



Guidelines for transitioning in primary school in the Republic of Ireland

Within discussions between the student, parent/guardian, and school, consider developing a transition plan that considers and accounts for the following. Remember that all aspects of this will likely require negotiation with the school. Please consult 'Being in LGBT in School' and 'Essential elements of a transition plan for a school context' (GLEN, 2016) for further guidance.

1. **Starting date of transition**
2. **Name, language, and pronoun:** The student's preferred name, gender identity, and pronoun (he, she, they) should be identified by the student.
3. **Informing staff/administration:** The primary school teacher should inform other staff and administration within the school. In-school education and resources should be provided to these staff to support them in understanding issues around gender, gender non-conformity, and being transgender in school.
4. **Informing other families:** The transgender child's parent or guardian may consider informing other families about their family member's transgender identity. This is something that should be discussed between the student, parent/guardian, and school. It will not be the right option for every situation; some parent/guardians have informed other families before, while others have chosen not to do this. If it is decided to inform other families within the school, one possibility is to consider writing a letter informing other families about their transgender family member. Another option is for the school to compose a letter on behalf of the student and their family; however, any letter like this should be signed off on by the student and parent/guardian before going out to other families within the school. This may be done with the assistance of the Family Support Officer in TENI.
5. **Informing the students:** The teacher should consider how to discuss gender, gender non-conformity and being transgender within the classroom. They might consider the use of storybooks. They should explain that sometimes a person's outside body does not always match what they feel on the inside and that sometimes a person has to change the way they look on the outside so it matches what is on the inside. This will include how they want others to see them and so they sometimes need to change their appearance, name and pronoun.

6. **Behaviour amongst students:** The teacher should remind students about rules around bullying. Mistakes made with names and pronouns are okay, but persistent or purposeful misuse of these, teasing, name calling, threats, or any other forms of bullying will not be tolerated. Depending upon the school context, teachers should consider encouraging other students to be allies for the transgender student through a message of pro-active anti-bullying. This might involve using role play or other scenarios showing what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and what to do if you see someone engaging in inappropriate behaviour.
7. **Facilities:** The two main facilities for consideration are the toilets and locker rooms/changing facilities. Typically within primary schools in Ireland, there are single stall, ungendered bathrooms. However, in the case that there are gender-specific toilets, negotiations must be made between the student, family, and school. In this case, the use of disabled toilets for the student should be considered. In terms of locker rooms or communal changing facilities, there may be some difficulty. There are often single stall changing areas but this: a. leaves a child unsupervised and they may not be of an age to get changed themselves and b. if a teacher were to supervise them there would need to be two teachers for safety reasons of both the child and the staff. When this situation occurs, TENI can assist in finding a solution. Generally, they have resolved it by having a family member or neighbour go on the bus with the class and help the child; however, it is all individual and up to negotiation.
8. **Single-gender activities:** Transgender students should be included in the gender group that matches their identity, when it comes to single-gender identity, such as SPHE.
9. **Physical education and sports:** Transgender students should be encouraged and enabled to participate fully in physical education and the sports - in the gender they identify with. This may be more complicated depending upon the specific sport and league and negotiations may be required.
10. **Uniforms:** Many schools require students to wear uniforms, and many schools have a variety of options available in the uniform (e.g. trousers, skirts, tracksuits). However, in some cases, there may not be as readily available options. Uniforms can be very much part of a school's identity and there may be some resistance to changing them; however, schools should be encouraged to begin the journey by negotiating with the board of management as official uniform changes can take time. Negotiations for appropriate uniforms should be made between the student, family,

and the school. Ultimately, a gender neutral uniform option will reduce difficulties for the student, family, and school. No transgender student should be forced to wear a uniform that does not correspond to their gender identity.

11. **Organisational:** All school forms should be updated to include 'male', 'female', and 'other' gender options. All policies should underline that there is a zero tolerance policy towards any transphobic or LGBTI-bullying from students, staff, or administration. Respect and appreciation for diversity should be encouraged within the cultural ethos.
12. **Supports and further resources:** The school/teacher should provide supports and further resources for other students, families, and staff who may have questions.