



Bradford Girls' Grammar School Supporting Gender- Questioning Children: Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy

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1. Trust Policy Statement

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) is committed to providing safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all pupils. We recognise that some children may experience questions, uncertainty, or distress relating to their gender and may require support from their school.

Furthermore, as part of our focus on diversity and inclusion, BDAT pledges that our policies will seek to promote equality, fairness, and respect for all staff and pupils. Our policies reflect the BDAT values of inclusion, compassion, aspiration, resilience, and excellence. By working closely with a range of stakeholders, such as our school, union, and HR colleagues, we have ensured that BDAT's policies do not unlawfully discriminate against anybody.

This policy will be reviewed on at least an annual basis to ensure it reflects any changes in national guidance.

For the purpose of this policy, the term Trust refers to BDAT. The term school and the term academy are interchangeable. The term pupil and the term student are interchangeable.

2. Introduction and Scope

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) states that there has been a significant increase in recent years in the number of children who are questioning the way they feel about being a boy or a girl, including the physical attributes of their sex and the related ways in which they fit into society.

This policy sets out how Bradford Girls' Grammar School will respond to circumstances where a child is questioning their gender, ensuring that:

- the welfare and best interests of the child remain paramount
- safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled in line with statutory guidance
- parents and carers are appropriately involved
- decisions are made on an individual basis
- the rights, safety, privacy and dignity of all pupils are considered
- staff act consistently and lawfully

Bradford Girls' Grammar School will not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination towards any pupil because they are questioning their gender or because of any protected characteristic.

This policy applies to all staff, Governors, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working for and on behalf of Bradford Girls' Grammar School.

3. Links to Legislation, Guidance and Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following legislation, guidance and other BDAT/Academy specific policies:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 \(KCSIE\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR](#)
- Bradford Girls' Grammar School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Bradford Girls' Grammar School Behaviour Policy
- BDAT Supporting Gender-Questioning Children: Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Inclusion Statement and Expectations
- [BDAT Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- [BDAT Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

4. Key Principles and Definitions

KCSIE 2026 sets out the approach that schools should take to support children who may be questioning their gender. Some of the key terminology referenced within this policy is defined below:

Gender Questioning: where a person expresses uncertainty, curiosity or desire to explore their feelings regarding their gender identity.

Sex: biological sex recorded at birth.

Gender Identity: a person's internal sense of their gender. This may or may not match their biological sex.

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

The guidance is clear that social transition is an active intervention and schools must take a careful safeguarding-led approach when responding to children who are questioning their gender. Schools must not initiate any action in this area. Members of staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made and communicated to them in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

It is a key principle that parents should normally be involved in discussions, and their views should carry great weight in the considerations.

In responding to children who may be questioning their gender or requests for social transition, Bradford Girls' Grammar School will:

- operate with a child-centred approach
- recognise that children who are questioning their gender may have a range of needs and experiences
- avoid making assumptions about the reasons for a child's feelings
- recognise that where a child is questioning their gender it does not automatically indicate a safeguarding concern, but that consideration should be given as to whether any safeguarding, mental health, SEND, neurodevelopmental or wellbeing factors are present
- ensure concerns are managed through established safeguarding procedures
- maintain accurate records of all discussions, including the rationale for any decisions reached
- keep decisions under review when circumstances change

All decisions will be based with the best interests of the pupil and other pupils at their heart.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

This section sets out the responsibilities of different stakeholders:

5.1 BDAT Trust Board

Trustees are responsible for reviewing and approving the BDAT Trust-wide statement. The Trust Board sets BDAT's overall strategy, which prioritises inclusion for all at its heart and aims to eradicate discrimination of all forms.

5.2 Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB of Bradford Girls' Grammar School is responsible for reviewing and approving this school-level Supporting Children who are Questioning their Gender Policy, which sets out our arrangements and procedures as to how we will respond.

The LGB will monitor the implementation of the policy by providing scrutiny of documentation provided to them including Headteacher Reports, Safeguarding Reports and our Inclusion Strategy.

5.3 Headteacher

The Headteacher of Bradford Girls' Grammar School will ensure lawful and consistent implementation of this policy, which has been developed in line with the principles set out in the BDAT statement.

