HEADLANDS SCHOOL
SINCE 1965

Biological Sex-Based Provision and Support for Students Questioning Gender Policy
Policy

(Replaces Transgender Policy)

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Headlands School

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the school's approach to biological sex-based provision, safeguarding, inclusion and support for students who may be questioning their gender.

The policy applies to all aspects of school life, including admissions, student records, safeguarding, behaviour, pastoral care, educational activities, uniforms, facilities, school visits and residential experiences.

The school is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all students whilst meeting its safeguarding, legal and educational responsibilities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, governors, volunteers and visitors.

It should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Equality Policy, SEND Policy, Uniform Policy and Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy.

3. Principles

The school is committed to:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students.
- Treating every student with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Providing a learning environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Complying with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals.
- Promoting students' wellbeing, safety and educational achievement.
- Applying school policies consistently and fairly.

4. Definitions

4.1 Biological Sex

Biological sex refers to whether a person is male or female.

4.2 Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to an individual's personal sense of their identity. Some students may experience uncertainty or distress relating to their gender identity.

4.3 Social Transition

Social transition refers to steps taken by an individual to present or be recognised as the opposite biological sex. This may include requests relating to names, pronouns, clothing, facilities, sports participation or other aspects of daily life.

Known or Preferred Name

A known or preferred name is a name used in school that differs from a student' legal name. Use of a preferred name does not alter a student's legal name or biological sex.

5. Recognition of Biological Sex

The school recognises the two biological sexes, male and female, and maintains accurate records of each student's legal name and biological sex as required by law. Biological sex-based language, records, facilities and arrangements will be applied consistently throughout the school.

The school recognises and respects the dignity of all students while ensuring that safeguarding, privacy, wellbeing and legal obligations are met.

6. School Records

The school will:

- Maintain accurate records of students' legal names and biological sex.
- Maintain records in accordance with data protection, safeguarding and educational requirements.
- Consider requests for a known or preferred name where appropriate.

Use of a known or preferred name does not alter:

- A student's legal name.
- A student's recorded biological sex.
- The application of school policies relating to biological sex.

7. Toilets, Changing Facilities and Residential Accommodation

Students will use toilets, changing facilities and residential accommodation designated for their biological sex.

Where a student has an identified medical, SEND or wellbeing need, the school may consider alternative arrangements where appropriate facilities are available.

Alternative arrangements will not involve access to facilities designated for the opposite biological sex.

Any alternative arrangements:

- Must be compatible with safeguarding responsibilities.
- Must not compromise the privacy, dignity, safety or wellbeing of other students.
- Will be documented and reviewed regularly.

8. Sport and Physical Education

The school aims to provide equal access to sporting opportunities for all students.

Participation in PE, sport and physical activities organised on a sex-separated basis will be determined by a student's biological sex. This includes activities where separation is considered necessary for reasons of fairness, safety, privacy or developmental considerations.

Where appropriate, the school may consider alternative arrangements or reasonable adjustments to support individual students in accessing physical education and sporting activities.

Reasonable adjustments may be considered for students with SEND, medical or wellbeing needs.

All students will be encouraged and supported to participate positively in PE and school sport

wherever possible.

9. Uniform

The school's Uniform Policy applies to all students.

Requests for adaptations linked to:

- Disability
- Medical conditions
- SEND
- Religion or belief

will be considered in accordance with the school's legal duties and relevant policies.

Students are expected to comply with the uniform requirements applicable to their biological sex unless an authorised exception has been agreed.

10. Safeguarding and Pastoral Support

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Students who are questioning their gender will be treated with dignity, compassion and respect. The school will:

- Listen to students' concerns.
- Provide appropriate pastoral support.
- Work with parents / carers wherever appropriate.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.
- Maintain professional curiosity regarding any underlying welfare concerns.
- Refer concerns relating to a student questioning their gender to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL for consideration and oversight.

Where concerns arise regarding:

- Mental health
- Self-harm
- Exploitation
- Bullying
- Online harms
- Family circumstances
- Emotional wellbeing

Staff must follow safeguarding procedures without delay.

11. Protection from Bullying

Bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes behaviour related to:

- Sex.
- Gender identity.

