

Gender Identity Policy

Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set a framework for how The Mount School York will support students in relation to gender identity issues and transgender pupils. This policy is in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which includes gender reassignment as one of the nine 'protected characteristics' where people are protected against unlawful discrimination. The policy also sets out the school's obligations under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

The Mount School York aims to give support and understanding to anyone who wishes to take, or has taken steps, to begin transitioning to a different gender from that assigned at birth. The challenges need to be addressed with sensitivity especially as a transgender pupil will be more identifiable in a single sex senior school.

Transgender Definitions

In this policy 'transgender' is used to refer to the following groups:

- People who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment under section 7 of the Equality Act 2010, which says: "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."
- People who do not wish to undergo gender reassignment, but whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex, including those who identify as intersex, third gender, non-binary or gender fluid.

Meeting the Needs of Transgender Pupils

It is important to recognise that the relationship between biological sex, gender identity and what this means for access to provision and recognition, is a highly charged and sensitive subject. The school does not form a view on this debate but focuses on providing a respectful, kind, safe and non-judgemental environment in which our pupils are able to explore their own identity in a way and timescale that is right for them, knowing that they will receive acceptance and support whatever conclusions they reach

The underpinning ethos of this policy is that matters related to gender identities are acknowledged and handled in a respectful way, with the child's individual needs and circumstances at the centre of our thinking. Our fundamental duty is to look after each pupil's well-being: our pupils come first, and this will always guide our response.

Should a pupil disclose that they are having gender identity thoughts, that they are identifying as trans, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, non-binary or gender questions, the school's overall approach is not an affirming and encouraging one, it is a supportive and inclusive one. A supportive and inclusive approach is:

- To listen to the pupil and not judge
- To acknowledge the pupil's personal and individual experience
- To make clear to the pupil that the school is acting in the pupil's best interests and is accepting of their exploration of identity
- To work collaboratively, as needed, with the pupil, parents/carers, and any external professionals to look after the needs of the pupil.

Support may include but is not limited to:

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- Adopting a 'watchful waiting approach'
- Referring to the school counsellor
- Referring to external support such as GP
- Facilitating a social transition in school if this is agreed in tandem with parents/carers and/or medical professional to be in the best interests of the pupil.

In our Senior School we remain a girl's school. However, during the process towards an affirmed binary male identity, existing pupils will be accommodated if:

- This is their wish, and
- A thorough process of discussion and assessment has taken place, including with parents/carers, school counsellor, GP, CAMHS or such other third-party medical professional as appropriate, and
- It is believed to be in the best interests of the pupil and their well-being, and Adjustments and processes can be put in place to ensure that both the pupil concerned, and other pupils can thrive and have their needs met.
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A girls' school which permits a pupil who is undergoing gender reassignment to remain after they adopt a male gender role would not lose its single-sex status.

The details of what adjustments would need to be made would be specific to the needs and experience of each individual pupils and a support plan would be drawn up with the school nurse. These will be discussed openly and comprehensively, as appropriate with the pupils, their parents/carers, appropriate external professionals and the essential school key personnel in order to understand an ideal picture and then determine what is feasible.

The underpinning ethos of this discussion is that adjustments will be possible if they are in the best interest of the pupil and without significant impact on the learning of other pupils.

Protection Against Harassment and Bullying

The Mount School York aims to create an inclusive transgender-friendly culture in its school, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Transphobic bullying, incidents and harassment will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with in the first instance under the Anti-Bullying Policy.