



## SAFE SCHOOLS ALLIANCE CONCERNS AND AIMS

### WHO ARE WE?

Safe Schools Alliance is a group of parents, grandparents, teachers, governors, health professionals, education professionals & others from a wide range of backgrounds. We have no religious or political affiliation and, as a volunteer organisation, we do not receive funding.

### WHAT ARE OUR CONCERNS?

We are concerned that schools are being advised to use policies regarding gender identity that are **based on misleading or inaccurate information**. These policies are informed by lobby groups.

We fear that many of these policies have **not been subject to proper impact assessments** and may cause **conflict between protected characteristics** under the **Equality Act 2010**. For example, although **Equality Act exemptions allow for single-sex provision** to achieve a legitimate aim (such as **keeping female students safe** in light of **alarming sexual harassment statistics** reported in the recent NEU & UK Feminista's study on sexism in schools), lobby groups push policies which **allow males into female spaces**, including in schools.

We are also deeply troubled that these policies often **contradict safeguarding legislation and good practice**. For example, some transgender lobby groups advise that a child's trans status must be subject to **absolute confidentiality** – including not informing parents. This **directly contradicts basic information-sharing safeguarding principles**.

We also fiercely object to training offered to schools by lobby groups which asserts that certain personality traits, characteristics, interests or hobbies are typical of girls whilst others are typical of boys. **This is sexism**. Such training dictates that children who conform to these gender stereotypes are to be labeled 'cis', whilst children who do not conform to these gender stereotypes are labelled 'trans' and should 'transition' in order to meet societal expectations. **This reinforcement of sexist gender stereotypes is regressive, restrictive and severely limits the opportunities for children to develop into well-rounded, balanced and diverse individuals**.

We also feel that lobby groups perpetuate heterosexual gender stereotypes to the extent that young people are led to believe that **same-sex attraction is indicative of being transgender**. As whistleblowing clinicians from the Tavistock Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) said, 'it **feels like conversion therapy for gay children**'. This observation, made by medical professionals with first-hand experience of treatment within a gender identity clinic, is alarming. We reject the **homophobic notion that children who are perceived to be heterosexual are 'cis' and, by extension, that children who are perceived to be homosexual are 'trans'**.

Safe Schools Alliance are deeply concerned that **many organisations, including political parties and charities** are **failing to use safer recruitment processes** and therefore risk allowing **unsuitable or dangerous individuals** to **make decisions and influence policy regarding children and education**. All schools, academies and organisations who work either directly or indirectly with children **must** use safer recruitment processes.

## WHAT ARE OUR AIMS?

**We urge the Department for Education to immediately review their policies and guidance to:**

1. ensure that **'sex' is listed as a protected characteristic** rather than the erroneous 'gender';
2. provide **clear definitions of each protected characteristic** – in particular, the definition of 'sex' as the biological reproductive classification of humans as 'male' and 'female'; and the definition of homosexuality as 'same-sex attraction';
3. ensure that the rights of **all** protected characteristics are upheld and that conflict between different groups is considered in **thorough equality impact assessments**;
4. ensure that statutory **safeguarding guidance is upheld consistently and objectively** across all protected characteristics;
5. ensure that policy and teaching on gender identity **does not reinforce sexist stereotypes** or **promote/encourage any particular ideology**;
6. ensure that **parents are notified** when single-sex provision will **not** be available (whilst respecting any transgender individual's right to anonymity) so that they are able to give **informed consent**;
7. ensure that **thorough background checks** are made on **external organisations** who provide schools with training/resources and that these meet safeguarding standards;
8. account for the vulnerability of children to **peer pressure & social contagion**;
9. highlight the **dangers** of gender nonconforming children seeking medical & psychological advice & support from **unregulated, unqualified online sources** which may include **unknown adults**;
10. highlight the **dangers** of taking **medication which has been obtained online** without a prescription from a reputable, registered doctor or **being coached for medical appointments** in order **to deliberately obtain a specific diagnosis/prescription**;
11. highlight the **dangers of breast binding**;
12. highlight the **side effects and irreversibility of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormone therapy**;
13. highlight that an **increasing number of young people 'detransition' or 'desist'** and ensure that the **experiences of detransitioners are communicated** to pupils for **balance**;
14. note that children presenting as trans are **more likely to have additional vulnerabilities** such as **autism, suffering trauma/abuse**, or other significant change prompting **psychological distress**;
15. reflect that **same-sex attraction is not indicative of 'gender identity'** and that conflation of the two is homophobic.

