

The image features two hand-drawn gender symbols on a dark, textured background. The female symbol is drawn in pink and is positioned in the upper left. The male symbol is drawn in blue and is positioned in the lower right. The symbols are rendered with thick, expressive strokes, giving them a rough, hand-painted appearance. The pink symbol consists of a circle with a vertical line extending downwards from its center, and a horizontal line crossing the vertical line. The blue symbol consists of a circle with a vertical line extending downwards from its center, and a diagonal line extending upwards and to the right from the top of the circle.

Gender Ideology & Our Children

PIERS SHEPHERD

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Piers Shepherd

FAMILY EDUCATION TRUST

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What is Gender Ideology?



AT THE ROOT OF GENDER IDEOLOGY is the belief that ‘gender’ is something distinct from biological sex. While human beings are born male or female, proponents of gender ideology argue that we all have something called a ‘gender identity’ which may not match with the sex we were born.

Supporters of gender ideology believe that human beings are ‘assigned’ their sex at birth and that this may not match with the gender they feel themselves to be. Those who identify as a gender different to their birth sex are generally referred to as ‘transgender’. Previously, it was assumed that transgender people would have surgery in an attempt to change from one sex to the other but that is no longer always the case. Those who support gender ideology believe that people should be able to self-define their gender. This means that they can simply declare themselves male or female. All are encouraged to accept this new identity and accommodate it by using preferred gender pronouns and allowing them to use facilities such as toilets and changing rooms, based on the gender they define themselves as, rather than their birth sex.

➔ KEY POINT

At the root of gender ideology is the belief that ‘gender’ is something distinct from biological sex. Supporters of gender ideology believe that human beings are ‘assigned’ their sex at birth and that this may not match with the gender they feel themselves to be. Those who support gender ideology believe that people should be able to self-define their gender. This means that they can simply declare themselves male or female.

Gender Ideology & Young People



IN RECENT YEARS, there has been an extraordinary rise in young people feeling discomfort with the sex in which they were born. Teenage girls have been particularly affected. In 2018, the UK reported a 4,400 percent rise over the previous decade in teenage girls seeking gender treatments.¹ These treatments often include puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones that can do permanent damage to the girl's body.

Schools have become a central battleground over gender ideology with some schools effectively promoting the idea of self-identification of gender and allowing gender questioning young people to undergo a process of 'social transition' whereby they adopt the name, clothing and other attributes of a person of the opposite sex.

In what follows we provide evidence and examples of the promotion of gender ideology as it is currently happening in schools, by local authorities, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Children's Commissioner.

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1 Abigail Shrier, *Irreversible Damage: Teenage Girls and the Transgender Craze*, Swift Press, 2021.

Gender Ideology in Schools: The Parents Speak



NIGEL AND SALLY ROWE had their children at a school in the Isle of Wight. When their elder son was six years old, a boy in his class announced that he wanted to identify as female. Two years later in their younger son's class (also aged six), the same situation occurred again. In the second case the boy was identifying some days as a boy and other days as a girl. Some days he came into school in trousers and other days in a skirt. While the boy's parents were supportive of his new identification, there was no consideration given to the confusion that this was causing to other children in the class. They were simply expected to accept the child's new status without question. Nor was any attempt made to ascertain the feelings of the parents of other children in the class.

In the first case, the boy simply announced in circle time to his classmates that he was now a girl and this was automatically accepted. The school sought advice from the local education authority who told

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Mr and Mrs Rowe made their concerns known to the school but were informed that if parents and children do not communicate with the child in his chosen gender they will be deemed to be 'transphobic'.

In a letter from the school the Rowes were informed:

The school does not require any formal medical/psychological assessment and reporting when a pupil seeks to be treated as transgendered or is exploring their gender.²

The school claimed that the Equality Act 2010 required them to recognise the child's acquired gender. They claimed that examples of transphobic behaviour would include the following:

Inability to believe that a transgender person is actually a "real" male or female.

The refusal to acknowledge a transgender person's true gender e.g. by failing to use their adopted name or using gender inappropriate pronouns.³

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2 Letter to Nigel and Sally Rowe. 14 July 2017.

