



Guidelines for transitioning in post-primary school in the Republic of Ireland

Within discussion 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 school should decide how to inform 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:** At post-primary level, generally, other families within the school are not informed of the student's transition. At this level, teachers generally acknowledge that the transition will not have any impact or bearing on others students' education, and it is therefore, considered unnecessary to inform other families in the school. If families of other students enquire or complain about any particular aspect of having a transgender student in the school, one option is to provide these families with contact details for TENI. Another option is to make an experienced person, such as a representative of TENI, available in-person to answer any questions.
5. **Informing the students:** The teacher should consider how to discuss gender, gender non-conformity and being transgender within the classroom. This should be considered carefully, particularly whether the transgender student is going to be present or not for these discussion. The teacher might consider providing an age-appropriate reading list or information handout to the students. 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



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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. The school may consider re-labelling a disabled toilet as a unisex toilet and changing facility. This requires negotiation and depends upon the needs of the student and the specific circumstances in the school. TENI can assist in finding a solution in these situations.
8. **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 reduced 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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
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.