

Gender Questioning Young People Guidance

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees with reference to the academy's Equality Policy. The aims of the Equality Policy are to ensure that Plume Academy meets the needs of all, taking account of gender identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this academy we meet the diverse needs of students to ensure inclusion for all and that all students are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

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Approved by the Executive Senior Leadership Team who have delegated authority to approve this policy by the Board of Trustees		Approved: May 2025

Table of Contents

Statement of Intent.....	3
Legislation	3
The Human Rights Act 1998.....	3
The Gender Recognition Act 2004	3
The Equality Act 2010	3
Discrimination	4
Absence from Plume Academy.....	4
Terminology and Language.....	4
Training	5
Transition from One Educational Setting to Another	5
Responding to Request and Engaging parents	6
Press Interest	6
The Use of Toilets and Changing Facilities.....	7
Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) & Personal Development Curriculum.....	7
The Internet, Social Media and TV.....	7
Changing Names, Gender and Examination Certificates	7
Vaccinations	8
School Trips, Exchanges and Overnight Stays.....	8
Appendix 1: Support Resources for Parents/Carers and Young People	10
Appendix 2: Useful Book List	14
Appendix 3: Terminology	17

This guidance is aligned with our rigorous approach to safeguarding and equal opportunities at the academy.

Statement of Intent

Plume Academy recognises that gender questioning young people and their families face particular challenges and hurdles and are likely to need extra support from the academy to help them achieve their true potential. We are committed to supporting all of the students in our care, as well as their families, on an individual basis and will put into place as many extra levels of pastoral care as possible for all students who need it, including gender questioning young people.

Legislation

Legislation that informs this guidance and the participation of Trans (including gender-variant) students and students in the academy include the:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The following Articles from The Human Rights Act 1998 support the rights and needs of gender questioning people:

- Article 8: right to respect for private life and family life
- Article 10: freedom of expression
- Article 14: the prohibition of discrimination (See resources section for more information)

The Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 is mainly concerned with the process by which a person can get a Gender Recognition Certificate and correct their original birth certificate to match their true gender. This can only occur after a person reaches 18 years of age.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 ensures legal protection against discrimination (direct or indirect) for everyone under the nine protected characteristics defined in the Act, one of which is Gender Reassignment (also known as Transgender).

Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010 makes it clear that the Act specifically refers to Schools and young people. The Equality Act 2010 (2:1:7) states that;

“A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex”.

The act applies to employment, education and a range of other areas where discrimination may take place. In order to be protected under the Act, a student will not necessarily have to be undergoing a medical procedure, but they must be taking steps to live in the opposite gender or be proposing to do so.

Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 ensures legal protection against discrimination in employment, education, the provision of services and the delivery of public functions, in relation to the nine protected characteristics defined in the Act, one of which is Gender Re-assignment. The legislation lays down that a school must not discriminate against a student because of their gender questioning.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but puts a person with a particular protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and it can’t be justified as a proportionate means of meeting legitimate aim.

Absence from the Plume Academy

The academy will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support from external sources. The absence must be requested in advance by the parents/carers and will be recorded as *“other authorised absence”*.

Terminology and Language

It is good practice to focus on correct terminology and the use of language in the academy. As an academy, we focus some education in relevant lessons (such as Personal Development) and in an age-appropriate manner, around sexual orientation and gender, so that everyone has a clear understanding that sexual orientation (being heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian) and gender identity, are completely different things. Terminology and language can be confusing around gender questioning issues.

Different individuals sometimes prefer different terms to identify themselves and the nature of being gender questioning and the academy will take its lead from the student on an individual basis. The academy, in discussion with the student and their parents/carers, will change the preferred name(s) and gender on academy records as requested.

Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will never be tolerated at Plume Academy. At our academy the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all students and staff is a key priority and of paramount importance. We take all incidents of bullying very seriously and strongly believe it is our duty as a whole academy community to take measures to prevent, tackle and resolve any bullying, harassment or discrimination that is reported and or that may arise. We actively promote the core British Values of respect and equality, and work to ensure that ‘difference and diversity’ is celebrated across the whole academy community. We also want to enable our students to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for life in 21st Century Britain. These values reflect those that will be expected of our students, without exception, as well as by

society in general, when they leave Plume Academy and enter the world of work, further study, or training. We remain fully committed to improving our academy's approach to tackling bullying by regularly monitoring, reviewing, and assessing the impact of our preventative measures.

For more information, please see the Plume Academy Anti Bully Policy.

