



Parents' guide to external PSHE / RSE providers

Barnardo's

Top tip!

This document contains links to external sources. To open a link in a new window or tab, please right click on the link and select from the pop up window how you would like to view it.

Contents

• External organisations used by schools	3
• What does the DfE Guidance say?	3-4
• Barnardo's	
- Funding	5
- Primary School Resources	5-6
- Secondary School Resources	6-9
- Barnardo's on Puberty Blockers	10
- Barnardo's on the Gender Recognition Act	10-11

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS USED BY SCHOOLS

There are a number of organisations that offer training on Equality and Diversity, RSE or PSHE to schools. Safe Schools Alliance have serious concerns about some of the content of the lesson plans and resources offered by these organisations, where it is not evidence-based, promotes a particular ideology, or fails to safeguard children.

To look at the information that we have relating to the provider in your child's school, please click on the relevant link in the contents page.

✗ Where the material is in contravention of new DfE guidance we have indicated this with a cross ✗

▶ Where the material raises a safeguarding concern we have indicated this with a flag ▶

Some of the information here is drawn from the programmes' websites and social media; other information has been relayed to us by concerned parents.

WHAT DOES THE DfE GUIDANCE SAY?

On the 24/09/20, the DfE released new guidance for schools:

[Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum](#), and [Teaching about relationships, sex and health](#).

This sets out that school leaders and teaching staff should:

- when teaching topics involving gender and biological sex, NOT reinforce harmful stereotypes, for instance by suggesting that children might be a different gender based on their personality and interests or the clothes they prefer to wear. There should be no suggestion that children might be a different gender based on their personality, interests or the clothes they prefer to wear. Resources used in teaching about this area must be evidence-based.
- NOT work with organisations who produce material which suggests that non-conformity to gender stereotypes should be seen as synonymous with having a different gender identity.
- ensure all content and resources are age-appropriate, aligned with developmental stage and takes into account the background of the pupils.
- exercise extreme caution when working with external agencies and only proceed if they have full confidence in the agency, its approach and resources.
- when using external agencies, check their materials in advance, conduct a basic online search and check external speakers' protocols for taking pictures or using personal data.
- ensure all content, resources and external agencies used are impartial and ensure balanced presentation of opposing political views: must be impartial in line with school's legal duties (including the Education Act 1996) regarding political impartiality, take reasonable steps to offer a balanced presentation of opposing political views and forbid the promotion of partisan political views.

WHAT DOES THE DfE GUIDANCE SAY? *(continued)*

- NOT under any circumstances work with external agencies that take or promote extreme positions or use materials produced by such agencies. Examples of extreme positions include, but are not limited to:
 - teaching that requirements of English civil or criminal law may be disregarded whether for political or religious reasons or otherwise
 - engaging in or encouraging active or persistent harassment or intimidation of individuals in support of their cause
 - promoting divisive or victim narratives that are harmful to British society
- ensure that all resources and content are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics and are from a credible source.
- ensure resources are sensitive to the needs and experiences of all pupils and do not provoke distress.
- work together with parents on any decisions regarding your school's treatment of their child, in line with the school's safeguarding policy and the statutory guidance on [working together to safeguard children](#).
- comply with the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty but remember that the curriculum is exempt. Schools are not required to equally weight all of the protected characteristics within the curriculum.
- create a safe environment for pupils to discuss RSE topics and should consider setting ground rules to discourage children from sharing personal information. As always, staff must not promise confidentiality if a pupil confides something concerning. Staff must ALWAYS follow the school's safeguarding policy regarding safeguarding disclosures or concerns.

Barnardo's

Funding

[Barnardo's has received funding from the Government Equalities Office](#) to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools. They provide resources and run workshops for schools, other education providers, foster care agencies, leaving care teams, children's homes, and parents and carers.



