

DRAFT v0.1 FOR TESTING — NOT FOR CIRCULATION

Policy framework: supporting children who are questioning their gender

For schools and colleges in England. Based on *Keeping children safe in education 2026* (KCSIE). Numbers in brackets are KCSIE paragraphs.

How to use this framework

- Text labelled **MUST**, **SHOULD** or **STATED** restates KCSIE 2026 and cites the paragraph it comes from. Keep it, so that your policy says what the guidance says. **MUST** means the law requires it; **SHOULD** means it should be followed unless there is good reason not to; **STATED** means KCSIE says it without using either word; **GOOD PRACTICE** marks the one line that does not come from KCSIE.
- Boxes headed **YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES** are choices that KCSIE leaves to the school. Each box shows the limits the guidance sets. Choose an option, or complete the fields, within those limits. The options are ours, not KCSIE's.
- Replace every [square bracket]. Delete section 6 if your school has no pupils of primary school age.
- Complete the equality consideration record at Appendix A. For state-funded schools and colleges this is part of a legal duty [101, 102], and copying this framework does not meet it.
- Have the draft reviewed by your local authority, trust or a legal adviser, and approved by your governing body or proprietor, before adoption (Appendix B).
- This framework summarises statutory guidance. It is not legal advice.

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out the steps [School name] takes when a child, or their parent or carer, requests support with social transition. **SHOULD** [261]

Social transition means the school making changes, or putting support in place, to facilitate a child presenting as the opposite biological sex. **STATED** [260]

The school does not initiate any action regarding social transition. **SHOULD** [255, 260]

Staff do not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless the school has made a decision and the child's parents or carers have been involved as this policy sets out. **SHOULD** [260]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Which pupils this policy covers

Choose one option:

- Option A: all pupils at [School name].
- Option B (all-through schools, federations and trusts): all pupils, with section 6 applying to pupils of primary school age.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 267, 273, 97, 107, 114, 199.

Note: The rules on toilets, changing rooms, overnight accommodation and sport apply to schools, colleges in the further education sector and 16–19 academies; other colleges should take independent legal advice.

2. Legal framework

In making decisions about supporting social transition, the school complies with its obligations under safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. **MUST** [262, 275]

[State-funded schools and colleges] The school complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and has given specific consideration to the equality implications of this policy (Appendix A). **MUST** [101, 102]

The school processes personal information fairly and lawfully, and keeps it safe and secure, under the data protection laws: the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. **STATED** [104, 105]

This policy is read alongside the school's child protection policy and behaviour policy. **GOOD PRACTICE**

3. Principles

Decisions start from the best interests of the child and of other children. A decision may not be the same as the child's wishes. **STATED** [265]

The school considers how best to fulfil its duty to safeguard the child and their peers, so that any agreed course of action takes account of its impact on everyone affected. **SHOULD** [264]

Staff take time to understand a child's thoughts and feelings, are appropriately professionally curious, and remain aware of possible vulnerabilities, including complex mental health and psychosocial needs and discriminatory bullying. **SHOULD** [257]

The school keeps in mind that it is common for children to engage in activities less typically associated with their sex, and maintains flexibility and avoids rigid rules based on gender stereotypes across school life. **SHOULD** [256, 258]

Social transition is viewed as an active intervention, and the school takes a very careful approach to it. **SHOULD** [272]

The school takes a strong, proactive stand against all forms of bullying. **MUST** [259]

4. When a child confides in a member of staff

Where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the school to make changes to how they are treated, there is no reason to break any confidence unless there is a related safeguarding risk. **STATED** [271]

Where a conversation raises concerns about a child's wellbeing or safety, staff act on them immediately, follow the child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy. Usual procedures apply, including involving parents or carers where appropriate. **SHOULD** [58, 59, 271]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Whether anything is recorded when a child only confides

Choose one option:

- Option A: no record is made where a child confides, asks for no change, and nothing they say raises a safeguarding concern.
- Option B: the member of staff makes a brief factual note, kept confidential and stored securely under the school's usual arrangements, and not shared unless a concern or a request arises.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 271, 74, 104, 105.

Note: Any note about a named child is personal information under the data protection laws. Take data protection advice before choosing option B.