Training

Training around gender questioning will be given within the regular welfare and/or safeguarding briefings and to all new staff. This will include:

- Confidentiality
- Gender identity
- Privacy and dignity
- Tackling bullying
- Relevant Legislation

Gender Questioning & Physical Education

A young gender questioning person has the same right to Physical Education lessons and fitness as other young people. At Plume Academy there should be no difficulty with this. PE lessons in Years' 7 and 8 are single gender and a gender questioning student has the right to choose which group pathway they want to follow, and in Years 9-11, there is an opportunity to participate in mixed gender groups and a gender questioning student should be allowed to wear the sports kit of their choice. Provision can be made for showering and changing, and this will be done for each individual circumstance, depending on the availability of private showers, and changing areas.

Team sports also must be dealt with on an individual basis. Pre-puberty in Years' 7 and 8 should present no particular issues and students should be able to compete regardless of gender. However, in later adolescence, there may be welfare and safeguarding concerns if there is a discrepancy between size and strength of a gender questioning student. Although this needs to be handled sensitively, and in consultation with the gender questioning student and their parents/carers, the safety of every student who will be involved needs to be the first priority.

Within the competitive and representational aspects of school sport, advice will be taken from the relevant sporting governing bodies on a case-by-case basis. In certain circumstances, a student may be in receipt of hormone blockers that may affect performance and eligibility for competition.

In inter-school matches or competitions, care needs to be taken to ascertain what facilities would be available for a gender questioning student that respects their dignity and privacy.

Transition from One Educational Setting to Another

It is important to acknowledge that children in primary school may socially transition. Particular needs may then arise for a child who, for example, socially transitioned in Year 4 of primary school, at the point they move up to a secondary school as they will be faced by different challenges in this new context. Where a gender questioning student is identified the following can be put in place:

- A meeting with the child and their parents and carers to address how they would like any issues that arise to be managed in the secondary school.
- A named contact or 'trusted adult' for the child to approach if issues arise during the day.

Responding to Request and Engaging parents

There is a clear expectation and understanding that all Plume Academy staff give academic and pastoral support to the best of their ability and equally, to all students. Comprehensive and informative training is given so that staff can feel confident about the issues involved.

Confidential information about students will not be shared with other parents/carers and any queries or questions from other parents/carers about this must be referred to the relevant Head of Year/ Assistant Head of Year.

Children questioning their gender may make different requests. At Plume Academy staff will not proactively initiate action towards a student's social transition. Action will only be considered after it has been explicitly requested by the student, and the steps set out below have been followed, including engaging with parents. There could be instances where children disclose first to their teachers that they may be questioning their gender. If there is no change being requested, teachers can listen respectfully about a student's feelings without automatically alerting parents, but, for safeguarding reasons, cannot promise confidentiality.

The academy can accommodate degrees of social transition, and will do so considering the following:

- **Allow for watchful waiting:** Waiting for a period of time before considering a request, to ensure it is a sustained and properly thought through decision. This period of 'watchful waiting' may help to ensure unnecessary action is not undertaken.
- **Make parents/ carers aware:** If a child requests a change, we will make parents/ carers aware of the situation and can point them to support outside the academy environment (for example, pastoral or medical support) if they request more information. The only exception to this is the very rare situation where informing parents might raise a significant risk of harm to the child.

If, after a period of watchful waiting, the student would still like their request to be granted, involving the Whole Academy Mental Health Lead, the following points will be taken into account:

- The academy's safeguarding obligations.
- The view of parents
- The age of the child
- Any relevant clinical information that is available
- The seriousness and context of the request
- The long- and short-term impact on the student
- The impact on other students

Press Interest

The academy shall provide factual information regarding this guidance in relation to media enquiries. It will not make comment or provide details relating to any individual case. Media enquiries should be directed towards the Joint Heads of Academy.

The Use of Toilets and Changing Facilities

There are several gender-neutral accessible toilets at Plume Academy.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) & Personal Development Curriculum

RSE and Personal Development are an important part of preparing young people for some of the issues they will come across in their lives. The curriculums and schemes of works are updated annually and awareness of gender questioning issues, along with sexual orientation and differing family structures, are implicitly embedded within ideas of tolerance, equality, and difference. Explicit references to these issues are covered at age-appropriate times using carefully selected resources.

The Internet, Social Media and TV

Social media and the internet are seemingly inescapable parts of modern life. The safe and effective use of the internet is a great concern to all involved in safeguarding young people. Social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Kik and Tumblr for example) are often a place for connections to be made that help people feel much less isolated. Connecting with people over common interests or shared experiences is more familiar to young people than connecting because of location or year group.