✦ [An archive of the PSHE Association's promotion of Barnardo's can be found here](#)

Primary School Resources

[Barnardo's Primary Schools Resource Pack](#) sets a rule for classroom discussions to “Keep what is said in the room”.

▶ The effect of this is children are told to keep the discussions during PSHE lessons secret from their parents. This is dangerous and puts children at risk of abuse. Children should never be told to keep secrets from their parents.

- **Create a safe and inclusive environment**

Ground rules

Before teaching any of the lessons, ensure that you have established a set of age-appropriate ground rules that pupils must follow.

Ground rules are best negotiated and agreed with the pupils themselves, and should be re-visited before each lesson.

Examples of ground rules could include:

- Voluntary participation (people don't have to contribute if they don't want to)
- Respect for other people's views and opinions
- **Keep what is said in the room**
- Listen to each other
- Anonymise personal experiences

Primary School Resources (Continued)

Children are asked to discuss different types of bullying. Bullying someone for “being a girl who does something that is seen as a ‘boy thing’” or for “being a boy who likes to wear ‘girls’ clothes” is described as gender-based / transphobic bullying. These are both examples of sexist bullying and should be accurately described as such. Describing this as ‘transphobic’ implies that children should conform to gender stereotypes about how boys and girls should behave and dress.

✗ This resource breaches the DfE guidance by reinforcing harmful stereotypes by suggesting that children might be a different gender based on their personality and interests or the clothes they prefer to wear.

Guide to type of bullying in pictures:

1. Being a boy who loves other boys (homophobic/biphobic)
2. Being a girl who does something that is seen as a ‘boy thing’ (gender-based/transphobic)
3. Having a religion (religious discrimination)
4. Being a boy who likes to wear ‘girls’ clothes (gender based/transphobic)
5. Having a disability (disablist)
6. Having a different skin colour (racist)
7. Being a girl (sexist)

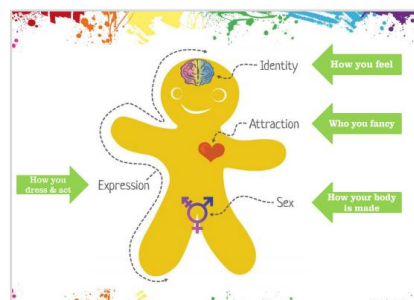
The picture used to illustrate bullying for “being a boy who likes to wear ‘girls’ clothes” is a very young boy, around pre-school age. This further reinforces the idea that little boys wearing dresses or playing with dressing up clothes are doing something unusual, instead of simply being a child playing.



Secondary School Resources

[Barnardo's Secondary School Resource Pack](#) has three assemblies for Key Stage 3 (ages 11-13). The KS3 assembly on Identities uses the Genderbread Person.

‘Gender Identity’ is described as ‘How you, in your head, think about yourself. The chemistry that composes you (e.g. hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means’. There is no scientific evidence for ‘gender identity’. The Genderbread person is at odds with scientific fact, presenting biological sex as a spectrum, and asserting that people with differences of sexual development (intersex) are neither male nor female but a combination of the two.



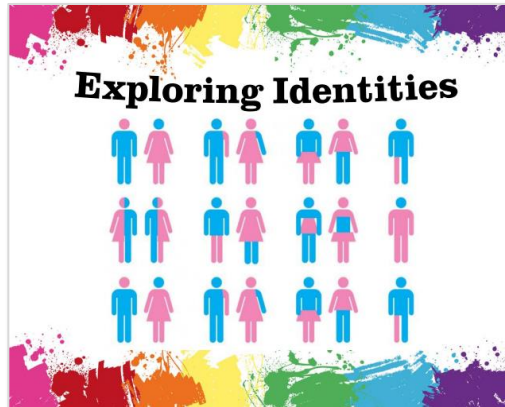
✗ This resource does not meet the DfE’s criteria for evidenced-based resources that contain robust facts and are from credible resources.

✗ It breaches the DfE guidance by suggesting that children might be a different gender based on their personality and interests or the clothes they prefer to wear.

