



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

SOCIAL TRANSITIONING GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURE

This guidance must be used in conjunction with the academy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

September 2026

Details

Title: Social Transitioning Guidance & Procedure

Issued: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

Owner: Kin Webb

Category: Safeguarding

Date	Section Amended	Signature
September 2026	New Guidance & Procedure	KW

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Flourishing Together

Releasing Potential

Inspiring Futures

St. Bart's Mission

We ensure that every academy is a flourishing community, dedicated to releasing potential and inspiring ambitious futures through exceptional education.

St. Bart's Vision and Values

Releasing potential together through **PEACE**:



PASSION

We pursue excellence with energy and purpose, releasing the potential within every child and adult.



ENCOURAGEMENT

We nurture confidence and resilience, supporting each individual so that they can thrive.



AMBITION

We set high expectations, striving for fairness and opportunity so that potential is not limited by circumstance.



COLLABORATION

We work together in partnership, recognising that flourishing comes when we share strengths and support one another.



ENJOYMENT

We celebrate learning and community life, creating joy-filled environments where potential can flourish.



Our Trust Christian ethos is captured by the **PEACE** values and all schools work in close partnership (*whether C of E or community*) to ensure that all children, adults and the communities they serve flourish just as Jesus encouraged us to do in John 10:10 – ***“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”***

St. Bart's vision includes a strong commitment to preparing our children for a world impacted by climate change, through learning and practical experience. We encourage pupils and staff to consider the impact of their actions locally and globally, while embedding climate change education across our curriculum, and sustainability into our ethos and Trust-wide practice.

Social Transitioning Guidance and Procedure

Introduction

KCSIE 2026 defines a request for social transition as:

"Where a child or their parent has requested that a school makes changes or put support in place in order to facilitate a child presenting as the opposite biological sex."

Our academies are legally required to record a child's biological sex accurately wherever sex is recorded and should ensure that relevant staff have access to that information where necessary for the school to discharge its safeguarding responsibilities. However, general policy flexibility should not be used to bypass a request that genuinely engages the social transition framework.

KCSIE 2026 is clear that schools should not initiate any action relating to social transition. Accordingly, individual members of staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless the school has made a decision as a result of discussions with parents and with the pupil and accurate records of the decision-making process have been kept.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), and the Maintained schools: governance guide. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners (see section 3).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Education Act 2002 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 September 2026.
- Part 3 of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination.
- Children and Families Act 2014 - The Children and Families Act 2014 is a combination of previous child welfare legislation and guidance – along with a number of important updates – that aims to improve the way services are received by vulnerable children, young people and their families.
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding protected characteristics (including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

- DfE guidance on gender-questioning children- guidance on children who are questioning their gender in 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)'
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026- creating a legal framework to improve safeguarding, education standards, and family support across England.
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- The CASS Review - an independent report published in April 2024 that evaluated National Health Service (NHS) gender identity care for children and young people in England.

Aims

- Our academies and staff will never initiate a social transition for a child.
- Our academies will approach any social transition request with high professional curiosity and care, particularly in primary schools.
- Changes to names, pronouns, uniforms, or appearance should follow a formal school-level assessment of the child's best interests.
- Gender is often an important part of an individual's identity and developing a positive sense of gender identity is part of growing up. However, gender identity is often complex and there is a spectrum of gender which is wider than just boy/ man or girl/ woman.
- We are aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, such as relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment.
- Practice to support trans children is embedded across academy policies and curriculum and builds on best practice already in place to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; it aims to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- We will take a strong, proactive stance on all forms of bullying based on gender. See individual academy policies for more detail. The academy will ensure that children and their families are aware that, while the academy will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, it must also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to their religion or belief.

When supporting a pupil questioning their gender, we will take into account the principle of taking a careful approach.

Principles

In developing practice to support our children, our academy should follow these principles:

- Listen to the child, their parents, carers and siblings. Wherever possible follow their lead and preferences.
- No child should be made to feel that they are the ones who are causing problems or that they owe anything to their school in return for being treated with the equality they deserve and are legally entitled to.
- Avoid seeing the child as a problem and instead, see an opportunity to enrich the school community and to challenge gender stereotypes and norms on a wider scale.