A number of support groups mentioned in the later sections have an internet presence that can provide support and connect young people with others in a similar situation. All students are expected to follow our 'E-Safety Agreement' and are supported to ensure their experiences online are positive. Whilst incidences of online peer-on-peer abuse are very rare, we remain vigilant at all times and will take swift and effective action in response to any negative behaviours / interactions.

Gender questioning students seeking help and support from social media need to as do all young people, keep personal security tight, be aware of boundaries in online life and connect to only reputable websites. Information for parents and young people on internet safety is available from CEOP and NSPCC and the information contained in their websites. In recent years, TV has started to portray Trans people in a more positive way.

Changing Names, Gender and Examination Certificates

If a gender questioning student wishes to have their personal data recognised on school systems, parents will be consulted and the academy will support via changes to 'preferred name' which will feed into letters home, report cycles etc.

In regard to the academy recording this data, section 4.2.7 of the annual 'School Census' Department for Education guidance indicates that the gender of a student is recorded in the format of male or female. However, *"in exceptional circumstances, a school may be unsure as to which gender should be recorded for a particular student. Where this occurs, gender is recorded according to the wishes of the student and/or parent/carer."*

Students can be entered under any name with an examination board, however, once a result is accredited, it will need to be linked with the student's legal name held on the academy register not the preferred names. It is possible for examination certificates to be issued in the preferred name.

In all cases, there must be close consultation with the gender questioning student and their parents/carers. Examination boards are very experienced in gender related questions and will be able to guide the academy through the process.

It is possible for most documents to be changed to reflect the chosen name or gender of the young person. Changing details on a birth certificate is not possible until a Gender Recognition Certificate has been issued. To change a name on other official documents such as a passport, it might be necessary for evidence of change of name to be produced: there are two main ways in which this can be done-by deed poll or by statutory declaration. The government advice is published here: www.gov.uk/change-name-deed-poll/overview

Support organisations listed in the resources section will have more information on the subject of changing name. A person under 16 years cannot change their name legally without the consent of a parent/carer, and simply changing name does not change a legal gender.

*Legal Name refers to the name in which a student or students arrives in education for the first time; this is often the name on their birth certificate.

Vaccinations

Generally, vaccinations are given in the academy, however, consideration should be given to allowing the gender questioning young person to receive their vaccinations from their doctor's surgery if the vaccination is gender specific.

Vaccinations are not always separated by gender and if it is still necessary to have mass vaccination sessions in school, then a mixed gender queue will be used, as well as screens for the person receiving the vaccination be supplied to promote privacy whilst being included in the mainstream (See Article 8 Human Rights Act 2004)

School Trips, Exchanges and Overnight Stays

Learning about different cultures and lives, and taking part in activities, may lead to overnight stays, both at home and abroad. Gender questioning students are entitled to access appropriate trips, but consideration should be given well in advance to any additional needs which may include having a parent or carer (as a member of staff) accompany the trip to ensure that the student is fully included.




The sleeping arrangements will need to be thought about before a trip is undertaken; it is possible that the student would prefer to have a separate room for example. Each individual case and trip need to be thought of separately and in-depth discussions should happen well in advance with any and all appropriate bodies.

When travelling abroad, different countries will have laws, policies and procedures that could affect gender questioning students. The trip leader will consider these laws, policies, and procedures in advance so that any risk assessment is accurate for that visit or trip.






The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) have more information on their website about countries that pose a risk to LGBT+ individuals. In relation to passports, the Passport Office has a confidential service (0800 448 8484) and more advice can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applyingfor-a-passport-information-for-transgender-andtranssexual-customers>

Appendix 1: Support Resources for Parents/Carers and Young People

LGBT+ Inclusive Organisations

Source	Overview	Online links
<p>Childline</p> 	<p>Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. Young people can contact Childline via email, message boards or phone and access advice and information online</p>	<p>https://www.childline.org.uk/ Call 0800 1111</p>
<p>Ditch the Label</p> 	<p>Global Youth Charity. Here to help young people aged 12-25 navigate the issues affecting them the most; from mental health and bullying to identity and relationships</p>	<p>https://ditchthelabel.org/</p>
<p>Families and friends of lesbian, gay and bisexual people (FFLAG)</p> 	<p>Families and friends of lesbian, gay and bisexual people (FFLAG) provides support for parents/carers and their lesbian, gay and bisexual children. The website offers resources, stories from parents/carers of LGB young people and information on local parent groups</p>	<p>https://www.fflag.org.uk/ Confidential Helpline 0300 688 0368</p>
<p>Galop</p> 	<p>Support LGBT+ people who have experienced abuse and violence. Providing confidential support to all members of the LGBT community, their family, friends, and the agencies supporting them. The helpline is run by trained LGBT people and provides a safe space where you can share your issues and think of next steps</p>	<p>https://galop.org.uk/ National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 999 5428 LGBT+ Hate Crime Helpline 0207 704 2040 National Conversion Therapy Helpline 0800 130 3335</p>

