

## **FOREST HILL SCHOOL POLICY- CHECKLIST FOR SUPPORTING A TRANS YOUNG PERSON (APPENDIX A)**

Forest Hill School is committed to being inclusive of any gender presentation and/or identity. The school will work with pupils who are at any stage of transition, experience gender dysphoria and/or are questioning their identity. The school's priority is for a child to be happy with their experience and to feel supported and listened to in their own decisions. Forest Hill School will follow the steps outlined below, in order to support any child:

### **1. Changing name and pronoun**

- A. A formal name change is not required for the school to refer to the young person by their chosen name and pronoun, but is required for qualifications. Young people under the age of 16 may change their name via a deed poll or through a statutory declaration of name change with parental consent. For changing gender markers on registers and database systems such as SIMS, Forest Hill School would liaise with the local authority for Lewisham. The school may want to make use of the "preferred to be known as" option in registers.
- B. Respect the child's name and pronouns. Forest Hill School will ensure that staff understand that if someone has made it clear how they would like to be addressed, it is important to respect someone's name and pronouns. Using a trans person's new name and pronoun is one of the most positive and validating things you can do, and should be used whether the trans young person is in the room or not.
- C. Work with the trans young person on how to best communicate the name and pronoun change to other students and staff. This may involve using the trans young person's name and pronoun of choice when sending letters home.
- D. Define harassment. It may be helpful to include in definitions of harassment intentionally not using a person's name or pronoun that they have explicitly asked for.

### **2. Single Sex Facilities**

- A. Trans people should be allowed to use the toilet of their self-identified gender. Trans people are covered by the Equality Act 2010, and the same applies to changing rooms and residential visits. Non-binary young people may prefer to use gender neutral facilities. Under the same legislation, single sex schools must also support trans young people. Forest Hill School has a designated gender neutral toilet and is open to expanding and improving our current toilet provision.
- B. All changes are made in consultation with the trans young person. As part of the trans young person's social transition, a plan may be made to negotiate when the student will transfer from one single sex space to the other (if that is what they want). They may prefer to be allocated a separate toilet.
- C. Provide options for the trans young person. Some schools have found that gender neutral toilets for all students is an option; for example, some schools have replaced the outer toilet door or wall with glass (not the cubicle doors) and have found that it reduces all instances of bullying. Other schools have turned accessible toilets into gender neutral toilets, although this can be frustrating for disabled students. Non-binary young people may feel most comfortable in a gender-neutral toilet. Support the trans young person. If another student feels uncomfortable sharing a changing room or toilet with a trans young person, provide alternative options for the student that feels uncomfortable. Forest Hill School is committed to providing options for pupils and to finding the most appropriate solution.
- D. Residential and trips abroad are possible. For overseas and residential visits, discuss with the trans young person in question and research the legal protections afforded to lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in the country they are visiting.

### **3. Uniforms**

- A. Gender neutral uniform is in place at Forest Hill School. Some schools have chosen to make their uniform gender neutral by listing the shirts, trouser and skirts needed but not by gender. The same applies to rules around hair length and style, make up and jewellery.
- B. Any changes are in consultation with the trans young person. Forest Hill School would work with the trans young person to create a plan negotiating when they will change uniform (if applicable).

### **4. Physical Education (PE)**

- A. Creating a trans inclusive school can mean creating gender neutral or mixed sports options for all pupils.
- B. Changes to participation in PE are in consultation with the trans young person. Trans people should be entitled to play whichever sport they choose and not be disenfranchised on the basis of their gender identity.
- C. Seek advice from the governing body of the relevant sport. Schools can seek advice from the governing body of the relevant sport to find out if a trans student may compete. For example, the Football Association say that students under 18 can compete in football in their self-identified gender. There are no teams for non-binary people and so they may choose which team to play on.

