



Gender Identity Research and Education Society

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ASSISTING SCHOOLS TO COMBAT TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING

Schools may now be reviewing their policies and the training that they provide for their staff in the light of equality legislation. One of their aims is likely to be to create a whole school ethos in which bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Schools may see that, to protect pupils having the gender reassignment characteristic, they need to introduce special pre-emptive measures to prevent the transphobic bullying to which this group is especially vulnerable.

Also, some schools may have an urgent need to deal with a specific situation involving a pupil in which transphobic bullying has already occurred or seems likely, for example:

- **a parent discloses to a primary school teacher that her 5 year old child who appears to be a boy and answers to a boy's name, is registered as a girl on the birth certificate.**
- **a boy in a mixed secondary school is being called 'tranny' by his peers because he appears effeminate**
- **a girl who has changed to a male gender role in a mixed secondary school is subjected to cyber bullying**
- **a mixed secondary school is worried about the toilet and changing facilities it can offer to a girl who intends to adopt a male gender role**
- **a girl wishes to change to a male name and pronouns and wear trousers in a secondary girls school, where all pupils are required to wear skirts**
- **a new pupil discloses to a teacher that she is on medication to put her puberty on hold, so that she doesn't develop male characteristics**
- **a boy in a primary school insists on dressing up in girl's clothes and refuses to join in sports with the other boys**
- **the father of a primary school pupil has undergone transition and wishes to bring the child to and from school**

A school of 1,000 pupils should expect around 10 to be gender variant to some degree. Although the number who reveal their gender variance in childhood or adolescence is rising, it is still the case that the majority of them are likely to remain hidden during their school years, because the environment is perceived to be hostile, so they fear rejection and discrimination. However, the number of gender variant people of all ages who are willing to reveal their 'core' gender identities is growing rapidly as understanding grows about their condition, and society and the law become more supportive.

GIRES has extensive experience of assisting schools in developing policies, training their staff and handling specific situations. The charity works with a range of other reputable expert support groups. The charity will be very pleased to respond quickly to a request for help from any school, supply information, including relevant free literature, offer policy advice and refer the school to whichever group can best provide tailor-made training to meet its needs. Contact details are provided above.

