
Accepted by: Board of Directors

Leadership Team Lead Reviewer: Head of Personal Development

Review Cycle: 2 Years

Last reviewed: September 2021

Date for next review: September 2023

Key Terminology

The term transgender, (or more commonly 'trans'), is an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans also includes non-binary people who do not fall into the binary categories of man/woman or male/female. Non-binary people may feel they are not exclusively male or female, and may embody elements of both.

Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. A trans person can be gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian or any other sexual orientation. You cannot tell if a person is trans just by looking at them; trans people do not look a certain way or come from any one background.

As trans people become more visible in society, the number of young people feeling confident and able to seek help with their gender identity issues is increasing.

The word 'transition' describes the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Every person's transition is unique and will involve different things. There's a lot of focus on medical transitions, but not all trans people want or can access hormone therapy and surgeries. Someone's transition may involve purely social aspects, such as telling friends, family and colleagues; dressing differently; and changing names, pronouns and official documents. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to transition. With more young people exploring their gender identity, the need for knowledge, experience and guidance in schools and colleges is crucial for education staff to be able to adequately support students.

Legal Obligations

There is a legal and moral obligation to support young trans and gender-questioning students in education. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination of anyone with a protected characteristic. The protected characteristic of gender reassignment covers trans people.

To be protected from gender reassignment discrimination, you do not need to have undergone any specific treatment or surgery. This is because changing your physiological or other gender attributes can be an entirely personal process rather than a medical one. You can be at any stage or part of a stage in the transition process – from proposing to reassign your gender to undergoing a process to reassign your gender or having completed it.

This means that students who want to use a new name, wear new clothes or ask for a new pronoun to be used are protected under the law, regardless of whether they have, or want to have, any medical treatment.

Schools and colleges must also consider gender reassignment when looking at their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty asks schools to proactively promote equality by thinking about their practice and changing it.

How do we create a trans-inclusive school?

Trans people should not have to ask to be included. There are steps that we can take to ensure a trans-friendly environment that will send a message of acknowledgement, respect and acceptance to all students.

Whole School

- Do not assume you do not have any trans students. Many trans students are not out, and, because of a lack of knowledge of trans issues, students may not have the language to explain their feelings or identity.
- Staff briefings and training to ensure that every staff member feels supported if they want to ask questions and increase their knowledge.
- Acknowledgment that there will be trans people within the school community as students, parents, carers, staff and governors.
- Ensure that trans issues and transphobia are included within the school policies. The school's duties to protect staff and students from transphobic abuse is detailed in the Equality and Diversity policy and the inclusion of trans issues within the curriculum is covered in the PSHE (including RESH) Policy.
- Use of curriculum and activities such as assemblies to challenge stereotypes based on gender and gender identity.
- Celebrating LGBT History Month, Transgender Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance.
- Links to resources and charities via school social media accounts.

In class

- Do not use boy-girl seating. This increases stereotypes about gender and girls and boys, and it could cause distress for trans students and non-binary students.
- Don't split into boy-girl teams for sports or quizzes.

- Keep up-to-date seating plans and registers for cover staff with preferred pronouns* and names.

*A student may choose to use different pronouns that are associated with their gender identity. For example, him/her/they

How do I respond when first approached by a pupil and/or their family asking for help with gender identity issues?

The response will vary depending on the staff member approached.

Grey Lanyards

Keep in mind when talking with a young trans person or their family that it is important to 'listen' and not lead the conversation, to keep an open mind and to not say things that could appear to minimise or dismiss how they are feeling. All conversations should be recorded on CPOMs so that Green Lanyards are aware of the needs of the students they are supporting.

It is really important that the young person's gender identity is respected. Let the young person express how they identify or need to express their gender in a conversation or in any other way they find comfortable. Care must be taken to find out what their needs are and how they want to proceed. Every young trans person is different.

Things to say when a student discloses gender identity questions

- Make sure that the student knows that the conversation will be passed on to Green Lanyards. Gender identity is not a safeguarding concern by itself but may affect the support that a student needs.
- You may wish to thank them for trusting you and sharing the information- this will depend on the relationship you have with the student.
- It may be appropriate to congratulate them- often sharing this news can be a positive time for a student and then may be excited to tell you.
- Ask them simply 'Is there anything I can do to help?' and 'Is there anything you are worried about?'
- Have they spoken to anyone else about their feelings or gender identity?
- How do they wish to express their gender identity?
- Which name and which pronouns do they wish to be known by/called at school or college? (NB, this might differ from those used at home, if this is what the young person wants at that time.)

Green Lanyards

The first thing to do is enter into a conversation with the young person and, only with their permission, with their family, in order to work through the questions below. Please keep in mind when talking with a young trans person or their family that it is

important to 'listen' and not lead the conversation, to keep an open mind and to not say things that could appear to minimise or dismiss how they are feeling.

As for grey lanyards, it is really important that the young person's gender identity is respected. Let the young person express how they identify or need to express their gender in a conversation or in any other way they find comfortable. Care must be taken to find out what their needs are and how they want to proceed. Every young trans person is different.

The parents/carers are also likely to need support so that they can work out how best to support their child and determine what pronouns, clothes and support might be most appropriate.

Things to discuss with the young person and their family initially may include the following:

- Ask them simply 'how can we best help you'?
- Have they spoken to anyone else about their feelings or gender identity?
- How do they wish to express their gender identity?
- Which name and which pronouns do they wish to be known by/called at school? (NB, this might differ from those used at home, if this is what the young person wants at that time.)

