



**FOREST
SCHOOL**

Transgender Policy

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For clarity, the term ‘transgender’ within this policy refers to any person whose self-identity does not conform unambiguously to perceived conventional notions of binary gender. This includes non-binary gender identities.

OUR AIMS

Forest School prides itself on being an inclusive institution that embraces equal opportunities for all. As a diamond structure school, we are highly aware of the significance of gender. We believe that our pupils benefit from the opportunities of single-sex teaching and pastoral care within a co-educational environment.

Adolescence is a time of significant change, both physically and emotionally, for all young people. During their years at Forest School, each of our pupils develops their individual identities. We recognise that gender identity is a personal issue which can have a significant impact on school experience. Developing a positive sense of gender identity is a key part of the growing up process. That said, it is now accepted that gender identity can be complex and there is a spectrum of gender which is wider than just male and female. We aim to support transgender and transgender-questioning pupils during their possible transition period to allow them to achieve their full potential while at Forest School.

At Forest School we are committed to ensuring equal attitudes and behaviours in our school community, regardless of gender or transgender status. We believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Transgender staff are entitled to be treated with respect and permitted to perform their roles free from harassment and unfair discrimination. Forest School views harassment or discrimination against any pupil or member of staff on any grounds as a serious disciplinary offence.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance to the whole school community about gender identity. It details current ideas of good practice in the field of transgender consideration for pupils.

This policy is not intended to document a response to all possible scenarios. We will respond to the needs of each pupil and staff member as an individual.

Following the guidance in this policy will support Forest School staff who are dealing with transgender matters sensitively. It will also assist the school to provide an inclusive environment for any transgender pupil.

This policy has been written in light of the legislation as outlined in Appendix 1.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Pupils

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Admissions Policy

Data Protection Policy

Staff

Staff Handbook

Data Protection Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Pupils

OUR APPROACH TO TRANSGENDER INCLUSION AND SUPPORT

Our fundamental duty is to look after each pupil's wellbeing: our pupils' needs come first and this will always guide our response. For transgender pupils, those who are coming out as transgender or those beginning to question their gender, issues of gender identity will be acknowledged and handled in a respectful way.

Support will be available from the Forest pastoral team. The pupil's Tutor, Head of House, Head of Section, the Deputy Head Pastoral, the school's Matrons and counselling team will work together with the pupil and their parents.

The school will take a neutral stance, neither encouraging nor discouraging a decision by a pupil. If appropriate, we will work with the pupil and their family to draw up a Gender Identity Transition Plan, to ensure a transparent process.

GENDER IDENTITY TRANSITION PLAN - The GITP

This plan is the format that will be used to guide the Forest pastoral team. The GITP will be drawn up with the pupil and their family, reinforcing the notion that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to gender transitioning.

The plan is personalised according to the individual needs of the pupil and acts as a tool to pre-empt problems and indicate how best to deal with them. It is by no means exhaustive or prescriptive, but it is designed to give all involved a clearer understanding of the stage a young person is at. It is also an opportunity to agree timescales with appropriate reflection. The stages of the plan could include, for example, introducing preferred names and pronouns, informing peers, informing teachers, changing uniform and changing name on the school database.

Date	Current stage	Next stage	Support required	Outcome

TERMINOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

Terminology and language around gender diversity can be confusing. Individuals may well prefer different terms to identify themselves and the nature of being transgender.

We will ask the pupil concerned about their language preferences and respect these. We accept that this will be a change to get used to, for both staff and pupils, and with the best intentions may take time. As a school community, we will endeavour to adopt the preferred terminology, names and pronouns of each of our pupils.

CHANGING FACILITIES AND TOILETS

There is provision at Forest School for unisex toilets in the Sixth Form Centre.

Elsewhere on the school site, there are accessible facilities which can be used by pupils of any gender.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Sport is a crucial element of Forest School's co-curricular provision and is a key aspect of the physical and mental wellbeing of all our pupils.

PE lessons and sporting activities for transgender pupils should not present a problem within a carefully and sensitively managed lesson context. The issue of physical risk within certain sports, such as high contact sports, will be managed within that lesson as with all risk assessments.

The issue of competitive sports is a little more complex as there may be a physical advantage gained by transgender participants in some sporting contexts. Forest School will take a common-sense approach, dealing with specific circumstances on a case-by-case basis and will seek up to date advice from relevant sporting bodies at the time. For example, it is likely that in football, no physical advantage would be gained in participation at the age of 11-12, but by the age of 15-16 there may be significant difference which may need to be

considered. Additionally, those pupils who are taking hormone blockers that could affect sporting performance may not be eligible for competition at certain levels.

Enabling participation in PE and sporting activities at Forest will be discussed with the pupil, their parents, the Director of Sport, the PE department staff and the pastoral team as part of the GITP.

HOUSES

As a diamond-structure school, Forest has fourteen single-sex Houses, seven boys' Houses and seven girls' Houses.

We would encourage transgender pupils to remain in their original House during their time at Forest. So much camaraderie, friendship and support exist within our House system and we believe that this would continue during a pupil's gender transition period. This would also enable a continuity of pastoral care with their Head of House and allow stability for the pupil in terms of peer support from their tutor group.

