

## **Gender Identity**

### **Our Approach to Inclusion**

The School is committed to the inclusivity of trans people and the entire LGBTQI+ community. This Policy explicitly covers gender identity and transition. Matters relating more directly to sexuality and sexual orientation are addressed in the School's [Inclusivity Policy: Sexuality and Sexual Orientation](#).

This Policy is intended to support and facilitate a student's ability to engage positively and fully with their course of study and to fulfil the expectations of the training regardless of their gender identity. It is also intended to support current and prospective staff. It is a School policy designed to support the needs of students and staff of all gender identities, those who have not yet 'come out' and those who are or have already taken steps toward transition and/or presenting themselves in a way different from their gender assigned at birth. This Policy sits with the school's [Support Through Studies Policy](#) and similarly aligned policies.

The school aims to provide support and understanding to those who do not identify with or who do not sit comfortably within the gender assigned to them at birth. The school recognises that coming out and transition can be a complex time and is committed to providing a positive, supportive, and sensitive environment for all staff and students.

We will support an individual who discloses either their trans identity or their intention to transition (this may be an existing or new student or member of staff). We will not make assumptions about what the individual may want or need, and there is no 'right' or 'wrong'. It is important to make sure that anyone who discloses their trans identity feels included and supported at the School.

### **Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to students studying on a course of Higher Education who are registered students of the School. This policy also applies to staff employed by the School, particularly those who manage staff or support or teach students.

While the aim of the Policy is to be inclusive it is particularly relevant to staff and students who have taken steps to transition, those who wish to take steps and those who have come out. The principles of this policy guide all stages of the student recruitment and application, studies and student life cycle with the school. Similarly, they apply to and should be followed in all stages of the staff recruitment, application and employment cycle.

Although the Policy provides a framework within which trans staff or students can be supported during their employment or education, this process should be very much informed by the individual concerned and they should be thoroughly consulted along the way. The school understands that every trans person is different and not everyone chooses to pursue medical interventions, but some do.

## Best Practice for Inclusivity

Dance, Ballet in particular, utilises gendered training approaches and traditions of performance. This need not present challenges for the inclusion of those who are non-binary, genderfluid and gender non-conforming. Similarly, Ballet training in particular presents specific challenges in supporting students who are transitioning.

There is precedent for inclusive practices in Ballet training and performance. *Dazed* magazine and *Pointe Magazine* have featured articles on three dancers, two of whom are transgender and one who is genderfluid, in 2018 and 2019 respectively, so the landscape is evolving:<sup>1</sup>

- Chase Johnsey is a genderfluid dancer who uses standard masculine pronouns. In 2018, Johnsey was given the opportunity to dance female corps roles in the English National Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty*.
- Scout Alexander was assigned female at birth and is in the process of transitioning to male. Alexander trained in female classes until he came out at the age of 15. He has since auditioned and earned a place on a full male scholarship to train with [BalletMet](#). He has been accepted on the basis on talent, even if he requires some additional support to reach the same specific skill level as male dancers who have trained in male classes since birth.
- Jayna Ledford also began dancing young. Due to her gender assignment at birth, she was forced to take male classes from the age of five and conceal her gender identity to progress in ballet. Jayna came out while training on a full male scholarship at the [Kirov Academy of Ballet](#). The school supported her journey, exempting her from male partnering class and enrolling her into pointe training.

Part of the School's role in supporting trans students is to make reasonable adjustments to their training and assessment. These processes fit within the informal procedures of the School's [Support Through Studies Policy](#) as a matter of course. As with all students, formal Support Through Studies procedures may be used by Schools to facilitate and provide more structured support where necessary.

In the learning context we encourage, but do not demand, an open dialogue with those around you. The more open an environment, the more comfortable people will feel to discuss what they need to feel comfortable and safe.

## Supporting trans people

When someone comes out to you, it is important to speak with the person to understand whether they are making a confidential disclosure and are not ready for this information to be known more widely, or whether they are ready to immediately be known in the way they identify.