3 Ibid.

Gender Ideology in Schools: The Teachers & Governors Speak

A GOVERNOR IN AN ESSEX PRIMARY SCHOOL related to Family Education Trust how an eight-year-old boy in the school had self-identified as a girl and the school agreed that this should be announced in class. There was to be no communication with parents until the child had announced to the class. All concerns were to be referred to the headteacher. The headteacher's policy was fully supported by the Department for Education and the Education Officer of the diocese (it was a Church of England school). The governing body was told that this was the law, but this was not true. The trans advocacy group Mermaids was brought in to provide training. The governors were told they could not speak to any concerned parents. They were simply told that the child is self-identifying and there can be no communication with parents.

Speaking to the author of this booklet, the governor stated:

The biggest argument with the head and governors was over parental consent. We asked for a letter to be sent to parents. Teachers later confided to me that they felt pressured by the head to go along. They didn't feel comfortable with it, but they feared for their jobs. They were supportive of our stand, but they were silent. There was no psychological assessment of the child. Children felt intimidated. How do you explain to an 8-year-old that this boy is now a girl? Teachers were being disciplined for using the wrong pronouns and parents and teachers were under pressure not to say anything.⁴

The boy involved in this case is now in secondary school and has reverted to identifying as his birth sex.

A primary school teacher described to us how all staff at the school where she was working were required to receive training on gender ideology using a tool called 'The Genderbread Person':

The Genderbread Person states that:

- Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that.
- Identity is how you, in your head, experience and define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand the options for gender to be.
- Sex is the physical traits you're born with or develop that we think of as 'sex characteristics', as well as the sex you were assigned at birth.

...we looked at a sheet outlining the 16 different genders: asexual, agender, bisexual, cisgender, gay, gender fluid, genderqueer, heterosexual/straight, female, lesbian, pansexual, pangender, questioning, transgender, male, intersex...We were also shown a table of pronouns we should use, including the ones 'zir, zis, etc'.⁵

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A governor in an Essex primary school related to Family Education Trust of how an eight-year-old boy in the school was self-identifying as a girl and the school agreed that this should be announced in class. There was to be no communication with parents until the child had announced to the class. The governing body was told that this was the law, but this was not true. The trans advocacy group Mermaids was brought in to provide training. The governors were told they could not speak to any concerned parents. They were simply told that the child is self-identifying and there can be no communication with parents.

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⁵ Email sent to Piers Shepherd. 12 May 2021.

School Case Study: De Bohun School



SOME SCHOOLS HAVE INCORPORATED gender ideology as a feature of their Relationships and Sex Education or Health Education programmes. A particularly shocking example is De Bohun School, a primary school in London.

As part of its Personal, Social and Health (PSHE) programme aimed at key stage 2 (ages 7-11), De Bohun incorporates a Relationships and Sex Education unit which claims to teach:

What 'trans' means and the different groups of people associated with this prefix. They are also taught about gender identity. The objectives are to know about gender identities and have an awareness of transgender issues and to understand the difference between being a transgender person and a cross-dresser.

By year 6 (age 10-11) all pupils are required to know about:

'gender identities and have an awareness of transgender issues' and 'understand the difference between being transgender and transvestite'.⁶

The Role of Local Authorities



MANY SCHOOLS ARE ENCOURAGED to promote gender ideology by their local authority. A number of local authorities have drawn up detailed guides for the promotion of gender ideology in schools. These guides can all be characterised by several factors:

Unquestioning acceptance of self-definition of gender

Self-definition of gender is accepted as a given. Although gender dysphoric feelings in children do not usually persist into adulthood, local authority guidance instructs schools to accept a pupil's subjective feelings about their gender without question. One of the foremost local authorities promoting gender ideology is Brighton and Hove Council whose *Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit* states:

All children and young people should be free to explore their gender expression without having their gender identity questioned... We encourage the use of language which does not reinforce a binary approach to gender particularly when the gender of a person or people being referred to is not known... The right time to transition will be when a child or young person feels they are ready.⁷

⁷ Brighton and Hove City Council, *Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit 2021*.