That said, this recommendation is flexible and after consultation as part of the GITP, transgender pupils could request a managed move to their sibling House, if appropriate.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

At Forest, we currently have a girls' uniform and a boys' uniform for pupils up to Year 11. For pupils undergoing gender reassignment or who identify as transgender, we will work closely with the pupil and their family to agree upon uniform preferences.

For those in the Sixth Form, there is a greater degree of flexibility. Pupils are required to dress smartly and formally for work but there is no limitation on skirts or trousers, for girls and boys, for example. This should allow some liberty within existing arrangements.

NAME CHANGING FOR INTERNAL USE

Many of our pupils have preferred names which are recognised on the school system. A request for a change of name and associated gender identity should be respected and accommodated by the school. The preferred name, and indeed preferred pronouns, could appear on letters home and report cycles, for example.

EXAM CERTIFICATION

Our pupils have a Unique Candidate Identifier (UCI) which is linked to an exam result once it is accredited. UCIs are issued in the names that we, as a school, send to the Exam Boards, based on our school system. We recommend that exam certificates are issued with a pupil's legal name at the time, based on their birth certificate, a deed of name change or Gender Recognition Certificate for those over 18 years old. (see Appendix 2).

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

The Forest School curriculum is enriched by a wide range of education visits, some of which may lead to overnight stays both in the UK and abroad. As part of our risk assessment process, consideration is given well in advance to the additional needs of any of our pupils, and this will include transgender pupils. To this end, visit organisers will work with our Educational Visits Coordinator (Deputy Warden) and the relevant pastoral and safeguarding team.

For overnight stays, sleeping arrangements are always planned in advance by visit organisers. It is possible, for example, that a transgender pupil would prefer an individual room. These requests may be accommodated, in so far as is reasonable and possible.

Visit organisers will also need to consider that, just as anyone can be searched, transgender pupils may be searched at border crossings, for example. Contacting the relevant border control or agency in advance should ensure that the risk assessment is accurate for that visit.

There are countries that are not as legally or culturally open as the UK. In fact, some countries have laws that make it illegal to be transgender. Trip organisers will investigate the laws regarding transgender communities in countries where educational visits are proposed and seek advice from the safeguarding team. ILGA - the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association - provide information on their website about countries that pose a risk to transgender individuals.

TRANSPHOBIA, BULLYING AND RAISING AWARENESS

Forest School has robust Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying Policies. In line with these policies, any issues of transphobic discrimination and bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as other incidents that are motivated by prejudice, such as racist or homophobic occurrences.

To reduce the potential for transphobic discrimination and bullying, Forest School aims to challenge gender and societal stereotypes and to educate our pupils on gender diversity both in our classrooms and beyond.

Staff

Supporting Employees

A member of staff going through the process of gender reassignment can seek support from their line manager, Deputy Warden, Bursar, Head of the Preparatory School or the Warden. It is a matter of personal choice as to who should be contacted, an action plan to cover the period of their transition will then be drafted. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times for staff who may be undergoing transition or have undergone gender reassignment in the past.

All members of staff should aim to refer to the transitioning person by their new name and use pronouns appropriate to their new gender role.

If a member of staff is in possession of a gender recognition certificate it is unlawful to disclose their transgender status without their consent.

Transition Action Plan for staff

The staff member and line manager, Deputy Warden, Bursar, Head of Preparatory School, or the Warden will write an action plan together for managing the transition to another gender from the one assigned at birth, whilst they are at Forest school. This will include agreeing dates of transition and communication plans, the school being guided at all times by the individual's preferences. Under no circumstances should any communication or actions be taken without the explicit consent of the individual. These action plans, together with any other notes of the meeting, must be kept strictly confidential in the individual's personnel file or pupil file, as appropriate. After a person has successfully transitioned into their new gender role, or obtained a gender recognition certificate, these records will be destroyed.

Use of single sex facilities

An action plan and a discussion with the individual will agree the point at which the use of facilities such as toilets should change from one sex to the other. A transgender employee should not be instructed to use disabled toilet facilities, nor facilities of their former gender.

Sickness and Absence

In writing the transition action plan, the time the employee will need in order to undergo gender reassignment treatment should be discussed. When the individual is absent for treatment or surgery, normal sick pay arrangements or absence arrangements should apply as per the Holiday, Sickness, and Personal Absence Policy. The above policy for medical appointments should also apply - flexibility should be offered. A sick note will be required, but the sick note does not need to state the procedures involved.

For the individual, questioning one's gender and/or commencing a social transition can elicit similar personal responses to those associated with any other life-altering condition, which will naturally lead to some individuals experiencing stress. However once the issues are identified and gender reassignment commences, such problems are usually resolved.

DBS

The DBS has developed a separate application procedure, which allows transgender applicants to exclude previous names from the Disclosure Application form. However, applicants will still be required to send details of their previous identity in a separate letter directly to the 'Sensitive Casework Team'.

Pre-employment

Individuals who have already transitioned socially have no obligation to inform Forest School of their change. Job applicants and interviewees will be accepted and treated as the gender stated on their application for employment and will not be subject to questioning regarding past, current or future gender transition.