In the trans community, there is a term known as 'stealth' which refers to when a person is living as their preferred gender but are not openly trans. Should you know that a person is trans, it is important to be aware of how they prefer to navigate their environment so as to not out them.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dazeddigital.com/life-culture/article/40706/1/ballet-gender-binary-genderqueer-transgender-dancers-chase-johnsey-interview>; <https://www.pointemagazine.com/nonbinary-ballet-dancers-2625118186.html>

Listen to the person and ask them how they want to be referred to. Ask which name and which pronouns you should use. If the person is 'out', remember to use this name and these pronouns all of the time, not just when in the company of the person.

If you make a mistake with pronouns, apologise, correct yourself, and then quickly move on. Similarly, if others misgender or deadname, correct them.

## **Respect and Confidentiality**

You should never ask a person what their 'real' or 'birth' name is. Trans people are often sensitive about revealing information about their past, especially if they think it might affect how they are perceived in the present. Their real name is the one they are currently using.

It is imperative that we respect people's boundaries. Consider whether it is appropriate to ask a personal question. Would you ask this to another person? If not, then reconsider asking it. If you do feel it is appropriate to ask a personal question, first ask if it is ok to do so. Personal questions include anything to do with one's sex life, anatomy, medical treatment, and relationship status – past, present, or future. Nobody is obliged to answer personal questions; a person may find such questions to be an intrusion of privacy. If the person chooses not to answer a personal question, respect their decision not to do so.

When someone starts to live as their correct gender, they may be very sensitive to the ways in which their physical appearance differs from others. It is inappropriate to discuss someone's appearance and it is never appropriate to judge someone by how they look.

It is always important to respect a person's privacy, and especially so when they are coming out or make a disclosure to you. Do not tell others about a person's history. If documents have to be kept that have the person's old name and gender on them, keep them confidential. Ensure that the individual understands this to be the case, and also the reasons why.

Similarly, if someone has told you of their intention to transition, including the intention to change names and pronouns, it is important this is kept confidential until the individual gives clear consent for this to be shared.

## **Supporting Transition**

When a student or member of staff expresses the intent to transition, socially, medically and/or otherwise, it is important that the school supports this decision. There will be a series of formal and informal steps that will need to be taken including, although not limited to the changing of records and informing other members of the school community.

Successful support and management of a person's transition depends crucially on taking account of their views on how to proceed. Sensitive and considered discussions can identify and resolve potential areas of difficulty and conflict before they arise. As stated above, this must be a person-centred process. We would always start by asking someone how they would like to be referred to and respecting their right to self-identify.

It is important to emphasise that the process will move at the pace dictated by the individual. Confidentiality is crucial. Others would be informed and any formal measures to update records would be taken only with the explicit consent of the person in question to avoid

'outing' them before they are ready. We recognise that what a person requires may change over the period of their transition.

If appropriate, an action plan can be developed that covers the administrative and social steps that might be necessary during transition, for example:

- The anticipated point in time of change of name, personal details, and gender
- Whether an employee wishes to stay in their current post or explore the possibility of redeployment, on a temporary or permanent basis
- Whether a student wishes to stay on their current course, suspend studies or explore the possibility of transferring to another higher education provider
- Depending on the individual, an anticipation of time off for medical appointments, treatments, and surgical procedures and how any such absences will be managed
- Who needs to be informed of the transition, the method(s) of communication and the timescales
- How to handle any harassment or hostile reaction. For example, would some training on gender identity issues be helpful.

### **Practical Support**

Being trans is not a mental health issue. However, worries about experiencing discrimination or distressing feelings relating to their gender identity mean that some trans young people may experience mental distress. A trans student may want to talk to someone if they have started to transition or if they are confused or unhappy about their gender identity. Teachers, school staff and adults who work with young people can help by providing pastoral support or counselling within a school setting or signpost to counselling or therapy services outside of the school environment. It's important to find a mental health professional equipped to talk about gender identity and with some knowledge about the experiences of trans young people.

In addition to a main point of contact, it also might be helpful to agree who else might need to be involved in supporting the individual in their transition, either in terms of active involvement or involvement in an advisory capacity (for example, the relevant HR staff member, Senior Management, Tutors, Student Support staff).