- Avoid where possible gender-segregated activities and where this cannot be avoided, allow the child to access the activity that corresponds to their gender identity.
- Challenge bullying and discrimination.
- Promote positive attitudes to gender diversity by including trans issues within activities relating to discrimination, hate crime, diversity, inclusion, and PSHE.
- Remember that transition is different for different people.

Early Help Process

It is important that any support offered to a child or young person starts with identifying their individual needs. Some may choose to be known by a different name or to wear different clothes. However, most or all young people (and their families) will need some expert/specialist support as they grow up and develop.

When completing an assessment for support particular attention should be paid to emotional health and wellbeing, family and social relationships, behaviour and an action plan put in place to address these issues and ensure the young person has a robust support plan.

DSL Role

The DSL will:

- DSL must be informed and involved from the outset of any gender-related request, noting that there may be wider welfare, mental health or neurodevelopmental factors to consider
- The DSL will confirm that biological sex is accurately recorded across all school systems and that relevant staff have access to this information
- Arrange training for staff on the new framework and the policies that set out the school's approach

Involving parents/carers in cases of pupils questioning their gender

Where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the academy, we will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority.

However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents/carers might put a pupil at greater risk than not involving them, the DSL will determine a course of action needed to safeguard the child before contacting parents/carers or any decisions are taken.

Where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the academy to make changes to how they are treated, the academy will only break any confidence if there is a related safeguarding risk.

Considering requests for support with social transition

The academy will not initiate any action regarding social transition. However, when a pupil or their parent/carer requests that the academy makes changes or puts support in place to facilitate the pupil presenting as the opposite biological sex ("social transition"), we will work together with parents/carers to determine what is in the best interests of the child and other children.

Members of staff will not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the academy and a child's parents/carers have been involved (as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)).

In making decisions about supporting social transition, the academy will ensure compliance with its obligations in respect of safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by the academy's evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children. The academy will make decisions in line with the following principles:

- The academy has statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children: the first step when considering a child's request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child and other children, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child's wishes
- Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance: (except in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them) where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the academy parents/carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views will carry great weight and be properly considered
- Accommodating social transition is an active intervention so the academy will take a very careful approach: social transition is an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes
- The academy will comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition
- Respecting a child or young person's request to change name and pronoun is crucial in supporting and validating that young person's identity. Some children and young people may wish to change their name to make it in line with their chosen identity. Although they may not have changed their name legally, individuals have the right to choose the name by which they are known by staff and fellow pupils.

The academy will ensure that the decision-making process is documented, and records are kept on CPOMS.

The circumstances or needs of a child may change over time, and the academy may need to review its original decision and will involve the DSL in doing so.

Single-sex toilets, changing rooms and showers

The statutory guidance makes it clear that our academies must provide single-sex toilets for boys and girls aged eight and over, and separate single-sex changing facilities for children aged 11 and over. These facilities must be provided according to biological sex.

Our academies must not allow a child to use toilets or changing facilities designated for the opposite biological sex, including where the school is considering or supporting a request for social transition (more on which below). Schools should consider whether they are able to provide alternative facilities, such as a self-contained toilet or fully enclosed room for changing. Any alternative must not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of that child or other pupils.

The guidance also states, where academies do provide mixed-sex or gender-neutral toilets in addition to single-sex toilets, those toilets should be in individual, lockable rooms and open directly into public areas, for example a corridor. Safeguarding risks in respect of those toilets should also be assessed and recorded.

School trips and overnight accommodation

The rules concerning single-sex provision will also apply when pupils are away from the school site. This means that our staff will need to plan carefully for outings and residential accommodation to ensure compliance with single-sex requirements, whilst exploring appropriate alternatives when needed.

In addition to toilets and changing facilities, our academies do not allow a child to share overnight accommodation with a child of the opposite biological sex. If a child does not want to share a room with other children of the same biological sex (for example a trans girl being asked to sleep in a boys' dormitory), alternative arrangements should be explored where possible. This might include providing a separate room for the gender-questioning child, either on their own or with other pupils who they are comfortable sharing with, provided that they are also of the same biological sex.