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Whether staff use a different name or pronouns in a private conversation before any decision

Choose one option:

- Option A: until the school has made a decision, staff do not use a different name or pronouns for a child.
- Option B: in a private conversation, staff may use the words a child uses about themselves. This is not treated as adopting a change: nothing changes in lessons, in records or with other staff until the school has decided.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 260, 271.

Note: KCSIE does not say whether option B counts as adopting a change under paragraph 260. Take advice before choosing it.

5. When a child or their parent requests support

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: How staff pass on a request

Choose one option:

- Option A: staff pass any request to the DSL or a deputy on the same school day.
- Option B: staff pass any request to [named senior leader], who involves the DSL.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 266.

The school engages parents or carers as a matter of priority. Their views carry great weight and are properly considered. **SHOULD** [268]

In the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them, the DSL determines what action is needed to safeguard the child before parents or carers are contacted or any decision is taken. **SHOULD** [268]

The school explores how best to support conversations with parents or carers, including offering a member of staff to be present or to speak to parents on the child's behalf. **SHOULD** [270]

The school considers everything that could be affecting the child, including wider health issues or neurodiversity. **SHOULD** [266]

The school works with parents or carers, considers any clinical evidence or advice, seeks non-clinical professional advice where relevant (for example from the SENCO), and involves the DSL. **STATED** [266]

The decision-making process is documented and records are kept, including the reasons for decisions. **SHOULD** [261, 263, 74]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Who decides, and how quickly

Complete:

- Decisions are made by [head teacher or principal] with the DSL.
- The school aims to decide within [number] school days of a request.
- The child and their parents or carers are told the outcome by [role], in [how].

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 265, 268, 261, 263.

Note: KCSIE sets no timescale for decisions.

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: What happens if a child or parent disagrees with a decision

Choose one option:

- Option A: the school's complaints procedure applies.
- Option B: the school first offers a meeting to review the decision, then the complaints procedure applies.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 280.

6. Children of primary school age [delete if not applicable]

The school is particularly conscious of safeguarding concerns relating to primary-aged children, and exercises particular caution. **SHOULD** [267, 273]

Support for full social transition for a primary-aged child is expected to be agreed very rarely. **STATED** [273]

Advising on the risks and benefits of social transition is not a role for staff without appropriate clinical training. **STATED** [273]

Older children will generally have greater agency to make their own decisions, and keeping options open and flexible helps avoid a child feeling under pressure to commit to a potentially irrevocable pathway when young. **STATED** [274]

7. What support can and cannot include

The school explains sensitively to the child that support will not include access to toilets, changing rooms, or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex, or to opposite-sex PE classes where single-sex PE is for safety. **SHOULD** [278]

No child uses toilets designated for the opposite biological sex, including where the school is supporting any degree of social transition. The school provides separate toilets for boys and girls aged 8 and over. **MUST** [108, 109]

No child aged 11 or older at the start of the school year undresses in front of a child of the opposite biological sex. When supporting any degree of social transition, no child has access to changing rooms designated for the opposite sex. **MUST** [115]

No child shares overnight accommodation with a child of the opposite biological sex, or has access to boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex. In allocating dormitories, tents or shared rooms, the school has regard to its Equality Act duties, safeguarding obligations and the relevant standards. **MUST** [200, 201]

Where a sport is played in single-sex groups for safety, there are no exceptions. **MUST** [99, 276]

Where single-sex sport is for fairness, not safety, a request about how a child takes part is considered through this policy, including the child's best interests, the impact on other children, and safe and fair PE for all. **STATED** [99, 100]

Where a child does not want to use the facilities designated for their sex, the school considers whether an alternative toilet, changing or washing facility, or a separate room, can be provided without compromising single-sex provision or any child's safety, comfort, privacy or dignity. **SHOULD** [111, 117, 202]

Any alternative arrangements are clearly recorded, communicated appropriately and reviewed regularly. **STATED** [112, 118]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Alternative facilities

Complete:

- Alternatives available: [for example, a self-contained lockable toilet; changing at a different time].
- Recorded by: [role]. Reviewed every: [period].

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 111, 112, 113, 117, 118, 202.

Note: Where mixed-sex toilets are provided in addition to single-sex toilets, the school should assess the safeguarding risks [113].