If they are looking to find medical help with their transition, then their GP is the first port of call. The GP should refer the young person to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) so the young person or their family can have their questions answered. School staff can refer directly to GIDS (Gender Identity Development Service) but their preferred method of referral is through CAMHS so that a holistic assessment may take place.

Local LGBT+ or specific trans-focused youth groups are an excellent place to find local peer support for the young person and for families. The Smile Project runs across schools in Darlington and Natalie Douglass is the representative for Hurworth School.

If continuing conversations with the pupil and family show that the pupil is intending to transition in school or college, then putting together an action plan is a good next step. When putting together any transition plan, it cannot be overstated that it must be led by the needs of the pupil and the family, and the young person will have many good and practical ideas about what they would find helpful.

Supporting transition in school

When a student is ready to social transition at school, staff should work with the student to identify their needs. Some students may want to transition 'silently' with a name change on the register and no announcement, where others may wish for their

Head of Year or another Green Lanyard to speak to their class first. Some will use social media to announce their intention to transition. It is important that students can dictate their own timeline with regards to their transition.

Transitioning mid-term may produce certain challenges. There may be an increased chance of bullying and of increased stress on the young person's mental health. It may also be challenging in terms of continuity of records and administration when the person starts using a new name (if they choose to).

Transitioning at the beginning of a new term or year is sometimes preferred as it gives breathing space for the pupil in the holiday break. Also, if they wish to come out publicly, it allows others to ask questions and begin to understand how the young person is feeling and how they identify. It also allows adequate time for records or admin to be brought in line, so there should be no confusion when the pupil starts back with a possible new name.

Changing schools/colleges or transitioning when moving from primary to secondary or from secondary to further education can also be a popular choice, as it gives the young person more chance of a positive new start at school or college.

Handling sensitive information

It is crucial that schools and colleges provide maximum confidentiality in supporting trans students. Trans students may choose to apply for a gender recognition certificate once they reach the age of 18; it would be a criminal offence for someone who has been told that someone is trans in the course of their professional role to disclose this information without the consent of the student. In all other cases, the wishes of the pupil or student in respect of disclosure should be respected. Schools and colleges should ensure they discuss with students, and where necessary with their parents or carers, when it will be necessary to disclose trans children's legal names; for example, when registering for exams and for medical record purposes.

Correct pronouns and new names must always be used out of respect, support and safety. If incorrect pronouns or an old name are used, it can sometimes lead to outing that person as trans within a school or college, which can then lead to bullying and discrimination.

Even when discussing the pupil between staff, the student's correct and current name (the one they wish to be addressed by) must be used at all times and their gender identity issues should not come into conversation unless it is relevant. If a conversation needs to take place where the pupil's gender identity does need to be discussed, then it should be done so in a location that is private and confidential. It only takes one overheard conversation to start a chain of events that that can have a detrimental effect on a young person's transition and early life.

School Facilities

There are a number of practical issues regarding the use of school facilities (e.g. toilets) and accessing the full curriculum (e.g. PE). The first step is to ask the young person what would make them most comfortable. If what they want is realistic and possible, then this should be the course of action.

Not all young trans people will immediately want to use the facilities that correspond with their gender identity. They may wish to use another facility separate from others because of anxiety issues connected with gender dysphoria. For this reason, and because some students may identify as non-binary or neither male or female, there should be gender-neutral changing and toilet facilities available. It is not necessary to make all toilet facilities gender neutral, because some students will prefer single-sex toilets. In school, students who wish to may access the accessible toilets in the PAC and the Maths corridor. They should not be challenged by staff over the use of their preferred toilets.

PE lessons can also be a source of anxiety for trans students. This is due to issues about gender dysphoria mentioned above, and reactions from other students. In this case, the pupil can be offered alternative changing facilities. The young person should not in any case be told that they must use the changing rooms that correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth. One concern for students may be if the only changing rooms available are open and do not have cubicles. Our changing facilities do offer some cubicles for students to use. There should not be an assumption that students will be withdrawn from PE as we recognise that this is an essential part of the National Curriculum and good physical health can help to manage well-being and good mental health. Where accessing PE lessons is having a significant impact on a young person's mental health then withdrawal can be discussed with the Head of School on an individual basis.

Our uniform policy consists of a list of clothes, shoes and hair requirements which does not refer to gender. We acknowledge that a gender-neutral uniform policy allows all students to present themselves in a way that makes them comfortable and confident to access school life.

There are also a number of voluntary organisations with experience that can provide schools and colleges with training and advice. Listed below are some of the current resources available.

- **Gendered Intelligence:** Gendered Intelligence is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, established in 2008. They work predominantly with the trans community and those who impact on trans lives; they particularly specialise in supporting young trans people aged 8-25. They deliver trans youth programmes, support for parents and carers, professional development and trans awareness training for all sectors and educational workshops for schools, colleges, Universities and other educational settings.

- **Mermaids:** Mermaids is passionate about supporting children, young people, and their families to achieve a happier life in the face of great adversity. They work to raise awareness about gender issues amongst professionals and the general public. They campaign for the recognition of gender dysphoria in young people and lobby for improvements in professional services.
- **Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit:** Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit from Brighton and Hove City Council and the Allsorts Youth Project. This is one of the best and most comprehensive guidance documents available in the UK
- **The Genderbread Person:** The great Genderbread person graphic perfect for explaining the difference between gender identity, gender expression, biological sex and sexuality.
- **Wipe Out Transphobia:** [Wipe Out Transphobia](#) operates the largest gender identity based social media page on the internet to promote awareness and education on trans issues. They also provide training and policy advice on trans inclusion to public, private and other third sector organisations.