

# A pupil tells you about their gender: what to do

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

**MUST** the law requires it    **SHOULD** follow it unless there is good reason not to    **STATED** what KCSIE says, without “must” or “should”    **GOOD PRACTICE** not from KCSIE

## 1 In the moment

- Take time to understand how they are thinking and feeling, and stay alert to anything else going on for them, including bullying or pressures with family or friends. **SHOULD** [257]
- Keep in mind that it is common for children to enjoy things less typically associated with their sex. **SHOULD** [256]
- Don’t suggest or start any change. It is not for schools to initiate action on social transition. **SHOULD** [255, 260]
- Don’t agree, yourself, to use a new name or pronouns or to make other changes. Staff should not adopt changes until the school has decided and parents or carers have been involved as the guidance sets out. **SHOULD** [260]
- Be honest about confidentiality: you won’t break their confidence just because they told you, but you would have to act on a safeguarding concern. **STATED** [271]

## 2 Then: which of these happened?

### A They told you how they feel. They didn’t ask for anything to change, and nothing worries you.

- There is no reason to break their confidence. **STATED** [271]
- You don’t need to tell their parents, or anyone else, just because they confided in you. Check what your school’s own policy says. **STATED** [271]
- Let them know they can come back to you, and who else they can talk to. **GOOD PRACTICE**

### B Something they said worries you about their safety or wellbeing.

- Act on it immediately. **SHOULD** [58]
- Follow your child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy. **SHOULD** [59]
- Usual procedures apply, including involving parents or carers where appropriate. **SHOULD** [271]
- Write down the concern, what you did and why. **SHOULD** [74]

### C They asked the school to change something, such as their name, pronouns, uniform or other arrangements.

- This is a request for support with social transition. It is a decision for the school, not for you alone. **STATED** [260, 261]
- Pass it on through your school’s process. The DSL is expected to be involved. **STATED** [266]
- Parents or carers should be engaged as a matter of priority. **SHOULD** [268]
- Only if involving parents would be a greater risk to the child than not involving them: the DSL decides what is needed to keep the child safe before parents are contacted or any decision is taken. **SHOULD** [268]
- The child’s wishes matter, but the decision may not be what they asked for. **STATED** [265]
- The school should explore offering a staff member to be with the child in conversations with parents, or to speak to parents for them. **SHOULD** [270]
- Tell the pupil honestly what will happen next. **GOOD PRACTICE**

## 3 Rules that always apply

- Pupils must not be allowed into toilets, changing rooms, or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex. There are no exceptions. **MUST** [276]
- If a pupil does not want to use the facilities for their sex, the school should consider whether it can provide an alternative without compromising single-sex facilities. **SHOULD** [111, 117]
- Schools must take a strong, proactive stand against all forms of bullying. **MUST** [259]
- Record concerns, discussions and decisions, and the reasons for them. **SHOULD** [74]

This aid summarises statutory guidance for England. It is not legal advice and does not replace KCSIE 2026 or your school’s own policies. Decisions on requests for support are for the school. Some colleges do not have a designated safeguarding lead. Eden Openly · Identifier to be assigned · Version 0.1 (draft) · CC BY 4.0 · Check for the current version at edenopenly.com