APPENDIX 1 - LEGISLATION

Legislation that informs the participation of transgender pupils in schools and colleges include the Human Rights Act 1998, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The following Articles from The Human Rights Act 1998 support the rights and needs of transgender people to live their lives in their true gender.

- Article 8: right to respect for private life and family life
- Article 10: freedom of expression
- Article 14: the prohibition of discrimination

The Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 is mainly concerned with the process by which a person can get a Gender Recognition Certificate, and correct their original birth certificate to match their true gender. This can only occur after a person reaches 18 years of age but is something that many younger people may aspire to.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 ensures legal protection against discrimination (direct or indirect) for everyone under the nine protected characteristics defined in the Act, one of which is Gender Reassignment (also known as Transgender). Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010 makes it clear that the Act specifically refers to Schools and young people.

The Equality Act 2010 (2:1:7) states that;

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.

APPENDIX 2 - GENDER RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE

Under current UK law, you must be at least 18 years old to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate. If you have not yet turned 18 then the application will be automatically rejected. You can start collecting evidence and have the forms filled in ready, but you must not sign the statutory declaration or application form until on or after your 18th birthday.

Most of things that you do on a day-to-day basis are not affected by whether you have the Gender Recognition Certificate or not.

Without the certificate:

- You can still change your name, title and gender on almost all records held by organisations
- You can still use the toilets, changing rooms and other single-sex facilities of your choice
- You can still get a driving licence and passport with your choice of male or female gender marker
- You are still entitled to respect for your gender identity from employers and other organisations
- You are still protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation by equality legislation
- Information about you is still confidential and protected by the Data Protection Act

APPENDIX 3 - GLOSSARY OF KEY GENDER IDENTITY TERMS

AFAB - assigned female at birth

Agender - not relating to a particular gender

AMAB - assigned male at birth

Binary - refers to the gender spectrum: binary refers to the two fixed ends of the spectrum, male and female.

Binding - a FTM adolescent that is developing breasts may strap down their chest so that it is less obvious.

Cisgender - someone who identifies completely with their assigned gender at birth which also corresponds to their sex.

FTM - female to male: a person that was identified as female at birth but came to feel that their true gender is actually male.

Gender - the way that a person feels about themselves in relation to their physical and mental self; the basis of them identifying as male or female or somewhere in between on the gender spectrum.

Gender Dysphoria - the medical condition that describes the symptoms of being transgender. It can be present from a very early age and can only be diagnosed by a medical expert. A transgender person may live their life without being, or needing, to be diagnosed as having Gender Dysphoria.

Gender Fluid - someone who identifies as gender fluid will identify with a different gender on a varying basis.

Gender Identity - the gender that a person truly feels they are inside.

Gender Identity Clinics - there are currently eight NHS GICs in the UK. Many young transgender people and their families will look to expert support.

Gender Identity Disorder - GID is a medical term describing being transgender, this tends not to be used, owing to the subtext around the word 'disorder'.

Genderqueer - a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.

Gender Recognition Certificate - an official document awarded by the Gender Recognition Panel that enables all official documents and records, including birth certificates, to be amended to the true gender of the individual, thereby providing full legal recognition.

Gender Spectrum - the continuum between the two binary points of male and female. This is vast, and many people identify at different points on the gender spectrum.

Hormone Suppressors - also known as puberty blockers, drugs that are taken to delay the process of puberty.

MTF - male to female, a person that was identified as male at birth but came to feel that their true gender is actually female.

Non-binary - refers to the gender spectrum: non-binary can be used to describe someone who identifies not solely with either male or female, but somewhere in between.

Packing - a FTM person may wear a prosthetic item in their pants that can give a bulge in their trousers to appear more male.

Preferred Pronouns - the pronouns someone wishes others to use for them as aligned to their gender identity, most often she/her, he/him, they/them (in its singular form).

Sex - the physical and biological characteristics that define men and women.

Transgender - a person that feels the assigned gender and sex at birth conflicts with their gender identity, often shortened to 'trans'. Trans Female - someone who was assigned male at birth but identifies as female.

Trans Feminine - someone who was assigned male at birth but who identifies more with the feminine end of the gender spectrum.

Trans Male - someone who was assigned female at birth but who identifies as male.

Trans Masculine - someone who was assigned female at birth by who identifies more with the masculine end of the gender spectrum.

Transition - the process of changing gender; this may include social, physical, medical and/or surgical changes.

Tucking - a MTF person may tuck, and sometimes tape, their genitals between their legs so that they do not show at the front.

APPENDIX 4 - SOURCES OF USEFUL INFORMATION

Mermaids - supports children and young people who are gender diverse, and their families, and professionals involved in their care - <http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

NHS Gender Identity Development Service - <http://gids.nhs.uk/>

Gendered Intelligence - works with the trans community and those who impact on trans lives, they particularly specialise in supporting young trans people under the age of 21. Their mission is to increase understandings of gender diversity - <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

ILGA - the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association - a useful resource for those who are planning overseas educational visits - <https://ilga.org/>