[SSA UK have a letter template with more information about the Genderbread Person resource.](#)

Secondary School Resources (Continued)

Children are told that everyone has a gender; that gender is assigned at birth depending on biological characteristics; and that some people don't feel that they identify with their biological gender.



✗ This does not meet the DfE's criteria for evidenced-based resources that contain robust facts and are from credible resources. It conflates sex and gender. Babies are not assigned a gender at birth. Sex is determined at fertilisation and can be observed during pre-natal scans. At birth, a baby's biological sex is observed, based on their genitals.

Gender is a set of stereotypes which changes according to time and culture. There is no scientific evidence that everyone has a gender identity – this is a belief in gender ideology that many people disagree with.

A slide titled "Gender Identities" with a rainbow background. The text reads: "And.....we all have a gender identity. Sometimes our gender matches the gender we were assigned at birth, and quite simply, sometimes it doesn't. When our gender identity does NOT match this is what is called **Trans** or **Transgender**. There are lots of different identities that people identify with. Some examples are: • Trans • Transgender • Transman or Transwoman • Non-Binary **You should never feel pressured to label your gender identity.**"

A slide titled "Gender Identity Quiz" with a white background. It contains a bullet point: "Gender is assigned at birth, depending on biological characteristics." Below it, it says "True: However, some people do not feel that they identify with their biological gender. This links to the next question...."

A slide with a white background. It contains a bullet point: "Some people identify as being more than one gender and move between them." Below it, it says "True: This is called being 'gender fluid'."

The teaching pack indicates that gender identity is something very important; that children need to make a decision about their identity and can choose whether they are male, female, neither or both; that there are many different gender identities to choose from; and that they may have more than one gender and move between them.

✗ This does not meet the DfE's criteria for evidenced-based resources that contain robust facts and are from credible resources. There is no scientific evidence that everyone has a gender identity – this is a belief in gender ideology that many people disagree with. There are two sexes – male and female – and whether someone is male or female is a biological fact, not a choice or a feeling.

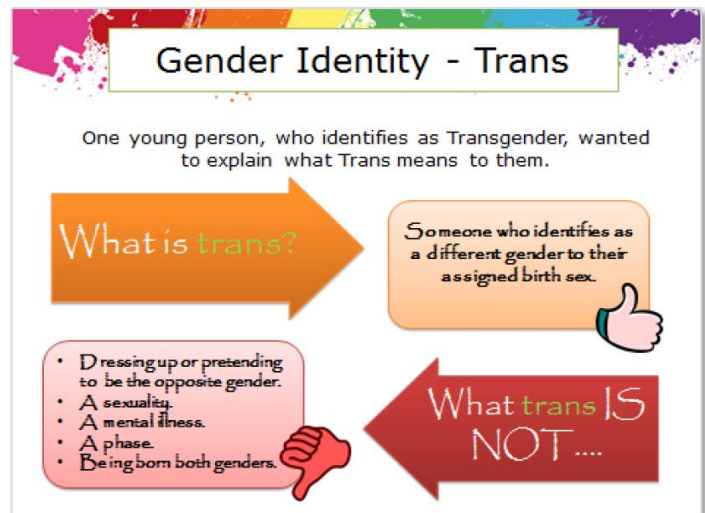
A slide titled "My hair is Brown" and "My hair is Blonde" with a rainbow background. It contains text: "Game/activity about choice – blonde/brown , cats/dogs, TV/film. Be clear that they must pick one of the two. If it is this difficult to choose between two mundane things, imagine if this was a choice about who you are – male or female? What if you felt like neither, or both? Not everybody has to make a decision or be labelled."

Secondary School Resources (Continued)

Despite the Secondary schools pack suggesting that wearing clothes associated with the opposite sex may be linked to being transgender, the KS3 presentation says that being trans is not “dressing up or pretending to be the opposite gender”. It does not explain what the difference is meant to be between someone identifying as the opposite gender and someone pretending to be the opposite gender. The supporting notes for teachers say this may encourage questions relating to drag culture and cross dressing, but does not explain how these are different. The slides also say being trans is not “being born as both genders” – what this means is not explained.