Sports

Statutory guidance recognises that, while physical education may be delivered co-educationally to younger pupils, some sports are often taught and played in single-sex groups as children get older. It notes that the Equality Act 2010 permits schools to separate children by biological sex where differences in physical strength, stamina or physique would otherwise place one sex at a competitive disadvantage.

This guidance is nuanced to recognise that different sports may require different approaches:

- Some sports may need to be played in single-sex groups from a certain age to ensure children's safety. KCSIE 2026 is clear that, where safety concerns require separation by biological sex, there must be no exceptions.
- Where single-sex provision is being considered for reasons of fairness rather than safety, schools should assess the individual circumstances, including the nature of the activity, the age and development of the pupils, the impact on other children and any relevant guidance from the sport's national governing body.

Where a gender-questioning pupil asks to participate in a sport which is designated for pupils of the opposite biological sex, our academies will need to consider that request under the social transition decision-making framework below.

Social Transition Procedure

Step 1: Clarify whether a request for social transition has been made

Our academies will distinguish between our pupils merely discussing or exploring feelings about gender and those pupils (or their parents or carers) making a request of the school to facilitate social transition. Steps towards social transition could include agreeing to facilitate preferences around a child's name, pronouns and uniform or how they participate in school trips or sports. Whether a particular request amounts to a request for support with social transition will depend on its nature, purpose and context.

Our academies will therefore take care to distinguish between the following:

- **Disclosure or exploration:** a child says that they are questioning their gender, discusses their feelings or tells a member of staff how they identify, but does not ask the school to make any changes. This will not ordinarily engage the social transition provisions in KCSIE 2026.
- **A routine request that might be made by any pupil:** as mentioned above, some requests may be capable of being dealt with under a generally applicable policy, such as an ordinary uniform option or an established approach to nicknames. However, our academies will not assume that every request available to all pupils necessarily falls outside a request to facilitate social

transition. They will examine its nature, purpose and context and, depending on that assessment, it may require the school to consider the request under the KCSIE 2026 guidance on social transition.

- **A request for the academy to facilitate social transition:** the child or parent asks the school to make changes to the pupil's treatment, presentation or arrangements in order to facilitate presentation as the opposite biological sex. This is likely to amount to a request for support with social transition requiring consideration under KCSIE 2026.

Academies should avoid initiating or encouraging social transition and should not promise absolute confidentiality.

Step 2: Assess safeguarding, welfare and the wider context

Before reaching any decision, our academies will take time to understand the child's thoughts, feelings and wishes, and remain appropriately professionally curious about their wider circumstances. This may include considering mental health, psychosocial or SEND-related needs, family and peer relationships, and any relevant safeguarding concerns. The DSL will be involved, and any assessment should be carried out in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and other relevant policies.

Our academies must also respond proactively to bullying. A child's vulnerability to discriminatory bullying is relevant to their welfare but should not itself determine whether a request for social transition is agreed.

The guidance makes clear that decisions should be based on the child's best interests, which may not always align with the child's wishes.

Step 3: Involve parents, unless doing so would create a greater risk

The child's parents or carers should be involved in the vast majority of decisions related to social transition, except where specific safeguarding concerns might exist. KCSIE 2026 gives parents a leading role and requires schools to give their views "significant weight", although it does not expressly create an absolute parental veto. Our academies will therefore engage parents and carers as a matter of priority once they receive a request from a child to facilitate social transition.

In the rare circumstances where involving parents may place the child at greater risk of harm, the DSL should be involved immediately to determine what safeguarding action is required before parents are contacted or any decision is made.

Step 4: Record the reasoning and keep decisions under review

Whatever decision is reached in response to a request for support with social transition, our academies should ensure that the decision-making process, the factors considered and the reasons for the outcome are clearly documented. KCSIE 2026 also expects schools to keep decisions under review as circumstances change. This means that schools should also reconsider whether pre-existing arrangements for children who have already socially transitioned (prior to the KCSIE 2026 guidance coming into effect) remain appropriate in light of the new guidance, taking into account the pupil's current circumstances, welfare needs and any impact of making changes.



ST. BART'S

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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