

# Aspire Academy Trust



## Gender Identity Policy

Date: November 2018  
Date of Board Approval: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018  
Review Date: December 2021

# **ASPIRE GENDER IDENTITY POLICY**

## **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.

Practice to support transgender children is embedded across school policies and curriculum and build on best practice already in place to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

This policy seeks to provide a broad overview of the needs of transgender children and their families.

## **Principles:**

In developing practice to support transgender pupils, we aim to follow these 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 their 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.
- Avoid where possible gender segregated activities and where this cannot be avoided, allow the child to access the activity that corresponds to their gender identity.
- Challenge bullying and discrimination.
- Promote positive attitudes to gender diversity by including trans issues within activities relating to discrimination, hate crime, diversity, inclusion, SRE and PSHE.

## **Legislation:**

- Legislation that informs the participation of trans pupils in schools include the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Trans Gender Bill of Human Rights 2016

## **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 Cornwall's Children's Safeguarding Board procedures to identify any additional needs arising from transgender issues. Our academies would (with agreement and in consultation with the pupil and parent/carer) complete an Early Help Assessment to identify specific information that the pupil would like to be shared to avoid them having to repeat themselves. When completing the assessment attention should 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 and ensure the young person has a robust support plan. The allocated Lead Professional should always be someone who knows and gets on well with the child.

Further guidance on the Early Help Process:

[www.cornwall.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/earlyhelp)

Advice and guidance may also be sought through the INTERCOM TRUST. A referral requesting support may also be made using this link:

<https://www.intercomtrust.org.uk/help/referral>

### **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 pupils 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 pupils.

### **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 by which they are known to by staff and fellow pupils.

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

[www.deedpoll.org.uk/CanABirthCertificateBeChanged.html](http://www.deedpoll.org.uk/CanABirthCertificateBeChanged.html)

### **School Attendance**

Our academies will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for any treatment or

appointments with external sources in line with their 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 Photos**

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. Our academies will always seek parental/carers permission to publish photos in line with the school policy.

### **Transphobia and Bullying**

Our academies have 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 well-being of young people. Physical Education develops pupil's 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.

There may be sports where, as puberty develops, male to female (M2F) Transgender participants may have a physical advantage over other girls but this should not present a problem within a carefully and sensitively managed lesson context. The issue of physical risk within certain sports should also be managed properly within the lesson context rather than preventing young Transgender people from participating (which would be discriminatory).

If a pupil is binding their chest, they should be monitored carefully during particularly physical activities and in hot weather. There is a chance that the binding could cause discomfort or even impair breathing. Short breaks from activity could be offered discretely.

It may be that due to the nature of contact and physicality of sports such as rugby, the school would consider whether a Transgender person participating in full contact lessons is appropriate towards the latter stages of puberty.

Additional advice will be sought from nationally affiliated sporting bodies.

### **Changing Room Facilities**

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

### **Swimming lessons**

We will encourage pupils to partake in swimming lessons. If the transgender pupil wishes to partake in swimming lessons then a risk assessment of the changing facilities should be completed. There must be careful consideration, in consultation with the pupil and in line with the health and safety policy of the leisure centre or swimming pools health and safety procedures. For example, it may be against health and safety regulations to wear a t-shirt in the swimming pool and therefore would be more appropriate for a F2M pupil to wear an all in one wetsuit or similar. Should the need arise, our academy will seek to provide alternative provisions for swimming.

### **Toilet Facilities**

There is provision in our academies unisex toilets. Transgender pupils will be able to use these facilities which have been labelled sensitively and appropriately.

### **School Uniform**

Transgender students will be expected to follow the School Uniform Policy, which covers uniform, make-up and jewellery and hairstyles.

There is a generally broad range of uniform available for both genders (i.e. girls and boys can wear trousers and all students must wear a jumper/sweatshirt/cardigan, polo shirt etc.).

### **Residential Trips**

Careful consideration and preparation is needed where a transgender pupil is taking part in a residential trip – to exclude a transgender pupil would be contravening the Equality Act.

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 pupil to participate.

### **Work Experience**

Where our academies consider a work experience placement, it 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 must not be shared.

Our academies will be sensitive to this in their planning before any young Transgender person is placed in any business or organisation. Careful discussion about the placement with the pupil and parents or guardians, will occur to find the most suitable way forward to ensure the placement is successful.

### **Vaccinations**

Our academies 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 pupils will not be shared with other parents. The following suggested suitable response for staff to offer should they be asked questions in relation to transgender issues:

*"We value all our pupils 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 pupils."*

Aspire Academies will not engage with the press over this issue without seeking the advice of the Trust Communications Team

Aspire Staff must 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.

For further information around data protection please refer to Aspire's Data Protection Policy.

### **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 others, including parents/carers and other members of the school community unless there is a lawful reason to do so. Aspire 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 the child, young person, parent, or carer has specified otherwise.



**Key Aspire Contacts:**

Sally Olford – Director of Safeguarding & Transgender lead

Susan Costello – Director of Inclusion

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Resources and further support**

- Tavistock and Portman Clinic- Gender Identity Development Service  
[www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/childrenyoungpeoplegenderidentityissues](http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/childrenyoungpeoplegenderidentityissues)
- Mermaids- Family and Individual Support for Teenagers and Children with Gender Identity Issues [www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk)
- Intercom Trust is a lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans+ charity working across Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and the wider South West. [www.intercomtrust.org.uk](http://www.intercomtrust.org.uk) Tel: 08006123010
- Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) [www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)
- Press for Change- The UK's Leading Expert in Transgender Law [www.pfc.org.uk](http://www.pfc.org.uk)
- NHS- Live Well. Support for Young People  
[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Transhealth/Pages/Transyoungpeople.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Transhealth/Pages/Transyoungpeople.aspx)
- [www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/13620644/schools-transgender\\_guidance\\_booklet-2015.pdf](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/13620644/schools-transgender_guidance_booklet-2015.pdf)
- Equality Advisory Service [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

## **Appendix 2:**

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Binding** – a F2M adolescent that is developing breasts may strap down their chest so that it is less obvious. This can be hot, uncomfortable and restrictive but very important to their psychological and emotional wellbeing. It might make certain PE lessons difficult for them to participate in and could sometimes lead to breathing difficulties, skeletal problems and fainting.

**F2M** – 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 their identifying as male, or female, or neither, or either, or both.

**Gender Dysphoria** – the medical condition that describes the symptoms of being Transgender.

**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'.

**Gender Recognition Certificate** – an official document presented by a Gender Recognition Panel that enables all official documents and records (including birth certificate) to be amended to the true gender of the individual thereby providing full legal recognition.





**Gender Role** – the social role/interaction with others, which gives expression to the inner gender identity and reinforces it.

**M2F** – Male to Female, a person that was identified as Male at birth but came to feel that their true gender is actually Female.

**Packing** – a F2M person may wear a prosthetic item in their pants that will give a „bulge“ in their trousers so as to appear more male.

**Sex** – the way a person’s body appears, sometimes wrongly, to indicate their gender.

**Transgender** – a person that feels the assigned gender and sex at birth conflicts with their true gender.

**Transsexual** – a Transgender person who lives fulltime in their true gender.

**True Gender** – the gender that a person truly feels they are inside