

# Trans pupils



## Managing name changes and pronouns

Trans young people may ask their school to use a new name and pronouns.

**Schools can support this social transition, but we know it can be extremely difficult to navigate if the young person does not want their parents informed.**

There is a genuine risk that school staff may get so used to using the new name / pronouns that they may accidentally and unintentionally use this in front of parents, outing the pupil.

We are aware of instances within supportive schools where this has unfortunately happened and so we thought it would be useful to provide further guidance.

**From our experience a key to successfully navigating this challenge is to explore it openly with the pupil involved.**

If the pupil is simply told "we cannot change your records without your parents' consent," they may feel the school is not supporting them. However, if the genuine risk of unintentionally outing the pupil is explained to them, it may help them see why changing their school records (even informally) is challenging. **You can then explore together potential solutions:**

Would they be willing to engage with the school and / or Free2B to work towards telling their parent(s)?

Is there a nickname or abbreviation that can be used informally that wouldn't compromise their situation but also meets their needs and avoids being misgendered?

**Free2B youth council members suggested a nickname, initial or surname as possible options.**

For example, if the child's birthname is Sarah and they wish to be known as Alex, could they agree on 'A' which if used accidentally in front of parents can be described as a nickname. It may be that the pupil can think of another nickname relating to their hobbies / interests etc.

Using neutral pronouns can be helpful regardless of gender identity as the singular use of they/ them is common in everyday language – for example:

*Parent: How is Sarah getting on in maths*

*Teacher: they are doing really well...*

This avoids accidentally using gendered pronouns in front of parents. Though please note this may not work for all pupils and again, the key is to explore solutions **together**.

It is helpful to update your communications with parents across all pupils to keep language neutral so that this becomes the standard. For example, updating references in written communications from 'your son / daughter' to 'your child' and 'he / she' to 'they' or 'pupils.'

**Please see page 2 for important information on safeguarding your pupils**

# Trans pupils



## Managing name changes and pronouns

### SAFEGUARDING

If a YP explains they CAN NOT come out at home because they would be at significant risk of harm (such as being disowned / made homeless / physically harmed), this is a safeguarding issue and needs to follow safeguarding protocol.

In this instance it's important to determine levels of risk *as it may be that the pupil is making an assumption about parent(s) reactions.*

**If the risk is evident – safeguarding protocols must be followed.**

There may be instances where a YP is not currently out at home about their identity and is dealing with a whole range of other complex issues (such as self-harming and suicide risk) resulting in the need for parental engagement. *In such instances it is importance to carefully consider the impact of informing the parents of the child's identity.* Ideally as with all safeguarding concerns this should be considered **with** the pupil including an exploration of potential consequences and developing a safety plan.

To support schools and DSLs with these complex cases, it may be helpful to consider setting up a local safeguarding peer support network with other local schools or relevant agencies to be able to talk through complexities.

### Current Legislation

Please use this [link](#) to access the NSPCC site for current information on children and the law.

### Race and Faith

We appreciate there can also be additional complexities for some young people from race and faith backgrounds where there may be a conflict between their intersectional identities. To support pupils, Free2B have developed a guide: [Race & Faith meets LGBTQ+](#) to celebrate intersectionality identities .

### Below are some additional helpful contacts

[African Rainbow Family](#) was created, run and led by LGBTIQ refugees and people seeking asylum who face intersecting forms of discrimination and institutional injustice due to our race, sexuality, and gender identity.

[Hidayah](#) is a nationwide organisation for LGBTQI+ Muslims.

[House of Rainbow](#) fosters relationships among Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ+) individuals, people of faith and allies in order to create a safer and a more inclusive community.

[Micro Rainbow](#) supports LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

[Naz and Matt Foundation](#) tackle homophobia triggered by religion or culture to help parents accept their children.

[Rainbow Migration](#) supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) people through the asylum and immigration system.