<p>Gendered Intelligence</p> 	<p>Gendered Intelligence is an organisation that works to increase the quality of trans people's lives and to raise awareness of trans people's needs. Their website hosts an online group for parents/carers of young trans people aged 13-25, a Guide for Parents/Carers and Families of Young Trans People and Parents/Carers and Family Members of Trans People in the UK – A Report on the Issues</p>	<p>http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/</p>
<p>GiDS</p> 	<p>The Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) is a highly specialised clinic for young people presenting with difficulties with their gender identity</p>	<p>https://gids.nhs.uk/</p>
<p>Gingerbread</p> 	<p>The charity supporting single parent/carer families to live secure, happy and fulfilling lives</p>	<p>https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/ Helpline number: 0808 802 0925.</p>
<p>Hidayah</p> 	<p>Hidayah is a nationwide organisation for LGBTQI+ Muslims in the United Kingdom. They campaign for social justice to defeat the stigma, taboo and discrimination faced by many within the Muslim community and to give LGBTQI+ Muslims visibility to gain social acceptance and change</p>	<p>https://www.hidayahlgbt.co.uk/</p>
<p>Kooth</p> 	<p>Kooth is a digital mental health support service. It gives young people access to an online community and a team of experienced counsellors</p>	<p>https://www.kooth.com/</p>
<p>LGBT Foundation</p>	<p>The LGBT Foundation</p>	<p>https://lgbt.foundation/</p>

	<p>supports LGBT people to increase their skills, knowledge and self-confidence to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing. They also work in partnership with other organisations to build strong, cohesive and influential LGBT communities</p>	<p>Advice Support & Information 0345 3303030</p>
<p>LGBT+ Switchboard</p> 	<p>Switchboard is an LGBT+ helpline – a place for calm words when you need them most. They're here to help you with whatever you want to talk about. Nothing is off limits and conversations are 100% confidential</p>	<p>https://switchboard.lgbt/ Advice 03003300630 Email chris@switchboard.lgbt</p>
<p>Mind</p> 	<p>LGBTIQ+ mental health. Gives information about mental health support for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer or questioning (LGBTIQ+)</p>	<p>https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support</p>
<p>NHS</p> 	<p>NHS choices website – think your child might be transgender? Information and guidance for parents/carers who think their child may be trans or whose child has just come out as trans</p>	<p>https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/</p>
<p>Pink Therapy</p> 	<p>We are the UK's largest independent therapy organisation working with gender and sexual diversity clients</p> <p>As an organisation we aim to promote high quality therapy and training services for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual</p>	<p>http://www.pinktherapy.com/</p>

	and transgender and others who identify as being gender or sexual diversities	
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Appendix 2: Useful Book List

LGBTQ+ Books available in our MRC LAIC

- From Prejudice to Pride (Lame, Amy)
- Trans Global (Head, Honor)
- Boys Don't Cry (Blackman, Malorie)
- Love in Revolution (Collins, B.R.)
- Happy families (Davis, Tanitas)
- Hollow Pike (Dawson, Juno)
- Margot and me (Dawson, Juno)
- Pet (Emezi, Akwaeke)
- George (Gino, Alex)
- Noah Can't Even (Green, Simon James)
- Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World (Herring Blake, Ashley)
- Totally Joe (Howe, James)
- Whats up with Jody Barton? (Long, Harley)
- This Song Will Save Your Life (Sales, Leila)
- To Night Owl from Dogfish (Holly Goldberg Sloan)
- Starring Kitty (Stainton, Keris)
- Parrotfish (Wittlinger, Ellen)

LGBTQ+ Books available in our FRC LAIC

- Trans Mission: My Quest To A Beard (Bertie, Alex)
- Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda (Albertalli, Becky)
- The Black Flamingo (Atta, Dean)
- Last Bus to Everland (Cameron Sophie)
- FreakBoy (Clark, Kristin Elizabeth)
- One in Every Crowd (Coyote, Ivan.E)
- Geography Club (Hartinger, Brent)
- I'm The King of the Castle (Hill, Susan)
- Hideous Beauty (Hussey, William)
- Almost Perfect (Katcher, Brian)
- Trumpet (Kay, Jackie)
- Openly Straight (Konigsberg, Bill)
- Out of the Pocket (Konigsberg, Bill)
- The Full Spectrum (Levithan, David; Merrell, Billy)
- Two Boys Kissing (Levithan, David)
- Boy Meets Boy (Levithan, David)
- Proxy (London, Alex)
- Strange Boy (Magrs, Paul)
- Pretend You Love Me (Peters, Julie Anne)
- Tomboy (Prince, Liz)
- Jack of Hearts (Rosen, L.C.)
- Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe (Saenz, Benjamin Alire)