They will have overall responsibility for decision making in relation to social transition requests as informed by discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

5.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will act as overall lead in relation to all processes relating to requests for social transition. This will include:

- assessing any associated safeguarding risks and responding in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- coordinating discussions with parents
- seeking advice from relevant professionals where appropriate
- liaising with the Headteacher to respond to any social transition requests
- maintaining records of discussions and rationale of decisions made
- reviewing arrangements regularly

5.5 All Staff

If a staff member is approached about social transition or to discuss any topic relevant to gender questioning, they should respond with understanding and support but explain that they cannot make any decisions.

Instead, they should explain that they will refer any requests on to the DSL and maintain confidentiality appropriately. Staff members will not provide clinical advice or undertake any functions that require clinical expertise.

Where a decision regarding a social transition is communicated to them by the Headteacher and DSL, staff should follow decisions and instructions as communicated. Staff must not initiate arrangements relating to social transition independently.

6. Responding to Social Transition Requests

6.1 Step-by-Step Response Process

Where a child or their parent or carer raises a request relating to gender questioning or social transition, Bradford Girls' Grammar School will undertake the following steps:

1. The request will be referred to the DSL who will act as overall lead in the process
2. The DSL will liaise with the pupil and, usually, parents to establish the nature of the request (see 6.2)
3. All relevant information will be gathered to enable a careful and considered approach, especially where the request involves any element of social transition. This may include gathering information from other colleagues in school (e.g. the SENDCO) and other professionals.
4. The DSL will assess whether there are any additional vulnerabilities present and determine if a safeguarding or other response is required
5. Using the information collated by the DSL, the Headteacher will undertake a documented decision-making process in line with the factors set out below (see 6.3).
6. The outcome of the decision, including the rationale, will be recorded on CPOMS (the school's safeguarding recording system) and communicated to the pupil and parents.
7. Where any elements of social transition are agreed, this will be communicated to the relevant staff members so that they can be implemented within school.
8. A meeting should be scheduled to review the implementation of any social transition arrangements.

We recognise that KCSIE guidance states social transition is an active intervention requiring careful consideration and so we will not implement immediate changes simply because a request has been made.

6.2 Parental Involvement

At Bradford Girls' Grammar School, it is our starting point that where a child is questioning their gender, parents will be involved as a matter of priority. We recognise that parents have primary responsibility for the upbringing and welfare of their children and their views will be given significant weight.

We believe that outcomes for children are best when they have supportive relationships with their family and it is a cornerstone of our approach to all aspects of school life that we work in partnership with parents.

Where pupils do not wish to tell their parents that they are questioning their gender, we will encourage and offer to support them in having these conversations. If the pupil is not requesting any element of social transition, however, their confidence will be maintained unless there is an associated safeguarding concern.

Where a pupil is requesting any element of social transition, it is only in exceptional circumstances that parents would not be informed. Namely, this would be where involving parents is believed to place a child at risk of significant harm and, in these circumstances, the DSL will consider alternative safeguarding arrangements before parental engagement occurs. Such decisions will be fully documented.

6.3 Assessment of Social Transition Requests and Decision-Making

As stated previously, Bradford Girls' Grammar School will take a careful and considered approach in deciding upon any requests for any element of social transition to take place for a pupil in school.

The DSL will gather all relevant information as outlined above and consult with the Headteacher to decide whether to agree to part or all of a social transition request. This decision will consider:

- the child's age and developmental stage
- the child's wishes and feelings
- any safeguarding concerns
- any presenting mental health and emotional wellbeing needs
- any SEND or neurodevelopmental needs
- any medical information
- the views of the child's parents
- any other relevant professional advice
- the impact on other pupils
- the school's distinct but interacting obligations under safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law.

Each case will be considered on an individual basis, and the decision will be underpinned by our evaluation of the welfare of and best interests of the child and other children.

6.4 Communicating the Outcome of a Decision

A Decision to Allow Social Transition

The pupil and parents will be informed of the decision by the DSL at the earliest opportunity once it has been made including the rationale and reasoning behind the decision.

The DSL, pupil and parents will then agree how it is going to be communicated to relevant staff in school, so that any changes can be implemented to support the transition. Consideration will also need to be given to how the pupil's peers are going to be informed.

