



Heathfield Schools' Partnership

Policy for supporting transgender children in school

At Heathfield Schools' Partnership we are strongly committed to inclusion. Decisions made within school always aim to be in the best interests of the children, and are taken against the background of a strong ethos of mutual respect, acceptance and tolerance. We recognise the need to be sensitive towards all stakeholders, especially those who present with a particular vulnerability.

Definitions:

- 'Trans' or 'transgender' refers to people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth
- 'Non-binary' refers to people whose gender doesn't sit within binary definitions of 'male' and 'female'
- 'Transitioning' refers to any stage of the process a transgender person undergoes to live in line the gender with which they identify; this may involve socially transitioning (telling people, style of dress and use of pronouns) or medically transitioning (hormones or surgery)
- 'Misgendering' is when someone refers to a transgender person using terms (e.g. name or pronouns) associated with the gender they were assigned at birth, and not the gender with which they choose to identify. This can be accidental or a deliberate refusal not to recognise the transgender person's chosen identity.

Terminology relating to transgender people can be highly sensitive and subject to change. These changes may occur more frequently than a policy would typically be reviewed and all staff are asked to use their best endeavours to use terminology which is up to date and inclusive.

Safeguarding

As members of Heathfield Schools' Partnership, we are committed to working together to create an environment in which every child feels safe. Good safeguarding requires a continuing commitment from all staff, volunteers and governors to ensure the safety and welfare of all children is embedded in our processes and procedures. Being transgender is not a safeguarding issue in itself but may mean that a child is at greater risk of harm (e.g. from other children) and may be in greater need of emotional support or protection.

Confidentiality

Transgender children are not a homogenous group and will have different views on whether their transgender status is a private matter, or not. School staff will respect the child and family's views and, where requested, will share information on a need to know basis. As with safeguarding concerns, the right to confidentiality is not absolute and information will always be shared where there is a risk of harm to a child.

Parental involvement:

As long as to do so would be in the best interests of the child, we make all decisions relating to a child's gender in consultation with parents/carers. We recognise that Gillick competence

is unlikely to apply for children of primary age and that good communication between home and school is likely to be in the best interests of the child.

Where there is a disagreement between a child and their parent/carer, the case will be considered on an individual basis, in consultation with governors and with external advice (including legal advice) sought where necessary. As in all decision making, the welfare of the child is paramount.

Legal framework

Gender reassignment and sexual orientation are protected characteristics. We recognise that under the Equality Act (2010) we have a responsibility to safeguard the rights of transgender children and those at any stage of transitioning. The legal rights of transgender children are complex and require sensitivity and a sound knowledge of potential issues. School staff are committed to discussing issues with all stakeholders in a manner of openness, respect and understanding and will also seek legal advice if decision making is particularly challenging.

Curriculum implications

We work within the National Curriculum and relevant Early Years curriculum guidance and aim, as far as is possible, to reflect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our children. We also recognise the importance of promoting British Values within school, notably Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance. We continually reflect on our curriculum and its appropriateness to our children and our context.

Our PSHE curriculum is sensitive, age-appropriate and aims to meet the needs of all children, whilst not proactively seeking to promote one family unit, culture or choice over another.

Use of gendered spaces

Most toilets within our school are gendered for children in Years 1-6. We have 2 gender-neutral toilets (which are also suitably adapted for children with disabilities). Children who are transgender will be given the option of using the gender-neutral toilets for their privacy.

From Year 3 (or in exceptional circumstances before this) children are given the option of changing for PE in a single-gender space if they choose. In addition, children who are transgender will be given the option of changing for PE in an individual area (e.g. locked toilet cubicle) for their privacy. The same protocol will apply for children changing for swimming.

Uniform

Our school uniform expectations are available within the parent handbooks for each school. Parents and children are able to select from any of the items listed.

Use of chosen names and pronouns

Children are able to choose the pronoun they would like to be used to describe themselves and also choose the name by which they would like to be known in school; staff and pupils will be expected to accept the child's choice. We recognise that for some children, their

name and pronoun may change frequently and we respect this. Occasional mis-gendering will be gently corrected; repeated misgendering is not acceptable and could be considered a form of bullying.

A child's preferred name can be entered on to our MIS (Arbor) without a legal change of name. This would typically be done at the request of the child, and in consultation with the parent/carer. When generating a CTF, the child's gender must match the gender recorded on their identification documentation. When a transgender child leaves the school, their gender on Arbor must be changed back to their legal gender before generating the CTF. Information about the child's chosen gender will be shared with the new school, with the consent of the child, and in consultation with the parent/carer.

On the census, a child's legal name must be recorded in full however the child's gender can be assigned according to the wishes of the child, in consultation with the parent/carer.

In-school documents (such as school reports and registers) will be produced with the child's preferred name and pronoun.

Child on child abuse

We are committed to taking a strong stand against child on child abuse and bullying and recognise that some children within our school community, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, may be at particular risk. We ask all staff to model anti-discriminatory language and behaviour, and to spot and report the signs of abuse, in line with our usual safeguarding procedures..

Emotional support

All children in school may require additional emotional support at times and this is made available to them, either through in-class staff, or through our ELSAs, therapists and DSL/DDSLs. We recognise that a child at any stage of transitioning, including early stages ('gender questioning'), may require additional support. With the child's consent, and in consultation with the child's parents/carers (where this is in the best interests of the child), a child who identifies as transgender or gender-questioning will be offered 1:1 support from a neutral, trusted adult. The role of this adult is to listen in an unbiased manner, not to advise or express an opinion.

CPD

All staff and volunteers will be expected to attend training on how to support transitioning or transgender children as required.

Additional information

Please also refer to our Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Equality and Diversity Statement and Equal Opportunities Policy for further information and guidance.

Agreed by governors: March 2025

Due to be reviewed: March 2026