available for all members of our school community to use.
- There will still be gender specific washrooms on every floor of NWSS as an available option.



It is true and expected that for those who are used to using gender specific washrooms, initially stepping foot into a multiuser universal washroom may feel strange or uncomfortable. Social change at this scale that increases accessibility, inclusion, and safety for an underserved group will inevitably cause some discomfort. However, the installation of multiuser universal washrooms is not an initiative that is just for a small group of students. **Creating spaces that affirm identities benefits all NWSS students, both present and future.**

In a school community where respect, diversity and inclusion are the keystones of our values, creating universally accessible and affirming spaces wherein discrimination and exclusion can be reduced is a change we must all commit to investing in.

5. What is the timeline for this project?

Universal Washroom Timeline