It is also described as not being a phase, despite the fact that, if not medicated with puberty blockers, [80% of children who identify as trans change their minds and do not continue into adulthood as transgender](#).

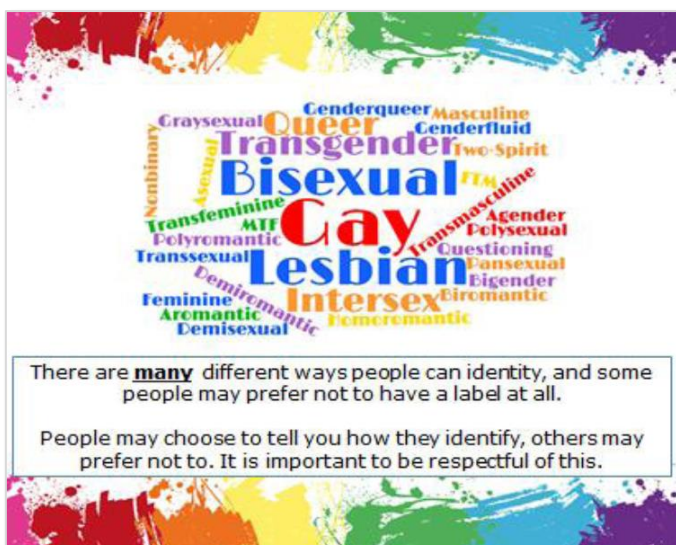
✗ This does not meet the DfE’s criteria for evidenced-based resources that contain robust facts and are from credible resources.



The third KS3 assembly pack is about LGBT History Month. It again reinforces that everyone has a gender identity, and that there are many different ways people can identify.

Many different terms for sexuality are introduced, e.g. graysexual, polysexual, demisexual; as well as many terms for transgender identities e.g. transfeminine, genderqueer, bigender. Some of the terms are homophobic as they deny same-sex attraction. Many of these terms are controversial, the definitions are contested and they are linked to political positions.

It is unclear what the purpose or supposed benefit of this graphic is, other than to further confuse children by suggesting that sexuality (attraction based on sex) is based on the same thing as gender identity (identification with gender stereotypes). Children are told that “people may tell you how they choose to identify, others may prefer not to”.



▶ This breaks down the boundaries of appropriate behaviour; adults should not tell children about their sexual identities in this level of detail.

✗ This breaches the DfE requirement to ensure all content, resources and external agencies used are impartial and ensure balanced presentation of opposing political views: must be impartial in line with school’s legal duties (including the Education Act 1996) regarding political impartiality, take reasonable steps to offer a balanced presentation of opposing political views and forbid the promotion of partisan political views.

Secondary School Resources (Continued)

There is a quiz included in the KS3 pack, which further reinforces gender ideology: gender identity is presented as a material fact that is “very real”. There is no legal definition of 'gender identity' and any definition in general use both relies on and reinforces sexist stereotypes.

✗ This does not meet the DfE’s criteria for evidenced-based resources that contain robust facts and are from credible resources. While a feeling of discomfort with one’s body may be real, this does not mean the person is trans; there is no evidence for “gender identity” as a material reality.

Being Trans is a choice?

False: It is not a choice. The gender that someone feels that they are inside does not always match their body and this is very real.

It reinforces the idea that stereotypes of clothing and hairstyles can be used to make someone’s appearance match their gender identity. Changing your body through unnecessary surgery in order to reflect an internal ‘gender identity’ is also presented.

✗ This breaches the DfE guidance by suggesting that children might be a different gender based on their personality and interests or the clothes they prefer to wear.

All trans people want to physically change their bodies.

