

Gender Identity Policy

Purpose of this policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to set a framework for how the GDST will support students in relation to gender identity issues. The policy and associated guidance give more detail on how the GDST's Equal Opportunities (Education) Policy applies to transgender students. The GDST's Equal Opportunities (Employment) Policy applies in relation to transgender staff.
2. This policy also supports staff and pupils in meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which includes gender reassignment as one of the nine 'protected characteristics' on the grounds of which people are protected against unlawful discrimination. The policy also sets out the Trust's obligations under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

Guiding principles

3. The GDST aims to give support and understanding to anyone who wishes to take, or has taken steps, to present themselves in a gender different to the gender assigned at birth. We recognise that the period of transition can be very complex and difficult for the individual, and would wish to act in a supportive and sensitive way.
4. The GDST values all its students and staff and aims to create an inclusive trans-friendly culture, workplace and learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation, where all transgender people are treated with dignity and respect in relation to their gender identity, irrespective of their birth sex.
5. The GDST was established to improve the education of girls at a time when single-sex education was the norm. The majority of schools today are co-educational, but the GDST is firmly committed to the benefits of a single-sex education for girls because, in our experience, students in girls' schools are less constrained in their choice of subjects, show a greater propensity to take risks and innovate, perform better in examinations, have more opportunities to show leadership, and are less likely to conform to gender stereotypes. For these reasons, GDST parents and students choose a predominately single-sex environment over other available options.

Within this context, a number of boys have been successfully integrated into GDST schools at different times, and there is also a developing awareness and understanding that gender identity may not be fixed or conventional, and that students may transition while studying at GDST schools.

6. Single-sex schools present a particular context for transgender pupils. An application for a gender recognition certificate can only be made from 18 years of age, so it is unlikely although not impossible that a pupil may be legally gender reassigned before leaving school. However

pupils may wish to begin transitioning to a different gender from that assigned at birth before this age. There are practical challenges involved in a trans pupil attending a school which deliberately tailors its ethos and educational approach to cater specifically for girls. Furthermore, a trans pupil will be more identifiable in a single sex school. These challenges will need to be addressed with sensitivity on a case by case basis. The guidance associated with this policy is intended to provide some overall guidelines.

Transgender definitions

7. In this policy 'transgender' (trans) is used to refer to the following groups:

People who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment under section 7 of the Equality Act 2010, which says: "A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex."

and

People who do not wish to undergo gender reassignment, but whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex, including those who identify as intersex, third gender, non-binary or gender fluid.

Scope of the policy

8. The policy applies to all transgender pupils in relation to admissions, to teaching and learning and pastoral provision, to scholarships and awards, to health and safety, to personal conduct, and to complaints and disciplinary procedures.
9. This policy and the accompanying guidance are available on Oracle at XXX

Meeting the needs of transgender students

10. The GDST aims to anticipate and respond positively to the needs of trans pupils, providing a professional and consistent approach so that they feel welcome, safe, valued and supported.

Support during transition

11. In particular the GDST aims to support the health and wellbeing of trans pupils in their affirmed gender. By supporting pupils through transition, they may be better able to perform well in their study and work. An individual action plan will be discussed and agreed with the pupil who announces their intention to transition.

Creating an inclusive environment

12. This means demonstrating respect for trans people, and those who are perceived to be trans, as well as their family members and friends, in terms of:
 - their gender identity;

- their right to work and study with dignity;
- their name and personal identity;
- their privacy and confidentiality.

Protection against harassment and bullying

13. The GDST aims to create an inclusive trans-friendly culture in its schools, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. All pupils, staff and parents shall be encouraged to value and respect others and to challenge inappropriate attitudes, behaviour and practices.
14. Transphobic bullying, incidents and harassment will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with in the first instance under the Anti-Bullying Policy or staff Disciplinary Policy as appropriate.

Confidentiality

15. The GDST will respect the confidentiality of all trans students and will not reveal sensitive personal information without the prior agreement of the individual except to protect their vital interests.
16. If a student notifies the GDST in writing of their intention to transition during their education, the school will agree with them the date from which their details are changed on records, as far as is possible. A trans person's file should reflect their current name and gender. Any material that needs to be kept related to the person's trans status should be stored confidentially. No records should be changed without the permission of the student concerned.
17. When a trans person receives a Gender Recognition Certificate, they have the right to request that all references to their former name and gender are removed and replaced with their current name and gender. The school will update records promptly.

Guidance, support and training for staff

18. Guidance, support and training will be provided to staff to ensure that the GDST's commitment to transgender equality is fully realised.

Review of policy

19. This policy will be subject to regular review by the Heads' and Directors' Committee.

Date: 21st October 2016