



# Transgender Policy

## **Aims of the Policy**

Downham Market Academy's (the school) aspiration is for all students to reach their full potential as human beings. The school aims to be an inclusive environment, in which students of all abilities, backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, sexual and gender identities feel equally welcome and valued. This policy sets out the ways in which the school seeks to meet these aspirations for trans, non-binary and gender-questioning students and how we will support these students and their parents/carers at all points. This may include times where students are not ready to share their feelings with families or where families are not supportive of their child's wishes.

## **Background**

For a trans person, their gender identity and the sex and gender that they were assigned at birth do not match. Some trans people will undertake social transition so that their gender expression matches their gender identity, for example by being known by a different name or wearing different clothes and some will also undertake medical transition.

A number of laws, including the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 1998, protects the rights of trans people. Under the law, a school must not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against a student because of their trans status. Information about a person's trans status is considered 'sensitive personal data' and is subject to tighter controls than other personal data.

### **School Attendance**

The school will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests from trans students for medical appointments and for support from outside agencies, in line with its absence policy. Sensitive care will be taken when recording the reason for absence.

### **Transphobic Bullying**

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

### **Training**

In order to ensure all staff are able to deal sensitively with trans matters and work confidently with trans, non-binary and gender questioning students, the school will hold training sessions on topics such as:

- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Gender identity
- Tackling transphobia
- Relevant legislation

All topics will be covered during the school CPD programme and will be revisited annually.

### **The Curriculum**

Gender identity will be included in the PSHE programme. It will also be discussed during other subjects when relevant, so that students understand that everyone has a gender identity and that gender stereotyping is damaging and limiting for all.

### **Physical Education**

Sports and physical education is a key aspect of the national curriculum and the physical and mental well-being of young people, and a trans or non-binary young person has the same right to physical education as other young people.

Trans and non-binary students will be supported to access PE and the issue of physical risk within certain sports will be assessed in advance and managed within the lesson context. Decisions will be made in consultation with the relevant student(s) and with parents/carers, having checked with the student(s) that they are happy for parents/carers to be involved.

Where lessons are segregated by gender, students will be enabled to participate in the activity that corresponds to their gender identity if this is what they request and where it is safe to do so. PE teachers will take into account the range of size, build and ability of individuals in the class and differentiate accordingly to keep all students safe.

In the case of competitive sports, school may need to seek advice from the relevant sporting body.

In relation to activities such as swimming, trans or non-binary students may want to wear swimwear that differs from their peers. We will assess this on a case-by-case basis as it will be different for every trans person. Teaching staff will be informed prior to the lessons that a student will be wearing different swimwear for personal or religious reasons.

### **Changing Facilities**

The use of changing facilities by trans and non-binary students should be agreed on a case-by-case basis, in discussion with the student. In all cases, trans students should have access to the changing facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Any student who needs increased privacy, irrespective of the reason, will be offered a reasonable alternative changing option such as a private area or a different time to get changed. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that maintains the confidentiality of a student's trans status.

When competing at another school or outside venue, school staff will ensure that appropriate sensitive provision is available.

If any other students object to sharing changing rooms with trans or non-binary students, they, rather than the trans or non-binary students, will be offered an alternative changing space or time.

### **Toilets**

Students have access to toilets that correspond to their gender identity; trans girls because they are girls, can use the girls' toilets and trans boys the boys' toilets. Single gender toilets can cause issues for students who do not identify with a gender binary such as boy / girl so gender-neutral toilets are also provided for any student not wishing to use the single gender toilets.

### **Work Experience**

The Equality Act 2010 encompasses every environment in which students will be working, and all placements should be aware of their duties and responsibilities.

Where the school is considering allowing a trans or non-binary young person to attend a work experience placement, the school will complete a suitable assessment on the potential placement to establish if there is any risk to the young person, taking account of their right to privacy. As a general principle, personal information on the young person must not be shared. The school will be sensitive to this in its planning before any trans or non-binary student is placed in any business or organisation. Careful discussion about the placement with the student and parents/carers, if appropriate, will occur to find the most suitable way forward to ensure the placement is successful.

### **School Uniform**

Trans, non-binary and gender questioning students will be expected to follow the Uniform Policy, which covers uniform, make-up and jewellery in a non-gendered way. A generally broad range of uniform will be made available for all genders.

### **Name Changing and Exam Certification**

There is clear evidence that the use of a preferred name and pronoun for students questioning their own gender identity significantly reduces negative mental health conditions such as depression or suicidal ideation and vastly improves personal wellbeing.

If a trans or non-binary student wishes to have their preferred name recognised on school systems, this will be supported and will feed in to the register, school email accounts, letters home (if appropriate), report cycles, bus pass information etc. Furthermore, the change of name, pronouns and associated gender identity will be respected and accommodated by the school. To ensure students are supported to make informed decisions around using a preferred name and pronouns, with the student's prior agreement, school will involve parents/carers in an open and honest dialogue throughout the process.

Where a student does not wish their parents/carers to know of their desire to use a preferred name in school, each case will be taken individually and the school will consider the student's own competence to make an informed decision using the Gillick methodology as well as any known concerns regarding safeguarding. It is our preference to engage positively with families so that there is support in the home for the young person.

Where parents/carers are opposed to their child using a preferred name and pronoun, the school will, again, look at each case individually and the school will consider the student's own competence to make an informed decision using the Gillick methodology as well as any known concerns regarding safeguarding. It is our preference to engage positively with families so that there is support in the home for the young person.

Technically, students can be entered under any name with an Examination Board. However, it is a complex matter and results can only be linked with legal names, not preferred names. It is possible for examination certificates to be issued in the preferred name, but any student finding themselves in this position should discuss this issue with the school's Exams Officer and parents/carers if appropriate, prior to starting GCSE courses, to ensure the best way forward.

### **Vaccinations**

Decisions about the administration of vaccinations will be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the student. The school will allow any gender specific vaccinations to be carried out at the GP's surgery in order to eliminate any anxiety, and this will be the responsibility of the parent/carer to organise.

### **School Visits**

Learning about different cultures and lives and taking part in activities may lead to overnight stays, both at home and abroad. Residential trips will be discussed in advance with trans and non-binary students, and their parents/carers if appropriate, to ensure the necessary preparation is made so that trans students can participate as fully and confidently as possible in residential trips.

Risk assessments will be carried out prior to residential trips in order to make reasonable adjustments to enable the participation of trans students.

As far as possible, trans students should be able to sleep in dorms appropriate to their gender identity. Some trans students may not feel comfortable doing this and in such cases alternative sleeping and living arrangements will be made.

When planning overseas trips, school will consider and investigate the laws regarding trans communities in countries considered for school visits.