### **5. Parents and carers of trans young people**

- A. Work with the young person to find out how they would like to proceed. The school is under no obligation to tell the parents of a trans young person's identity, though it is helpful if parents and carers are supportive. The young person does not require parental permission to identify as trans, but it is also important to support the young person to work towards coming out at home if they deem it safe enough to do so.
- B. Ensure that the young person feels safe at home. If they don't it might just be that the parents or carers haven't access to the right information. If this is the case, the school taking the trans young person seriously can be very helpful.
- C. Signpost to services for families, parents and carers. It might be helpful to signpost to Mermaids, Gendered Intelligence or Stonewall. Find local LGBT+ groups that also offer support to families, parents and carers.

### **6. Confidentiality**

- A. Sensitive personal information- Information about a person's trans status is considered 'sensitive personal data' and is subject to tighter controls than personal data. Explicit consent is required before it can be collected, used and shared (Data Protection Act, 1998).
- B. Private information- A person's status as trans is private and schools should not disclose this information to parents and carers, staff or anyone outside the school community. Schools may only share this information where there is a safeguarding risk or a young person has given their permission for specific details (such as telling staff about their preferred name).

- C. Discuss levels of confidentiality with the student - Ensure that the person has the right to confidentiality over their trans status or gender history. Respecting a trans young person's confidentiality may require staff to use their assigned name and gender when contacting parents or carers.

## **7. School Community (other parents, press)**

- A. Forest Hill School is transparent about our approach to inclusion. Whilst parents do not need to be informed of any individuals transitioning in the school, Forest Hill School will be open and transparent about the school's inclusive approach by sharing policies, lesson plans and activities. For example, other schools have displayed diversity work on open evenings and parents' evenings, invited parents to diversity days or events, developed home-school agreements and have had an open-door policy to answer questions or concerns.
- B. Explain our legal responsibilities- Forest Hill School will explain the school's legal duties with Ofsted and the Equality Act 2010 to foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.
- C. Forest Hill School has confident senior leaders and staff. The school ensures that all staff are on the same page and refers to equality in the school values. Forest Hill School is committed to training staff in supporting a trans young person.
- D. Forest Hill School is aware that most of the time there is no media attention for a pupil's trans status. In the advent of media attention, Forest Hill School acknowledges that Stonewall can help and a staff member would get in touch with the education team.
- E. Forest Hill School is committed to developing an inclusive curriculum. This includes building trans inclusion into the curriculum (particularly in PSHE), to create a consistent whole school approach as a planned programme, so all young people feel included.

## **8. Trans-Inclusive Policies**

- A. Forest Hill School is committed to being inclusive in school policies and working to improve the existing policies.
- B. Forest Hill School's Equality Policy references the relevant protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to providing equality for all pupils regardless of identity, including gender identity
- C. Forest Hill School's Relationship and Behaviour Policy references Transphobic bullying on the basis of gender identity.
- D. P.E. policies encourages the participation of trans pupils in sport and has considerations for changing facilities, including away games.
- E. A line on supporting trans young people is included in policies on school trips, visits and residential.
- F. Understanding trans identities is included in PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education policy.
- G. Safeguarding policies. It is recommended that Safeguarding policies explicitly reference that being trans is not a safeguarding risk.
- H. Confidentiality policies should mention how information about someone's trans status should be handled.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1) Isn't the student too young to know?**

We all have the right to be treated in the gender that we self-identify as. Socially transitioning doesn't mean that you can't have a change of mind or a different set of feelings in relation to one's own gender identity. Some people transition more than once. It's important to debunk any myths about what happens when a person identifies as trans. For instance, trans people do not undergo any surgery under the age 18 and are not issued 'cross sex hormone therapy' under the age of 16. Hormone blockers can be offered just prior to puberty. These are reversible and do no harm if a person changes their mind.

### **2) What if a parent makes a complaint about the school's approach to trans inclusion?**

Parents should feel reassured that the school puts the welfare of all children at its heart and that the school's policies of inclusion and diversity extend to all children. Explain to parents the school's legal duties to including trans people in your school. Ensure staff know they are backed by senior leadership, school policy and the law when dealing with resistance or complaints. Have clear procedures around parent's rights to remove children from learning opportunities that look at trans identities and gender diversity. Parents do not need to be informed about any individuals transitioning in the school (staff or pupils). Be open and transparent about trans inclusive practices e.g. share policies, lesson plans, activities. If parents wish to come in to discuss in general terms how the school includes trans pupils, then they could do so, but no specific case about the well-being of a particular student should be discussed with other pupils' parents. Parents should have access to all policies and be aware of inclusion ethos through induction packs, newsletters, school websites, the school prospectus or magazine, diversity days and events etc.

