

Gender Questioning Policy

Expanse Learning Wigan School

September 2024

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Version:

7

This Policy was approved by:

Board of Directors on a6th September 2024

Date for Review:

September 2026

1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff at Expanse Learning Wigan School (Hereafter referred to as the school).

2. 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 gender students is embedded across the 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 gender questioning students and their families. The policy will be reviewed in line with DfE guidance.

3. Principles

In developing practice to support gender questioning students, The School should try to follow these principles:

- Listen to the student, their parents, carers and siblings. Wherever possible follow their lead and preferences.
- No student should be made to feel that they are the ones who are causing problems or that they owe anything to the school in return for being treated with the equality they deserve and are legally entitled to.
- Avoid seeing the student 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 student to access the activity that corresponds to their gender identity.
- Challenge bullying and discrimination.
- Promote positive attitudes to gender diversity by including trans gender issues within activities relating to discrimination, hate crime, diversity, inclusion, SRE and PSHE.

4. Early Help Process

It is important that any support offered to a gender questioning young person starts with identifying their individual needs. It must be understood that some trans 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 trans people (and their families) will need some expert/specialist support as they grow up and develop. A trans student could benefit from an Early Help Assessment in line with Wigan Children's Safeguarding Board procedures to identify any additional needs arising from gender questioning issues. When completing the assessment particular 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 student.

5. Terminology and language

The correct terminology and language should be used and to do this there may need to be some education in lessons around sexual orientation and gender so that staff and students 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 gender questioning students.

6. Names and pronoun change

Respecting a young person's request to change name and pronoun is crucial in supporting and validating that young person's identity. Some gender questioning 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 students.

7. The School Attendance

The school 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 the school, so provision must be made in order for the student to be absent from the 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 approved absence (Medical) rather than being off sick.

8. School Photos

Trans children may feel fine with having their photograph taken at the school, but steps must be taken to ensure that these images do not reveal any confidential information. The school will always seek parental/carer permission to publish photos in line with the school policy.

9. Transphobia and Bullying

The school have robust anti-bullying policies. In line with these policies, 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.

10. 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 student'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 the school. A young gender questioning person has the same right to Physical Education as other young people. With regard to young gender questioning people at the 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) gender questioning participants may have a physical advantage over other females 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 gender questioning people from participating (which would be discriminatory).

If a student 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 gender questioning person participating in full contact lessons is appropriate towards the latter stages of puberty.

11. Changing Room Facilities

The use of changing room facilities will also be carefully considered. Facilities for gender questioning students must be sensitive to their needs and recognise the needs and sensitivities of other students.

12. Toilet Facilities

There are a range of accessible toilets in school to allow choice.

13. Media Interest

Confidential information about students will not be shared with other parents. The following suggested suitable response for staff to offer should they be asked questions in relation to trans issues:

"We value all our students and care for them, whatever their personal circumstances. Our main job is to give them a good education in a happy environment. That is what we are focusing on, and we would ask everyone to respect the privacy of all our students."

Staff must know their duties and responsibilities around data protection and the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations or the retrospective regulations once the UK leave the European Union so that they fully understand why information is protected, and when, how and to whom certain information can be released.

14. Monitoring arrangements

- The Shared Services Team is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- The Board of Directors will check that the school complies with this policy.
- This document will be reviewed **every 24 months thereafter**.

- At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board for review and challenge purposes.

Impact of non-compliance:

Staff:	Disciplinary action, prosecution
Student:	Not applicable
Legislation/organisational:	Reputational damage, litigation, statutory and non-regulated compliance. prosecution
Compliance lead:	Shared Services
Policy Reference:	ELWS-HSEM-POL-0004
Version:	7
Agreed policy location:	DatabridgeMIS and Company Website
Review Schedule:	24 Months
Does the policy require Governor approval?	No

Version Control

Version	Date	Revision	Review Date
1	04/01/2019	First Issue	03/01/2020
2	01/09/2019	Policy review and transferred onto 2019/20 policy template	31/08/2020
3	01/09/2020	Policy review	31/08/2021
4	01/09/2021	Reviewed	31/08/2022
5	01/10/2022	Policy Reviewed	24/08/2023
6	25/08/2023	Policy Reviewed	25/08/2025
7	16/09/2024	Policy reviewed to reflect changes in terminology.	16/09/2026