

KCSIE 2026 and children questioning their gender: getting your school ready

For head teachers, principals, designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), governors and trustees in England. *Keeping children safe in education 2026* (KCSIE) is already in force. If your school has no arrangements in place yet, work through these steps in order. Numbers in brackets are KCSIE paragraphs; lines marked USE point to the resource for that step.

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 Know what has changed

- ☐ KCSIE 2026 includes a section on children who are questioning their gender. **STATED** [254]
 - ☐ It is not for schools to initiate any action in this area. The guidance focuses on how a school responds when a child or their parent raises a request relating to social transition. **STATED** [255]
 - ☐ Where a child confides in a member of staff but asks for no change, there is no reason to break any confidence unless there is a related safeguarding risk. **STATED** [271]
 - ☐ Where a child asks for support, parents or carers should be engaged as a matter of priority; the DSL acts first only where involving them would be a greater risk to the child than not involving them. **SHOULD** [268]
 - ☐ 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]
- **USE** *KCSIE 2026, paragraphs 254 to 284; and the guide When a Pupil Comes Out as Trans.*

2 Name who is responsible

- ☐ The DSL is expected to be involved in considering a request for support. **STATED** [266]
 - ☐ The DSL should be involved immediately in deciding whether to review a decision, and where a child may be living in stealth. **SHOULD** [280, 283]
 - ☐ Decide who receives requests, who makes decisions, how quickly, and which governor or trustee has oversight. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- **USE** *Policy framework, sections 5 and 10.*

3 Train all staff

- ☐ All staff should receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction, regularly updated, and safeguarding updates at least annually. **SHOULD** [12]
 - ☐ The school’s safeguarding policies and procedures, Part one of KCSIE, and the role and identity of the DSL should be provided to all staff on induction. **SHOULD** [124]
 - ☐ Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction, in line with any advice from local safeguarding partners. **SHOULD** [153]
 - ☐ Include supply, temporary and newly arrived staff: they may be the first adult a pupil tells. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- **USE** *A pupil tells you about their gender: what to do (all staff); If a pupil tells you about their gender (induction card).*

4 Decide on a policy

- ☐ Consider whether pupils would be best supported by a policy on social transition, explaining the steps the school will take when a child requests support. **SHOULD** [261]
 - ☐ State-funded schools and colleges: when policies are developed, specific consideration must be given to their equality implications. **MUST** [101, 102]
- **USE** *Policy framework: supporting children who are questioning their gender.*

5 Set up how requests are handled and recorded

- ☐ When considering any request for support, make sure the decision-making process is documented and records are kept. **SHOULD** [261, 263]
 - ☐ Record concerns, discussions and decisions, and the reasons for them. Keep information confidential and stored securely. **SHOULD** [74]
- **USE** *A request for support with social transition: a checklist.*

6 Check toilets, changing rooms, PE and trips

- ☐ Check that no child can use toilets, changing rooms or overnight accommodation designated for the opposite sex, including where the school is supporting any degree of social transition. **MUST** [108, 115, 200]
 - ☐ Where a sport is played in single-sex groups for safety, there are no exceptions. **MUST** [99, 276]
 - ☐ Consider what alternative toilets, changing facilities or rooms could be provided without compromising single-sex provision. **SHOULD** [111, 117, 202]
 - ☐ Where mixed-sex toilets are provided in addition to single-sex toilets, assess the safeguarding risks. **SHOULD** [113]
- **USE** *Toilets, changing rooms, PE and trips: a checklist.*

7 Review arrangements already in place

- ☐ Identify any support agreed before KCSIE 2026 came into force, and consider whether each decision remains appropriate, taking into account the impact of making any changes on the child. **STATED** [281]
 - ☐ Involve the DSL immediately when deciding whether to review a decision. **SHOULD** [280]
- **USE** *Support agreed before September 2026: reviewing existing arrangements.*

8 Bullying and school culture

- ☐ Take a strong, proactive stand against all forms of bullying. **MUST** [259]
- ☐ Remember that some pupils are more at risk of certain kinds of bullying, including transphobic bullying. **STATED** [103]
- ☐ Consider adopting policies across school life that maintain flexibility and avoid rigid rules based on gender stereotypes. **SHOULD** [258]

9 Keep it under review

- ☐ The child protection policy should be reviewed at least annually and updated if needed. **SHOULD** [123]
- ☐ Set a date to review these arrangements too, and review them whenever KCSIE changes. **GOOD PRACTICE**

10 For governors and trustees: what to ask to see

- ☐ Whether the school has considered a policy on social transition, and what it decided. **SHOULD** [261]
- ☐ That all staff have had safeguarding and child protection training at induction. **SHOULD** [153]
- ☐ The equality consideration for any policy (state-funded schools and colleges). **MUST** [101, 102]
- ☐ How requests for support, and the decisions made, are documented. **SHOULD** [261, 263]
- ☐ The check of toilets, changing rooms and overnight arrangements. **MUST** [108, 115, 200]
- ☐ The review of any support agreed before KCSIE 2026 came into force. **STATED** [281]

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 [97, 107, 114, 199]. Some colleges do not have a designated safeguarding lead. “Data protection laws” means the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 [104]. This checklist summarises statutory guidance for England. It is not legal advice and does not replace KCSIE 2026 or the school’s own policies.