Staff will implement any changes linked to the social transition once this has been communicated to them by the DSL. Whilst we will strive for perfection from the outset, we ask for understanding from pupils and parents that staff may initially make mistakes given that they could have known the pupil with a different name and pronouns for a sustained period of time.

A Decision Not to Allow Social Transition

The pupil and parents will be informed of the decision by the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity once it has been made, including the rationale and reasoning behind the decision. If there are any concerns about the decision, these should be managed in line with the BDAT Complaints Policy.

6.5 Review of Social Transitions

Bradford Girls' Grammar School recognises that the circumstances of a case and/or needs of children can change over time. For example, a child may change their mind about the pronouns they wish to use or school leaders may find that an agreed decision has placed an unsustainable pressure on the school's resources.

To ensure that any decisions remain in the best interest of the child and other pupils, we will review them on a termly basis based on the same principles (as set out above) used to make the original decision. Review discussions and decisions will be documented on CPOMS (the school's safeguarding system).

6.6 Support for Children who Wish to Detransition

Bradford Girls' Grammar School understands the importance of maintaining flexibility and keeping options open for children who have socially transitioned. If a pupil wishes to fully or partially reverse a social transition decision, we will work closely with the pupil, their parents and any other professionals involved to ensure this happens in a supported manner.

7. Constraints on Social Transition

Bradford Girls' Grammar School is legally bound by its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and KCSIE statutory guidance which states that there are certain constraints regarding social transition arrangements that schools must abide by.

In explaining these constraints to pupils and families, we will always do so with compassion and sensitivity, however, these are provisions that we must comply with.

7.1 Facilities

In relation to school facilities, even where other elements of social transition are agreed, pupils will not be able to:

- use toilets designated for the opposite biological sex
- use changing rooms designated for the opposite biological sex
- access showers designated for the opposite biological sex
- access overnight residential accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex

Where a pupil does not wish to use facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider reasonable alternative arrangements where available and appropriate. Any alternative arrangements will not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child, or any other children.

7.2 Sport

Where activities or sports require single-sex participation for reasons of safety or fairness, participation arrangements will be determined in accordance with the law and guidance from that sport's national governing body (e.g. The Football Association).

Where there are no safety or fairness concerns, decisions on participation will be made in line with the principles and procedures set out earlier in this policy.

7.3 Correct Information

Holding the correct information about our pupils is vital in the context of us fulfilling our safeguarding duties. We are obliged to ensure that relevant staff are informed of a child's biological sex in all cases, and we are legally required to record a child's biological sex accurately on our Management Information System and CPOMS (the school's safeguarding system), even if a social transition is agreed.

8. Safeguarding Considerations

8.1 General Vulnerabilities

Bradford Girls' Grammar School considers the safeguarding of all pupils in our school as the highest priority. We recognise that children who are questioning their gender may also experience additional vulnerabilities including (but not limited to) mental health needs, bullying, difficulties in relationships with their peers and/or family, and challenges related to their broader social environment.

Any arising issues will be managed through our normal safeguarding and pastoral processes. Where there is reason to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, child protection procedures will be followed as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

8.2 Bullying

At Bradford Girls' Grammar School, we are clear that all forms of bullying, for whatever reason, are unacceptable. We will take a strong, proactive stand against any bullying, tackling it at the earliest opportunity to prevent it from escalating. Please refer to our Anti-Bullying Policy for further information.

8.3 Children Living in Stealth

We are particularly mindful of the vulnerabilities of children who may be living in stealth. This refers to circumstances where children may have socially transitioned from an early age and their friends and school staff may be unaware of their biological sex. We recognise that these children may be likely to approach puberty in a fearful or anxious state and will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead provides support as required.

9. Recordkeeping, Confidentiality and Information Sharing

As part of our approach to supporting children who may be questioning their gender, KCSIE requires that we maintain clear records of discussions, decisions and the rationale for them. The DSL will maintain records of:

- any social transition requests received
- any safeguarding assessments undertaken
- discussions with pupils
- discussions with parents
- any professional advice obtained
- decisions made
- reasons for decisions
- review dates

Records will be stored securely on CPOMS in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements. Information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis in accordance with data protection requirements.

10. Policy Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Local Governing Body. The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where changes in legislation, guidance or local procedures require this.