The council states of the school census: *'Gender should be self-declared...Individuals are free to change the way their gender is recorded'*. In dealing with pubescent teenagers, schools are warned: *'the puberty they may experience...may not be in line with the puberty they would like to have'* as if puberty were a matter of choice.⁸

Guidance published by Hampshire County Council also supports gender self-definition stating:

It is important to take the lead from the pupil at all times. A pupil support plan can be drawn up which should reflect the needs and aspirations of the pupil. Where social transition is happening, it is vital that all staff are briefed and trained so that support for the pupil is consistent, for instance, use of pronouns, changes in school uniform, use of toilets and changing facilities.⁹

Atypical interests among boys or girls are often promoted as evidence of transgenderism. Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services featured a podcast in which a young transgender person (a biological boy self-defining as a girl) stated:

I knew I was trans when I was six years old because I hated sports but I had a passion and love for doing ballet and dance.¹⁰

Undermining of and deception of parents

The Brighton toolkit states:

A child or young person...exploring their gender identity does not in itself constitute a safeguarding concern, nor is it something the child's parents or carers must be informed of. When contacting a child's family, therefore, respecting a trans or gender exploring child's confidentiality may very occasionally require staff to use their legal name and the pronoun corresponding to their sex registered at birth.¹¹

Guidance from Cornwall County Council states:

It must be recognised that people have their own prejudices. A parent or

8 Ibid, p. 42-43.

9 Hampshire County Council, *Hampshire: a safe place to learn, a safe place to grow: LGBT+ guidance for Hampshire schools and colleges*, June 2018.

10 Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, *My trans journey*, podcast of December 2019.

11 Brighton and Hove, p. 16.

guardian may not always be the most supportive or appropriate person to assist the young person through transitioning. It may not be necessary for a parent or guardian to provide permission for a Trans pupil or student to take steps to transition as there may be issues raised of Fraser competence if parents will not consent.¹²

Distortion of the Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 is frequently used to justify the promotion of gender ideology. The meaning of that legislation however is invariably distorted. That Act protects 'gender reassignment' but does not mention 'gender identity' and self-definition of gender is not recognised in law. Local authorities often wilfully distort this with misleading statements. For example, the Cornwall guidance states that it '*aims to be nondiscriminatory in every aspect as issues with gender identity are seen across all other protected characteristics*'.¹³ This suggests that gender identity is a protected characteristic, which it is not. Hampshire describes '*becoming a transsexual person*'¹⁴ as a protected characteristic without defining what this means. Hampshire County Council is one of the principal funders of Y Services for Young People, a charity responsible for a leaflet titled *Coming out as Transgender* which suggests that those who fail to use a young person's 'acquired name' might be engaged in illegal discrimination.¹⁵

➔ KEY POINT

A number of local authorities have drawn up detailed guides for the promotion of gender ideology in schools. These guides can all be characterised by several factors:

- Unquestioning acceptance of self-definition of gender
- Undermining of and deception of parents
- Distortion of the Equality Act 2010

12 Cornwall County Council, Devon and Cornwall Police and The Intercom Trust, *Schools Transgender Guidance*, 2015.

13 Ibid, p. 9.

14 Hampshire County Council, p. 3.

15 Y Services for Young People, *Coming Out as Transgender*, June 2018.

The Children's Commissioner



Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England

THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR ENGLAND is tasked with protecting children at the national level. However, even this official has been involved in promoting gender ideology. In 2021 the Commissioner put out a survey for children called the Big Ask. Children as young as six were asked 'What is your gender?' After being given the choice of selecting 'male' or 'female' they were then presented with another choice: *'I identify as...select this option to tell us how you identify'*.¹⁶ This represents promotion by the nation's highest ranking child protection official of the self-identification of gender.

Transgender themes are often woven into children's literature. Here a mother speaks about a book her child was read at school:

Our school read "Introducing Teddy" for reception year... In the book a boy bear becomes a girl bear by changing a bowtie to a hairbow. I complained saying that it was not age appropriate since kids don't understand gender constancy at 4 years of age...Then they told me that they are an inclusive and diverse school. We had a meeting and they said the curriculum was not up for debate and they were very concerned that I would not use opposite sex pronouns for potential transgender students (they don't have any). Then they told me to consider looking for a new school.

