



St Joseph's

Roman Catholic High School
& Sports College

Transgender Policy

January 2018

Our school is a community where Jesus Christ is our role model and his message the guiding principle behind all we do.

Every member of our community is responsible for creating an environment that is caring, fair and respectful of each individual.

We develop our potential, celebrate our talents and go forward together in faith.

Approved by Governors: January 2018 **Date for Review:** January 2019

Signed Chair of Governors:

Signed Headteacher:

Gospel Values

The term 'Gospel values' is commonly used in Catholic schools and other Catholic institutions; however, unless the term is unpacked and a common understanding formed of what true Gospel values are, there is a danger that what should be an objective Christian foundation, will itself become a random list of subjective values.

Whilst other 'values' may be found within the four Gospels and New Testament writings, it is the Beatitudes which: *"...depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity"*. Gospel values cannot therefore be values chosen subjectively from the vast corpus of the Old and New Testaments but are objective values revealed to us through Christ's proclamation. Such objective values are to be found rooted in the Beatitudes, the proclamation of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes also *"...reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts"* 46 and as such are the objective 'values' given by Christ himself.

Whilst not definitive, those Gospel values based on the Beatitudes which underpin this policy include:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven"

Values: **Faithfulness & Integrity**

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted"

Values: **Dignity & Compassion**

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"

Values: **Humility & Gentleness**

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"

Values: **Purity & Holiness**

Rooted in the teaching of Christ, these Gospel values constitute the targets and outcomes of the educational enterprise for St Joseph's as a Catholic school.

Introduction

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.

Practice to support trans children is embedded across school policies and curriculum and build on best practice already in place to eliminate discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

This Policy seeks to provide a broad overview of the needs of transgender children and their families.

Principles

In developing practice to support trans children, St Joseph's will 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, SRE and PSHE.

Early Help Process

It is important that any support offered to a transgender child or young person starts with identifying their individual needs. It must be understood that some trans people may not want any treatment. Some may choose to be known by a different name or to wear different clothes. However, most or all young trans people (and their families) will need some expert/specialist support as they grow up and develop.

A trans child would benefit from an Early Help Assessment in line with Bolton Children's Safeguarding Board procedures to identify any additional needs arising from transgender issues. St Joseph's would (with agreement and in consultation with the pupil and parent/carer) complete an Early Help Assessment to identify specific information that the young person would like to be shared with those working with them to avoid them having to repeat themselves. When completing the assessment, particular attention should be paid to the sections on 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. The allocated Lead Professional should always be someone who knows and gets on well with the child (Head of Year, Form Teacher etc).

Further guidance on the Early Help Process; <http://boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/working-with-children-and-young-people/early-help-and-working-together/>

Terminology and Language

The correct terminology and language should be used and in order to do this there may need to be some education in lessons around sexual orientation and gender, so that staff and pupils have a clear understanding that sexual orientation and gender identity are two completely different things. For the matter of fairness and inclusion it is extremely important that the correct gender, name and pronouns are used correctly to address transgender pupils.

Names and pronoun change

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 transgender 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.

More information on changing names on birth certificates can be found at www.deedpoll.org.uk/CanABirthCertificateBeChanged.html

School Attendance

St Joseph's will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for any treatment or appointments with external sources in line with their absence policy. It is possible that the young person may be accessing support from outside of school, so provision must be made in order for the student to be absent from school, but, confidentiality must be maintained at all times when complying with absence procedures. Sensitive care will be taken when recording the reason for absence. The young person may need time off for a medical appointment and it should be recorded as an 'M' code rather than being off sick.

School Photos

Trans children may feel fine with having their photograph taken at school, but steps must be taken to ensure that these images do not reveal any confidential information. St Joseph's will always seek parental/carer permission to publish photos in line with the school policy.

Transphobia and Bullying

St Joseph's have a robust anti-bullying policy. In line with this policy, transphobia incidents will be recorded and dealt with in the same manner as other incidents that are motivated by prejudice, e.g. racist or homophobic incidents.

Physical Education

Sports and Physical Education is a key aspect of the national curriculum and the physical and mental well-being of young people. Physical Education develops pupil's competence and confidence to take part in a range of physical activities that become a central part of their lives, both in and out of school.