False: Some trans people do go through extensive, and painful, surgery to change their bodies to reflect the gender in which they identify. However, many trans people choose not to do this and instead choose to present themselves in their identified gender in other, non-permanent ways, such as clothing, hairstyles, etc.

The quiz says people have a right to use the toilets and changing rooms that match their gender identity. However, this is not the case – [single sex toilets and changing rooms are allowed under Equality Act exceptions](#).

▶ This misrepresents the law; a lack of single sex facilities discriminates against girls on the grounds of sex, as well as putting trans-identified children at risk by removing them from normal safeguarding procedures.

Trans young people are not allowed to use the toilets or changing rooms of the gender with which they identify?

False: There is nothing that should prohibit a trans young person from using the changing room or toilet of their gender identity. It is in fact their right that if the Trans young person wants to use the facilities of their new gender, they should be able to do so.

Barnardo's on Puberty Blockers

[Barnardo's released a joint statement about the legal case to stop children being given puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.](#)

Their statement frames the High Court ruling as “denying children agency” and putting them at risk of harm. Framing it as ‘denying children agency’ is an abdication of the responsibility that all adults have to safeguard children. There are some things that children do not have the capacity to consent to, for their own protection. [The High Court ruling that children should not be given puberty blockers](#) protects children from being prescribed experimental medication that has no evidence of improving mental health and that has serious, long-term side effects.

“On matters of health treatment all children have the right to be listened to independently and have their wishes taken seriously – this includes children and young people who identify as trans and who may be undergoing hormone treatment therapy.

“Many trans children and young people feel lonely and isolated due to a lack of support, understanding, and acceptance. Denying them agency has the potential to compound this and can put them at high risk of mental illness and emotional distress, potentially affecting their long-term future.

Barnardo's on the Gender Recognition Act

Barnardo's [submission to the Gender Recognition Act consultation](#) says that “a number of schools are removing their trans guidance due to fears of being targeted by the anti-trans lobby.” [Oxfordshire County Council](#) withdrew their guidance after a legal challenge by a teenage girl whose rights were being impinged. A number of other Local Authorities have also withdrawn similar guidance, presumably after realising that the guidance may put them at risk of legal action if they breach the rights of children. The Trans Inclusion Toolkit did not support trans children; instead it removed them from normal safeguarding procedures, placing them at risk of harm.

The proposed changes have had a knock-on effect on trans support offered to children and young people. For example, there are challenges to trans guidance in use by schools, and a number of schools are removing their trans guidance due to fears of being targeted by the anti-trans lobby. Schools are confused about what support they would receive from government if they retain the guidance.

Barnardo's recommends that the age limit for applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate should be lowered to 16, and that “further exploration is taken to allow young people below the age of 16 to self-determine their gender.” They also seem to be recommending that children hide their sex from schools or educational institutions “Denying trans children and young people the possibility of a birth certificate that aligns with their gender places them at risk of unnecessary disclosure within educational institutions.”

Barnardo's on the Gender Recognition Act *(Continued)*

▶ Hiding a child's sex from a school or educational setting is a safeguarding issue. The child cannot be given access to appropriate single-sex facilities, which are often important for safety, privacy, and dignity of all children. The child would not be protected from sex-specific harms such as the risk of FGM or of breast-binding. The child may not receive appropriate information about their physical and sexual health, e.g. details about menstruation and risks of pregnancy. Emergency medical treatment would also be hampered if the child's sex is not known, which could be life-threatening.

Denying trans children and young people the possibility of a birth certificate that aligns with their gender places them at risk of unnecessary disclosure within educational institutions. Disclosure puts trans children and young people, who are already marginalised, at increased risk of transphobia and discrimination, exclusion by their peers, and violence.

They also seem to recommend that children should be able to legally change gender without parental agreement.

- **Further exploration is undertaken with young people under the age of 16 who wish to have their gender recognised; to include a definition of competence and approval, particularly where parental support is absent.**