Where a school rule or policy puts gender-questioning children at a disadvantage, the school considers whether it has a legitimate aim and is a proportionate means of achieving it, including whether an exception could still achieve that aim. **SHOULD** [277]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Uniform and PE kit

Choose one option:

- Option A: uniform and kit rules apply to all pupils as written; a request for an exception is considered under this policy using the test above.
- Option B: the school offers [items, for example trousers or shorts] as options for all pupils.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 277, 258.

The school makes children and families aware that it will sanction bullying and harassment, and that it must also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to religion or belief.

SHOULD [279]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Pronouns, and religion or belief

Choose one option:

- Option A: where support has been agreed, the school discusses options with pupils and staff, such as using names instead of pronouns.
- Option B: [write your own, within the limits shown].

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 279, 259.

8. Records, confidentiality and moving school

Relevant staff are made aware of the child's biological sex. **SHOULD** [282]

The child's biological sex is recorded accurately wherever it is recorded. This is a legal requirement. **MUST** [282]

Information is kept confidential and stored securely. **SHOULD** [74]

The school is particularly conscious of the vulnerabilities of a child who may be living in stealth, and involves the DSL. **SHOULD** [283]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Where records are kept and who can see them

Complete:

- Decision records are kept in: [location].
- They can be seen by: [roles].
- Relevant staff are told of arrangements by: [role], in [how].

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 74, 261, 263, 282, 104, 105.

When a child leaves, the DSL ensures their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible: within 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within the first 5 days of a new term, securely and, for schools, separately from the main pupil file. **SHOULD** [150]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: What is shared when a child with agreed support moves school, and what happens when one arrives

Choose one option:

- Leaving: the DSL decides, case by case, what information about agreed support should be shared with the new school, and records the reasons.
- Arriving: the DSL reviews any arrangements agreed by a previous school under section 9, involving the child's parents or carers.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 150, 151, 280, 283.

Note: Paragraph 151 asks the DSL to consider sharing information in advance, with examples that do not concern gender.

9. Reviewing decisions

Decisions are reviewed when circumstances or the child's needs change. The DSL is involved immediately in deciding whether to review, and a review involves the child's parents or carers. **SHOULD** [280]

Decisions taken before KCSIE 2026 came into force are considered, to check whether they remain appropriate, taking into account the impact of making any changes on the child. **STATED** [281]

If a child wants to fully or partially reverse a request that was agreed, the school works closely with parents or carers and relevant experts so the child is supported. **SHOULD** [284]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: How often decisions are reviewed

Complete:

- Agreed support is reviewed at least every [period], and whenever circumstances or the child's needs change.

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 280.

10. Training and responsibilities

All staff receive the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including this policy, at induction, and safeguarding updates at least annually. **SHOULD** [12, 124, 153]

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Responsibilities and training

Complete:

- Designated safeguarding lead: [name]. Deputy: [name].
- Senior leader responsible for decisions: [name].
- Governor or trustee with oversight: [name].
- Supply and temporary staff are briefed on this policy by: [role], in [how].

Limits set by KCSIE: paragraphs 12, 124, 153, 266.

11. Monitoring and review of this policy

YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES: Policy review

Complete:

- This policy was approved by [governing body or proprietor] on [date].
- It will be reviewed by [date], and whenever KCSIE changes.

Note: KCSIE is revised every year. Reviewing this policy at least annually matches the minimum KCSIE sets for the child protection policy [123].

Appendix A: Equality consideration record

For state-funded schools and colleges, compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal requirement, and whenever policies are developed specific consideration must be given to their equality implications. **MUST** [101, 102]

Date of consideration	
Who carried out the consideration	
Protected characteristics considered (for example sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation)	
Evidence and views considered	
Possible effects of the policy on each group	
Steps taken to reduce any disadvantage	
Decision and reasons	

Appendix B: Before adopting this policy

- ☐ The model text has been kept, and every [square bracket] has been completed.
- ☐ One option has been chosen at every YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES box, and unused options, labels and paragraph references have been removed or kept as the school prefers.
- ☐ The equality consideration record (Appendix A) has been completed.
- ☐ The draft has been reviewed by the local authority, trust or a legal adviser.
- ☐ The policy has been approved by the governing body or proprietor.
- ☐ Staff have been briefed, including supply and temporary staff.
- ☐ A review date has been set.

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