



Gender Identity Policy

At Dormer House School we value each individual, celebrating their uniqueness. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all. The school is sensitive to the social and emotional needs of children who seem confused about their gender and we signpost concerned parents to current NHS Guidance:

'It is common and natural for very young children to show an interest in clothes or toys associated with the opposite gender. Children under five have little awareness that certain preferences are associated with one gender or other. If a three-year-old boy enjoys dressing in his sister's clothes, this probably means nothing in terms of how the child feels about his gender. Even among older children, it's not uncommon for boys and girls to identify with the opposite gender or to say they want to be the opposite gender. Very few children who seem to be confused about their gender go on to live full-time as the opposite gender, or to be trans, as adults. In many cases, the gender variant behaviour or feeling disappears as the child gets older, often as they reach puberty.

Children who do continue to experience gender variance as they get older will develop in different ways. Some may feel they don't belong to any gender or have a gender. Others may want to dress in the clothes of the opposite gender from time to time or on a regular basis. Only a small number who have persistent and strong feelings of belonging to the opposite gender go on to live full-time in the opposite gender.

Puberty can be a more difficult time for young people who feel strong and persistent discomfort about their gender. The physical changes that occur at puberty can increase feelings of unhappiness about their body or their gender. Signs of distress in a child can include self-harm, destructive behaviour and depression. If a child is strongly identifying with the opposite gender, it is best to get advice before puberty begins. Medical advice is available from the child's GP. The next step is usually referral to a local CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) team, where psychological help will be offered to your child or teenager. This may involve working with the whole family, and sometimes with the school as well. The charity 'Mermaids' has a telephone helpline (020 8123 4819, Monday to Saturday 3-7pm), which parents can call for advice, information and support.'

Bullying at school can be an issue for children who behave in ways that don't fit into stereotypical ideas about gender roles. At primary school, other children may not want to play with them because "they don't act like boys" or "they don't act like girls". The family may also be bullied and victimised. At Dormer House, the Anti-bullying Policy addresses homophobic and transphobic bullying, whilst the Equal Opportunities Policy educates, promotes sensitivity and celebrates difference.

[This policy is monitored by the Headteacher and the Trustees and will be reviewed annually.](#)

Signed

Date: