



West Lodge School

PART OF
ST DUNSTAN'S EDUCATION GROUP

GENDER IDENTITY POLICY

Policy owner	Deputy Head Pastoral (DHP)
ISSR reference	N/A
Reviewed	Autumn 2026
Approved	Group Board, Autumn 2026
Next review	Autumn 2027

Version Control

Reason for amendment	Role	Date	Main changes
Annual Review	Deputy Head Pastoral	Autumn 2026	Updated in line with updated statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

1. Aims

This policy applies to staff, pupils and parents/carers across St Dunstan's Education Group, including St Dunstan's Enterprises Ltd, and any other school or setting within St Dunstan's Education Group where adopted. It aims to ensure that all parties are clear about the framework through which gender identity matters are managed and overseen in school.

The Group aims to provide an inclusive environment that allows all pupils to thrive, including pupils who are LGBTQ+ or who have a non-conforming, fluid, non-binary or no gender identity. Pupils who are transgender, non-binary or questioning their gender may have individual journeys and the support they need or want will vary.

This policy primarily applies where a pupil, parent or carer has requested support relating to social transition in school, where a child presents as different to their biological sex, and the school is considering how to respond.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy is based on expectations set out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and is informed by relevant guidance and legislation, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026).
- The Equality Act 2010 including protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to protected characteristics, including gender reassignment.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- DFE Statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance (July 2025).
- Non-statutory guidance on planning relationships, sex and health curriculum content.
- Relevant clinical or professional advice provided for an individual pupil, where appropriate.

Gender dysphoria is a clinical condition which can present from an early age and can only be diagnosed by a medical expert. Some people diagnosed with gender dysphoria may require or desire medical treatment, while others may not seek or want medical treatment or diagnosis.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 St Dunstan's Education Group

The St Dunstan's Education Group Board has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding. Day-to-day responsibility is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who delegates safeguarding responsibility to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in each school. The Group Board will review this policy annually and ensure that schools follow the requirements set out in this policy.

3.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding. This includes ensuring that staff follow the framework set out in this policy, receive sufficient training to implement its principles, and that decision-making is appropriately recorded.

3.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for providing pastoral care, implementing the framework outlined in this policy and maintaining appropriate records through the school safeguarding system.

3.4 Pupils and parents/carers

Pupils and parents/carers are responsible for communicating effectively with the school about any support that may be required and for engaging with school communication routes.

4. Core principles for supporting gender identity

- The first consideration will always be the best interests and safeguarding needs of the individual pupil and other pupils.
- Support will be considered carefully, respectfully and on an individual basis.
- The support agreed by the school may not always be the same as the support initially requested by the pupil or family.
- The school will take a flexible approach with the aim of keeping the pupil's options open while maintaining safeguarding standards and compliance with relevant legislation.
- Where changes or support are agreed, the school will continue to meet its legal obligation to record a pupil's biological sex accurately.
- Relevant staff will be given the information they need to carry out their professional and safeguarding responsibilities.

5. Requests for support with social transition

Where a transgender, gender non-conforming, gender fluid or non-binary pupil or parent/carer asks the school to make changes or provide support relating to social transition, the school will consider the request carefully and sensitively.

The school will consider any relevant clinical evidence or professional advice provided. Where appropriate, advice may also be sought from other professionals, such as the SENDCo. The relevant DSL or DDSL will be involved, and consideration will be given to the pupil's wider health, additional needs, neurodiversity and any other relevant circumstances.

For younger pupils, particularly pre-pubescent pupils, the school is unlikely to agree immediately to a full social transition. Before significant or long-term changes are made in school, further information and appropriate external professional advice will normally be required.

6. Parental and carer involvement

The school will normally seek to involve parents or carers where a pupil has made a request for support. Working with parents and carers is important to promote the pupil's wellbeing and protect them from harm.

If there is reason to believe that involving parents or carers could place the pupil at greater risk, the DSL will first consider what action is necessary to safeguard the pupil. Parents or carers will not be contacted until this consideration has taken place.

Where a pupil does not feel comfortable or able to discuss their gender identity with parents/carers themselves, the school will explore how best to support these conversations.

7. Names, pronouns and records

Requests to change a pupil's name or pronouns will be considered carefully. Parents and carers will be involved in discussion around any agreed pronoun or name changes, subject to safeguarding considerations.

A legal name change is not required for the school to refer to a young person by a new name or pronoun where this has been agreed. The school will agree how any change should be communicated and implemented.

The school will maintain legally required records accurately. A pupil may be required to use their legal name for formal examinations, in which case the school will speak with the pupil and family and liaise with the relevant examination board.

8. Facilities, clothing and activities

Schools must consider the welfare and safety of the individual pupil and the wider school community, as well as obligations under the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Pupils must not be allowed into toilets, changing rooms or residential accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex. Alternative arrangements should be considered according to the individual pupil's needs, age, relevant risk assessment and the facilities available locally.

Where lessons, sports, activities or fixtures are organised by sex for safety, safeguarding or competition reasons, schools will consider appropriate arrangements on an individual basis, taking account of the safety, dignity and needs of everyone involved.