- Gender non-conformity.

- Sexual orientation.
- Disability.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Any other protected characteristic.
-

The school will respond promptly and appropriately to all concerns and allegations. All students have the right to feel safe and supported within the school community.

12. Supporting Students Questioning Gender

The school recognises that some students may experience uncertainty or distress regarding their gender.

Support may include:

- Pastoral support.
- Safeguarding support.
- SEND support where appropriate.
- Medical support where appropriate.
- Referral to external services where required.
- Collaborative working with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Support arrangements will focus on promoting:

- Welfare.
- Educational access.
- Wellbeing.
- Resilience.
- Positive engagement in school life.

13. Requests relating to Social Transition

The school recognises that some students may express a wish to present or be recognised as the opposite biological sex.

The school will respond to all such situations with sensitivity, compassion and respect, placing the welfare, wellbeing and safeguarding of the student at the centre of decision-making.

The school will adopt a careful, structured and child-centred approach to decision-making. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of safeguarding responsibilities, the student's welfare and best interests, the rights and wellbeing of other students, legal obligations and the practical operation of the school.

Where a student expresses a wish to socially transition, the school will:

- Listen to the student's views and concerns.
- Consider any safeguarding, wellbeing, SEND or medical needs.
- Where appropriate, the school may undertake a written risk assessment to inform decision-making and identify any safeguarding, welfare, educational or operational considerations.
- Seek advice from appropriate professionals where necessary.
- Provide protection from bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- Ensure that the student's welfare remains the primary consideration.

Information relating to a student questioning their gender will be shared on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding, data protection and welfare considerations.

Parental involvement is the school's default position. Parents / carers will normally be involved in discussions and decision-making unless doing so would place the child at risk of harm.

The school will not take steps to facilitate a student being treated as the opposite biological sex where doing so would be inconsistent with the school's biological sex-based policies, legal duties or safeguarding responsibilities.

The school recognises that a student may be disappointed, distressed or frustrated if a request cannot be agreed. A decision not to agree a particular request does not remove the school's responsibility to support the student. Where a request cannot be accommodated, the school will consider whether pastoral, wellbeing, safeguarding, SEND or medical support measures are required to help the student access education successfully, maintain positive engagement in school life and promote their overall welfare.

Where appropriate, pastoral, wellbeing, SEND or medical support measures may be considered to help the student access education successfully.

Any arrangements will be reviewed regularly.

14. Requests Relating to Biological Sex-Based Provision

Where a request forms part of, or relates to, a student's wish to socially transition, the school will respond in accordance with the principles set out in this policy.

Requests may include:

- Recording or referring to a student as the opposite biological sex.
- Using alternative pronouns.
- Access to facilities designated for the opposite biological sex.
- Participation in activities designated for the opposite biological sex.
- Wearing uniform designated for the opposite biological sex.
- Other requests requiring the school to depart from its biological sex-based policies.

The school will consider requests respectfully and sensitively, taking account of:

- The student's welfare and best interests.
- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Legal obligations.
- The rights, privacy and wellbeing of all students.
- The operational requirements of the school.

Parents / carers will normally be involved in discussions regarding such requests unless this would place the child at risk of harm.

The school will not agree to arrangements that are inconsistent with its biological sex-based policies, safeguarding duties or legal responsibilities.

Where a student is experiencing distress or difficulty accessing education, the school may consider alternative support measures that promote engagement, wellbeing and educational access.

Any agreed support arrangements will:

- Be documented.
- Be subject to review.
- Not compromise the safety, privacy, dignity or wellbeing of other students.
- Be informed by risk assessment where appropriate.
- Be supported by an identified member of staff.

15. Partnership with Parents and External Agencies

The school recognises the important role of parents/carers in supporting children and young people.

The school will work collaboratively with families and, where appropriate, health professionals and other agencies to promote the wellbeing, safety and educational progress of students.

The school retains responsibility for applying its own policies, safeguarding procedures and legal duties.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes.
- Statutory guidance changes.
- Relevant case law changes.
- Local safeguarding procedures are updated.

17. Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Uniform Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Online Safety Policy