- History is all you left me (Silvera, Adam)
- Starring Kitty (Stainton, Keris)
- It's a kind of a funny story (Vizzini, Ned)
- Girl 2 Girl (Rashid, Norrina; Hoy, Jane)

The book list is not meant to be a definitive guide. New books are published regularly and checking websites such as Amazon, Waterstones and other book retailers will add to your library of resources. (Please check the book's age range to ensure it is appropriate)

Different Families

- It's Okay To Be Different *Todd Parr*
- The Family Book *Todd Parr*
- Who's in a Family? *Robert Skutch*
- Picnic in the Park *Joe Griffiths*
- Prince Cinders *Babette Cole*
- The Princesses Have a Ball *Teresa Bateman*
- You're Different and That's Super *Carson Kressley*
- We're Different, We're the Same *Bobbi Kates*
- Incredible You *Wayne Dyer*

Children

- 10,000 Dresses *Marcus Ewert*
- The Boy in the Dress *David Walliams*
- My Princess Boy *Cheryl Kilodavis*
- The Sissy Duckling *Harvey Fierstein*
- William's Doll *Charlotte Zolotow*
- The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler *Gene Kemp*
- Be Who You Are! *Jennifer Carr*
- Tutus Aren't My Style *Linda Skeers*

Teenagers

- Choir Boy *Charlie Anders*
- Freak Show *James St James*
- Morgan in the Mirror *C C Saint Clair*
- My Brother Beth *Rebecca Sardella*
- Parrotfish *Ellen Wittlinger*
- Luna *Julie Anne Peters*
- My Gender Workbook: How to Become a Real Man, a Real Woman, the Real You or Something Else Entirely *Kate Bornstein*
- Feeling Wrong in Your Own Body: Understanding
- What it Means to be Transgender *Jaime A Seba*
- How Stephen Became Stephanie and Other Transgender Tales *Kate Lesley*

- Grrl Alex: A personal journey to a transgender identity *Alex Drummond*
- Finding the Real Me: True Tales of Sex and Gender Diversity *Tracie O'Keefe & Katrina Fox (eds)*
- Am I Transgender?: The Transgender Primer Vol 1 *A Lite*
Adults & reference:
- The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals *Stephanie Brill & Rachel Pepper*
- Transparent: Love, Family and Living the T with Transgender Teenagers *Cris Beam*
- Understanding Transsexualism *Mildred Brown & Chloe Rounsley*
- Helping Your Transgender Teen: A Guide for Parents *Irwin Krieger*
- Transgender Explained for Those Who Are Not *Joanne Herman*
- The Transgender Studies Reader *Susan Stryker & Stephen*

Appendix 3: Terminology

Terminology is based off of government consultation guidance found here:<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gender-questioning-children-draft-schools-and-colleges-guidance>

- **‘Gender identity’** is a sense a person may have of their own gender, whether male, female or another category such as non-binary; it may or may not be the same as their biological sex. Please note that the DfE argues that gender identity is “a contested belief” and “[m]any people do not consider that they or others have a gender identity at all”.
- **‘Gender questioning’** is used to describe children asking questions about their biological sex and perceived gender identity.
- **‘Gender distressed or confused’** is used to describe the distress or confusion that may arise from a broad range of experiences connected to a child’s understanding of their biological sex and associated attributes and behaviours, but where a formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria has not been made.
- **‘Gender incongruence’** is a medical diagnostic term for a marked and persistent incongruence between an individual’s experienced gender identity and their biological sex.
- **‘Gender dysphoria’** is a similar diagnostic term to describe gender incongruence of at least six months’ duration, which is manifested by a number of criteria; the condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social or other important areas of functioning.
- **‘Social transition’** refers to a process by which people change their name, pronouns, clothing, or use different facilities from those provided for their biological sex.

Note that the terminology does not specifically use the term ‘transgender’ to describe children, stating: “Under UK law, children cannot obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate and therefore cannot change their legal sex.” As such, children’s legal sex is always the same as their biological sex.