



The John Fisher School

Transgender Policy

Responsible: Governors' Resources Committee

Next Review Date: March 2023

*Nurturing young Catholic gentlemen
Aspiring for Academic, Cultural & Sporting Excellence*

Introduction

Gender is often an important part of an individual's identity and developing a positive sense of gender identity is part of growing up. However, gender identity is often complex and there is a spectrum of gender which is wider than just boy/man or girl/woman. This Policy seeks to provide a broad overview of the needs of transgender children and their families.

Principles

In developing practice to support transgender children, we will follow the following principles:

- Listen to the child, their parents, carers and siblings. Wherever possible follow their lead and preferences.
- No child should be made to feel that they are the ones who are causing problems or that they owe anything to the school in return for being treated with the equality they deserve and are legally entitled to.
- Avoid seeing the child as a problem and instead see an opportunity to enrich the school community and to challenge gender stereotypes and norms on a wider scale.
- Challenge bullying and discrimination.
- Promote positive attitudes to gender diversity by including transgender issues within activities relating to discrimination, hate crime, diversity, inclusion, RSHE.

Through our procedures we will be conforming to the following Articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child:

- Article 2 (non-discrimination) The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.
- Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- Article 8 (protection and preservation of identity) Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.
- Article 42 (knowledge of rights) Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention

Early Help Process

It is important that any support offered to a transgender child or young person starts with identifying their individual needs. It must be understood that some transgender people may not want any treatment. Some may choose to be known by a different name or to wear different clothes. However, most or all young transgender people (and their families) will need some expert/specialist support as they grow up and develop.

A transgender child would benefit from an Early Help Assessment in line with the Local Authority's procedures to identify any additional needs arising from transgender issues. The John Fisher School would (with agreement and in consultation with the student and parent/carer and the Diocese of Southwark) complete an Early Help Assessment to identify specific information that the young person would like to be shared with those working with them to avoid them having to repeat themselves. When completing the assessment, particular attention will be paid to the sections on emotional health and wellbeing, family and social relationships, behaviour and an action plan put in place to address these issues, ensuring the young person has a robust support plan. The allocated Lead Professional will always be someone who knows and gets on well with the child.

Terminology and Language

The correct terminology and language should be used and in order to do this there may need to be some education in lessons around sexual orientation and gender so that staff and students have a clear understanding that sexual orientation and gender identity are two completely different things. For the matter of fairness and inclusion it is extremely important that the correct gender, name and pronouns are used correctly to address transgender students.

Names and Pronoun Change

Respecting a child or young person's request to change name and pronoun is crucial in supporting and validating that young person's identity. Some transgender children and young people may wish to change their name to make it in line with their chosen identity. Although they may not have changed their name legally, individuals have the right to choose the name which they are known by to staff and fellow students.

More information on changing names on birth certificates can be found at:

www.deedpoll.org.uk/CanABirthCertificateBeChanged.html

School Attendance

The John Fisher School will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for any treatment or appointments with external sources in line with its absence policy. It is possible that the young person may be accessing support from outside of school, so provision must be made in order for the student to be absent from school, but confidentiality must be maintained at all times when complying with absence procedures. Sensitive care will be taken when recording the reason for absence. The young person may need time off for a medical appointment and it should be recorded as an 'M' code rather than being off sick.

School Photographs

Transgender children may feel fine with having their photograph taken at school but steps must be taken to ensure that these images do not reveal any confidential information. The John Fisher School will always seek parental/carer permission to publish photos in line with its photographs and images policy.

Transphobia and Bullying

The John Fisher School has a robust anti-bullying policy. In line with this policy, transphobia incidents will be recorded and dealt with in the same manner as other incidents that are motivated by prejudice, e.g. racist or homophobic incidents.

Physical Education

Sports and Physical Education is a key aspect of the national curriculum and the physical and mental wellbeing of young people. Physical Education develops students' competence and confidence to take part in a range of physical activities that become a central part of their lives, both in and out of school. A young transgender person has the same right to Physical Education as other young people. With regard to young transgender people at school, there should be reasonably few, if any, issues regarding participation within the sports of their true gender. The issue of physical risk within certain sports will be managed properly within the lesson context rather than preventing young transgender people from participating.

Changing Room Facilities

The use of changing room facilities will also be carefully considered. Facilities for transgender students will be sensitive to their needs and also recognise the needs and sensitivities of other students. When competing at another school or outside venue, school staff must ensure there is appropriate sensitive provision available. The John Fisher School will take a view on prior to the delivery of those lessons, in discussion with parents or carers.

Toilet Facilities

There is provision at The John Fisher for unisex toilets. Transgender students will be able to use these facilities.

School Uniform

Transgender students will be expected to follow the School Uniform Policy. There is generally a broad range of uniform available and the school leadership will listen to reasonable requests.

Residential Trips

Careful consideration and preparation will be needed where a transgender student is taking part in a residential trip. The sleeping arrangements will need to be thought about carefully before the trip takes place. Risk assessments should be carried out prior to residential trips so that reasonable adjustments can be made to allow the student to participate.

Work Experience

Where The John Fisher School is considering work experience, the school will complete a suitable assessment on the potential placement to establish if there is any risk to the young transgender person, taking account of the young transgender person's right to privacy – as a general principle, personal information on the young transgender person will not be shared. The school will be sensitive to this in its planning before any young transgender person is placed in any business or organisation. Careful

discussion about the placement with the student and parents or carers, will take place to find the most suitable way forward to ensure the placement is successful.

Vaccinations

The John Fisher School will allow any gender specific vaccinations to be carried out at the GP's surgery in order to eliminate any embarrassment.

Media Interest

Confidential information about students will not be shared with other parents/carers. The following is a suggested response for staff to offer should they be asked questions in relation to transgender issues:

"We value all our students and care for them, whatever their personal circumstances. Our main job is to give them a good education in a happy school environment. That is what we are focusing on, and we would ask everyone to respect the privacy of all our students."

School will not engage with the press over this issue without seeking the advice of the L.A. Press Officer or Media Relations Officer. Staff know their duties and responsibilities around data protection so that they fully understand why information is protected, and when, how and to whom certain information can be released.

Confidentiality

All people have a right to privacy. This includes the right to keep private one's transgender status or gender non-conforming presentation at school. Information about a child, young person or staff member's transgender status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth also constitutes confidential medical information.

School staff should not disclose information that may reveal a child or young person's transgender status or gender non-conforming presentation to other members of the school community unless legally required to do so. Staff need to be careful about discussing the transgender child beyond the confines of the school.

Transgender children and staff have the right to discuss and express their gender identity openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share information. When contacting the parent or carer of a transgender child or young person, school personnel should use the child or young person's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to their gender assigned at birth unless it has been specified otherwise.