### **Informing others**

Agreement with the individual should be reached before communication of any intention to transition. The approach taken will depend on how the individual wants to progress and will need to be appropriate to their circumstances. It may not be necessary to inform those who have no direct contact with the individual, although it may be preferable to include more people in order to avoid misinformation.

If the information is not to be conveyed by the individual, it must be shared at a time agreed by the individual, and conversely if by the individual, then management will need to know when and how the disclosure is to take place, so that appropriate support can be co-ordinated. Any communication must be practical and address important issues such as how to address the individual (name, pronouns, etc), how to support them, and how to approach any questions that may arise without breaking confidentiality.

Respecting privacy is of utmost importance. Many trans people will have transitioned before commencing their education or employment. Some trans people will wish to keep their status as private as possible, even though others are willing to discuss it either confidentially with close friends or openly. It is vital that neither management nor colleagues breach the personal privacy of employees and students, recognising that the right to disclose or discuss their medical history is the prerogative of the individual. Such disclosure may constitute an offence under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

### **Access to facilities**

A trans person should have access to single sex areas – such as changing rooms and toilets – according to whichever they feel most comfortable with. This may mean that a person changes the facilities they use at some point throughout their transition. In some circumstances, it may be helpful to explain the situation to work colleagues or other students who use the facilities; however, this should only be done following full consultation with the trans person, and only if the trans person concerned wants this conversation to take place.

It is best practice to also offer gender neutral toilets and changing room as not everybody will identify as a binary gender or feel comfortable in these spaces. However, it is not acceptable to restrict a trans person to using gender-neutral facilities.

### **Inclusive Record Keeping**

Records should be changed from the date that the individual notifies the School of any changes to their name. It may however be necessary to retain some information relating to an individual's previous identity for other purposes, such as financial regulation. Such records should be held confidentially for the minimum time period required, with access strictly limited to only those members of staff who require access for a specific purpose.

If an individual discloses their status as a trans person or gives notification of their intent to transition during their employment or education, the date from which their name and/or gender is changed on all staff/student records and public references, such as identification passes, library cards, contact details, email addresses, formal records, website references, and so on, must be agreed with them. Should any of these documents also include photographs, these should also be changed if requested.

### **Disclosure and Confidentiality**

The School will respect the confidentiality of trans people and will not reveal information without the prior agreement of the individual. If an individual notifies the School in writing of their intention to transition during their employment or education, the institution will agree with them what steps should be taken. A trans person's file will reflect their current name and gender. Any material that needs to be kept related to the person's trans status, such as records of absence for medical reasons, should be stored confidentially. No records will be changed without the permission of the staff member or student concerned. When a person informs the School that they have received a Gender Recognition Certificate, we will undertake to remove references to the individual's former name and gender.

## Protection Against Harassment and Bullying

Our staff, students and other stakeholders should expect to be treated with respect at all times. All complaints of harassment or bullying will be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. Disciplinary action can be taken in cases where bullying/harassment have been proved. Any act of harassment or bullying toward a person based on their gender identity will normally, in first instances, be dealt with under the school's [Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours Policy](#).

The school is committed to supporting those who call out transphobic and other unacceptable behaviours, practices and structures both within the school and elsewhere. A complaint can be raised under the following policies:

- Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours
- Non-Academic Misconduct Policy
- Student Complaints Procedure (students only)

The school also understands that raising a complaint may be complicated and will always strive to protect confidentiality where we can. Unfortunately, the school is usually unable to investigate anonymous complaints or those made of behalf of a complainant.

However, where anonymous allegations are made or allegations are raised by third parties, these will be handled under Stage 1 of the Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours and referred to the quality team. The quality team will determine whether there are any matters arising from the allegations that the school should endeavour to follow up, though there may be limitations to possible action be.

We will use the data we receive to further our understanding of the experiences of our student, alumni, and staff communities, and help us to identify patterns of unconscious or implicit bias in our community. In the event of a complaint, a detailed record will be kept and a report of this data will be compiled and reviewed by the Academic Board and other institutional committees as appropriate. We will treat the data confidentially and remove the names of any individuals before the data is compiled into report form. We may also use the data received to drive improvements to relevant institutional policies.