A young Transgender person has the same right to Physical Education as other young people. With regard to young Transgender people at school, there should be reasonably few, if any, issues regarding participation within the sports of their true gender.

There may be sports where, as puberty develops, male to female (M2F) Transgender participants may have a physical advantage over other girls but this should not present a

problem within a carefully and sensitively managed lesson context. The issue of physical risk within certain sports should also be managed properly within the lesson context rather than preventing young Transgender people from participating (which would be discriminatory).

If a pupil is binding their chest, they should be monitored carefully during particularly physical activities and in hot weather. There is a chance that the binding could cause discomfort or even impair breathing. Short breaks from activity could be offered discretely.

It may be that due to the nature of contact and physicality of sports such as rugby, the school would consider whether a Transgender person participating in full contact lessons is appropriate towards the latter stages of puberty.

Changing Room Facilities

The use of changing room facilities will also be carefully considered. Facilities for Transgender pupils will be sensitive to their needs and also recognise the needs and sensitivities of other students. When competing at another school or outside venue, school staff must ensure there is appropriate sensitive provision available. St Joseph's will take a view on this prior to the delivery of those lessons, in discussion with parents or carers.

Swimming Lessons

The pupil should be given the choice as to whether they wish to partake in swimming lessons or not. If the trans pupil wishes to partake in swimming lessons, then a risk assessment of the changing facilities should be completed. There must be careful consideration, in consultation with the pupil and in line with the health and safety policy of the leisure centre or swimming pools health and safety procedures. For example, it may be against health and safety regulations to wear a t-shirt in the swimming pool and therefore would be more appropriate for a F2M pupil to wear an all in one wetsuit or similar.

Toilet Facilities

There is provision in St Joseph's for unisex toilets. Transgender students will be able to use these facilities which have been labelled sensitively and appropriately.

School Uniform

Transgender students will be expected to follow the School Uniform Policy, which covers uniform, make-up and jewellery and hairstyles.

There is a generally broad range of uniform available for both genders (i.e. girls and boys can wear trousers and all students must wear a *blazer, jumper, shirt and tie*).

Residential Trips

Careful consideration and preparation is needed where a transgender pupil is taking part in a residential trip – to exclude a transgender pupil would be contravening the Equality Act.

The sleeping arrangements will need to be thought about carefully before the trip takes place. Risk assessments should be carried out prior to residential trips so that reasonable adjustments can be made to allow the pupil to participate.

Work Experience

Where St Joseph's is considering a Work Experience placement the school will complete a suitable assessment on the potential placement to establish if there is any risk to the young Transgender person, taking account of the young Transgender person's right to privacy – as a general principle, personal information on the young Transgender person must not be shared.

School will be sensitive to this in their planning before any young Transgender person is placed in any business or organisation. Careful discussion about the placement with the pupil and parents or carers, will occur to find the most suitable way forward to ensure the placement is successful.

Vaccinations

St Joseph's will allow any gender specific vaccinations to be carried out at the GP's surgery in order to eliminate any embarrassment.

Media Interest

Confidential information about pupils will not be shared with other parents. The following suggested suitable response for staff to offer should they be asked questions in relation to trans issues:

"We value all our pupils and care for them, whatever their personal circumstances. Our main job is to give them a good education in a happy school environment. That is what we are focusing on, and we would ask everyone to respect the privacy of all our pupils."

St Joseph's will not engage with the press over this issue without seeking the advice of the LA press officer or media relations officer.

Staff must know their duties and responsibilities around data protection so that they fully understand why information is protected, and when, how and to whom certain information can be released.

Confidentiality

All people have a right to privacy. This includes the right to keep private one's trans status or gender non-conforming presentation at school. Information about a child, young person or staff member's trans status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth also constitutes confidential medical information. School staff should not disclose information that may reveal a child or young person's transgender status or gender non-conforming presentation to others, including parents/carers and other members of the school community unless legally required to do so or because the child or parent/carer has given permission for them to do so. Staff need to be careful about discussing the trans gender child beyond the confines of the school.

Trans children and staff have the right to discuss and express their gender identity openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share information. When contacting the parent or carer of a trans child or young person, school personnel should use the child or young person's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to their gender assigned at birth unless the child, young person, parent, or carer has specified otherwise.