What can I do about it?



WHAT CAN WE DO TO RESIST GENDER IDEOLOGY WHEN IT IS PROMOTED BY OUR SCHOOLS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER BODIES?

The law is on your side

You may be surprised to hear that the Equality Act 2010, which is so loudly invoked by trans activists, does not protect gender identity. While 'gender reassignment' is a protected characteristic, there is no legal recognition of self-definition of gender.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 lays down guidelines by which a person can acquire a 'gender recognition certificate' in order for them to be recognised as the opposite sex from which they were born. These criteria are that there should be a specific medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria, that the person must have lived in their acquired gender for at least two years and be intending to live in that gender until death. The law does not recognise gender change on the whim of an individual nor does it recognise identities such as 'gender queer' or 'non-binary'.

It is important to know what the law says if we are to successfully oppose the indoctrination of the transgender lobby.

However, it is also important to understand where the school is coming from. They may well have taken advice from the LGBT advocacy group, Stonewall. This group is at the forefront of promoting self-identification of gender and has had an immense influence on schools, government and the media. It has consistently given the impression that 'gender identity' is protected by the Equality Act. However, the tide may be turning against Stonewall as a large number of public bodies are now abandoning its programmes and distancing themselves from it. These include the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Ofsted, the Department for Education, the Ministry of Justice, the Cabinet Office and the BBC. You can challenge the school as to why it continues to take advice from Stonewall when these respected public bodies, including the nation's leading equalities watchdog, are no longer comfortable with the organisation.

Present the evidence

Previous studies have shown that among young people who experience gender dysphoria only a minority persist with these feelings into adulthood. According to the American Psychiatric Association, in biological males, persistence has ranged from 2.2 to 30 per cent, and in biological females, from 12 to 50 per cent.¹⁷ NHS England cites research showing that only 12-27 per cent of children who experience gender dysphoric feelings continue with them into adulthood.¹⁸

However, given the massive increase in young people presenting for gender dysphoria in the last few years we do not yet know the extent to which these people will persist in their gender identification and there is a need for greater evidence in this regard. At the present time, Dr Hilary Cass is conducting an *Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people*. The Cass review issued its interim report in February 2022. Among the significant findings of this report are the following:

- Clinicians feel under pressure to adopt an unquestioning affirmative approach to the young person's gender identification which is at odds with the standard process of clinical assessment and diagnosis.

17 American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, DSM-5, 5th edition, 2013.

18 NHS England, 'NHS Standard Contract for Gender Identity Development Service for Children and Adolescents', 2019.

- There is limited research evidence and what is available is based on previous cohorts of predominantly biological males presenting in early childhood. There is very little data on the more recent case-mix of biological females presenting for gender dysphoria in their early teens.
- Deeply polarised views on how gender incongruence should be interpreted and managed are heightened when potentially irreversible treatments are given to young people despite there being uncertainty about whether this is the best way of resolving gender related distress.
- There is a lack of space to have open, non-judgemental discussions in a safe and respectful manner.
- Some young people will remain fluid in their gender identity until their mid-20s.
- Some young people learn through social media what they should and should not say in order to access hormone treatment.
- Social transition is an active intervention and may have significant effects on a young person's psychological functioning.
- The report highlights the important role of schools and this will be considered further as part of the review.¹⁹

Given this lack of evidence it is extremely premature for schools, local authorities, CAMHS or advocacy groups to be unconditionally endorsing treatments that bring about radical and irreversible changes in the bodies of vulnerable young people.

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You may be surprised to hear that the Equality Act 2010, which is so loudly invoked by trans activists, does not protect gender identity. While 'gender reassignment' is a protected characteristic, there is no legal recognition of self-definition of gender.

¹⁹ Dr Hilary Cass, *Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people: Interim Report*, February 2022.