### **3) What if the parents of the trans student are not supportive of their child's gender identity?**

Sometimes the parents or carers of the young person may not be out as trans at home, or their parents may not be on board with using a different name, pronoun and other aspects of socially transitioning. Ensure to work with the young person to find out how they would like to go about things. Is it possible to send information home to parents and carers about what it means to be trans? Sometimes parents and carers hold onto myths about what it means to be trans, so it could be useful to address these. Can you or do you need to engage with other services to support families such as CAMHS or Social Services? Ensure that the young person feels safe at home, there may be safeguarding issues to think about.

### **4) Isn't this a lot of fuss for one student in our school who is trans?**

Ensuring the inclusion of trans young people has a positive impact on all pupils in schools. For instance, it is not only LGBT young people who experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. HBT bullying can affect any young person at any time during their education. Pupils with trans people in their families and friends will also benefit from trans inclusive practices. More broadly however, all pupils are affected by gender stereotyping and pressures to conform to social norms around gender. A positive school environment, which can be promoted by celebrating difference and diversity in everyday school life, benefits the whole school community.

### **5) How can I support a trans student who is not 'out'?**

If a pupil has socially transitioned prior to entering the school it may be that they do not want anyone to know. Not all staff need to know of a person's trans status. Talk to the pupil about how to deal with any potential questions that they (the pupil) may receive and how best they wish to handle things. Support the trans young person to manage their own responses to any questions or comments that other pupils might make.

## **6) What name will go in a young trans person's qualification certificates?**

A formal name change is not required in order to request a name to be used by teachers and pupils, but is required for the purpose of qualification certificates. If a person chooses to change their name formally, there are two ways in which they can do this - by deed poll or by statutory declaration of name change. A deed poll or a statutory declaration of name change can be created by the person themselves and must be witnessed. For pupils under 16 years old, parents need to agree to a formal name change. You can find out more: <https://www.gov.uk/change-name-deed-poll/overview>. Certificates can be reissued with a different name at a later date, usually at a small cost.

## **7) How can we change the name and gender marker on the register?**

To change names on registers in the school you could make use of 'preferred to be known as' name options. It is a good idea to remove gender markers from registers in classrooms. Regarding changing gender markers on registers on SIMS or other database that is outside the school's control liaise with local authorities, or whoever runs the system, to find out if gender markers can be changed. Be mindful where registers and gender markers get pulled into letters home, ensure new names and pronouns are used for trans pupils if they are out at home or work with the trans pupil to find out what they would like to happen.

## **8) How do we manage media interest?**

When someone transitions at school it can be a worry that the school might be contacted by a member of the local and/or national press. It is important to safeguard and maintain confidentiality of any trans pupils and their families. Get support from your local authority or cluster leader to manage press interest. It's important for the Senior Leadership Team to stay firm and confident about their trans inclusive practices. Ensure that statements are made by SLT that clarify your practices – media can sometimes misreport and exaggerate. For instance, around what the school means by the term 'gender neutral toilets'.

## **9) Are there any safeguarding issues that the school should be aware of?**

Transitioning or being a trans person isn't in and of itself a safeguarding risk. It may constitute a safeguarding risk if the trans pupil is experiencing abuse at home or are at risk of homelessness. If a person is displaying behaviours that are causing you concern regarding mental distress then you should follow safeguarding processes. If you feel that a young person is being coerced into transitioning you should pursue it as a safeguarding issue. For a trans boy to go into the boys' toilet, changing rooms or sleeping dorms or for a trans girl to go into the girls' toilet, changing rooms or sleeping dorms is not in and of itself a safeguarding risk. Safeguarding should focus on behaviour rather than bodies (i.e.- if anyone is behaving in a way that causes concern then it's important to address it).