9. Safeguarding, bullying and confidentiality

The Group does not tolerate discrimination or bullying of any kind and will address bullying under the relevant anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

A pupil may confide in a member of staff about questions or feelings relating to gender identity without asking the school to make any changes. Information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with safeguarding and confidentiality procedures. Where a safeguarding concern arises, the school will follow usual safeguarding procedures.

10. Training, communication, monitoring and linked policies

Schools will facilitate relevant staff training, including working with internal or external providers where appropriate, so that staff understand how to support transgender, gender non-conforming, gender fluid and non-binary pupils in line with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head Pastoral and approved through the appropriate governance route. It should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Trips Policy.

Part B – School-specific procedures

11. Application at West Lodge School

This Part B applies to West Lodge School. It should be read alongside Part A.

12. Local responsibilities and information sharing

The Deputy Head is the policy owner who has responsibility for leading the pastoral system. The relevant DSL or DDSL, alongside SLT colleagues, will be involved in decisions about support relating to gender identity. Relevant staff will be given the information they need to carry out their professional and safeguarding responsibilities, while respecting the pupil's privacy and dignity.

Policy owner	Deputy Head
Safeguarding oversight	Relevant DSL or DDSL + SLT
Pastoral implementation	Teachers, TAs and support staff as appropriate
School records	Maintained accurately on CPOMS and iSAMS, including legal name and biological sex where required
Parent/carers communication	Direct contact from pastoral or safeguarding staff as appropriate

13. Individual support decision-making

Where support relating to social transition is requested, the pastoral team will work with the pupil and parents/carers sensitively to explain and discuss the policy, including any limits on social transition in school. Decisions will be made carefully and individually, with the aims of safeguarding the pupil, maintaining flexibility and keeping future options open.

Where arrangements are agreed, the school will clarify how they will be communicated, implemented, reviewed and recorded. The school will also consider any related health, SEND, neurodiversity, mental health or safeguarding circumstances.

14. Facilities at West Lodge School

At West Lodge toilets in the EYFS section are non-gendered and Year 1 to Year 6 toilets are gendered, with the exception of accessible toilets, which are gender neutral.

Pupils whose gender identity and biological sex differ may use facilities dedicated to their biological sex or gender-neutral, unisex facilities. Pastoral teams / staff will discuss with parents/carers and pupils to agree which facilities will be used.

15. Uniform at West Lodge

West Lodge does have gender specific winter and summer uniform, but trousers and shorts can be worn by all pupils and flexibility and understanding will be given where pupils wish to wear non-gender specific uniform.

16. SES, PE, Games and fixtures

At West Lodge School, PE, Swimming and Games sessions are gender neutral. In EYFS and Pre-Prep, all pupils have the opportunity to engage with all sports and develop a wide breadth of skills. In Prep, pupils have the opportunity to choose the sport they wish to focus on each term in Games; sports are taught in mixed-sex groupings and every pupil is provided with suitable challenge.

Where a pupil's gender identity differs from their biological sex, the pastoral team will work with the pupil, parents/carers and Sports Staff to agree suitable arrangements, taking account of the safety, dignity and needs of everyone involved. For away fixtures, the Sports Staff should ensure appropriate changing facilities are available in advance of travel where needed.

17. Trips and residential accommodation

A pupil will never share a room with someone of a different biological sex on a school residential trip. Alternative accommodation arrangements will be considered according to the individual pupil's needs, age, the nature of the trip and the relevant risk assessment. Options may include a single room or, where appropriate, sharing with a smaller number of pupils of the same biological sex with whom the pupil feels comfortable.

The pastoral team and trip leader will discuss the available arrangements with the pupil and parents/carers before the trip. The trip leader will liaise with the accommodation provider to establish what suitable toilet, washing and changing facilities are available, and agreed arrangements will be communicated clearly to the pupil and parents/carers.

18. Pupils living in stealth

The school recognises that some pupils may join West Lodge having socially transitioned at an earlier age and may be living in stealth, meaning that some members of the school community may be unaware of the pupil's biological sex. The school will maintain legally required records accurately. The DSL will work with the pupil and family from the outset to agree appropriate support, information-sharing arrangements and safeguarding measures.

19. Support for de-transitioning

The school recognises that a pupil may wish to reverse or reconsider some or all of the changes relating to social transition that were previously agreed. Any such request will be considered sensitively, flexibly and individually, with the aim of supporting the pupil and keeping future options open. The school will normally involve parents/carers and consider relevant professional advice. Once arrangements have been agreed, relevant staff will be informed so that the pupil can be supported consistently.

20. Training, education and press enquiries

The school will facilitate relevant staff training, including working with internal or external providers where appropriate. Pupils will be taught about different gender identities as part of the school Relationships and Sex Education programme at an age deemed appropriate by the Senior School Leadership Team. The RSE and PSHE scheme of work is used to cover statutory RSE requirements.

The CEO, or in his absence the Chief Operating Officer (COO), will be responsible for handling press enquiries. Any approach from the press should be directed to the Head of the school's office and no comment should be provided by any other member of staff.