When confronting gender ideology, it is worth referring to real life cases such as that of Keira Bell, the teenage girl who was put on hormone blockers that permanently altered her body. Keira Bell subsequently changed her mind and returned to identifying as her birth sex. But by then permanent damage had been done to her body. She said:

I don't know if I will ever really look like a woman again...I feel I was a guinea pig...and I don't think anyone knows what will happen to my body in the future.²⁰

Social transition usually leads to a persistence in dysphoria which may lead to treatment of the kind given to Keira Bell with similarly destructive results. When these treatments are given to those under-16, they can lead to adverse consequences such as cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, infertility, increased cancer risk, and thrombosis.²¹ As a group of child health specialists wrote some years ago:

...73%–88% of prepubertal GD (gender dysphoria) clinic attenders, who receive no intervention, eventually lose their desire to identify with the non-birth sex... the use of puberty blockers may prevent some young people with GD from finally becoming comfortable with the birth sex.²²

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20 Quoted in Amie Gordon, Campaigners say 'common sense has prevailed' as High Court rules children under 16 are unlikely to be able to give 'informed consent' to take puberty blockers, *Daily Mail*, 1 December 2020.

21 Astrid Lindgren Children's Hospital, Policy Change Regarding Hormonal Treatment of Minors with Gender Dysphoria, April 2021.

22 Christopher Richards, Julie Maxwell, Noel McCune, 'Use of puberty blockers for gender dysphoria: a momentous step in the dark', *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 17 January 2019.

There is no doubt that gender dysphoria causes terrible distress and suffering to those young people who experience it. We need to be sensitive to this. However, we cannot escape from the fact that sex is real and is not simply assigned at birth. Therefore, it is desirable that we should attempt to make children and young people more comfortable in the body in which they have been born. We need to find the least invasive ways to help them come to terms with biological reality.

We owe it to our children and young people to protect them from the destructive gender ideology now being promoted in schools and other areas of our society.



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ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP

Family Education Trust

<https://familyeducationtrust.org.uk>

For over fifty years, Family Education Trust has conducted research into the causes and consequences of family breakdown. By means of its publications and conferences, and through its media profile, the Trust seeks to stimulate informed public debate on matters affecting the family, with a view to promoting family stability and the welfare of children and young people. In the last five years, the Trust has taken an increased interest in transgender issues and works to keep our supporters updated on research and developments in this area with the aim of defending biological reality.

Family Education Trust is a registered charity and has no religious or political affiliations.

Bayswater Support Group

<https://bayswatersupport.org.uk>

A support group for the parents of children and young adults suffering from gender dysphoria. Bayswater Support is critical of the 'affirmative' model of care.

Safe Schools Alliance

<https://safeschoolsallianceuk.net>

A grassroots organisation which campaigns to uphold child safeguarding in schools. The Alliance opposes the promotion of gender ideology in schools and the use of RSE materials which sexualise children and promote pornography and other harmful sexual practices.

Genspect

<https://genspect.org>

An international alliance of parents and professionals' groups who support an evidence-based approach to gender distress. Genspect highlights the low evidence-base for the current affirmative approach and the harms that medical treatment paths can cause.

Transgender Trend

<https://www.transgendertrend.com>

A group of parents, academics, safeguarding professionals and others who are working to combat radical gender ideology. Transgender Trend takes an evidence-based approach and aims to present research and facts which challenge the prevailing acceptance of an ideology which is new, untested, and invariably based on personal belief systems.

Thoughtful Therapists

<https://thoughtfultherapists.org>

A group of psychotherapists and counsellors working in gender and gender dysphoria who aim to protect the integrity of the open-ended exploration of feelings and ideas which they see as a necessary component of ethical and effective therapy.

Christian Concern

<https://christianconcern.com>

A Christian advocacy group defending the right of Christians to express their beliefs in the public realm. Their Christian Legal Centre has been involved in several court cases defending those discriminated against for failure to support the transgender agenda.

Christian Institute

<https://www.christian.org.uk>

A Christian charity which actively opposes gender ideology and the 'conversion therapy' ban which seeks to stifle criticism of this. The Institute can also offer legal advice and support in certain cases.



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