



Safe Schools Alliance UK



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From: Safe Schools [<mailto:info@safeschoolsallianceuk.org>]

Sent: 22 July 2019 22:56

Subject: FAO Dr Polly Carmichael and Dr Bernadette Wren: Information Request from Safe Schools Alliance UK

Dear Dr Carmichael and Dr Wren,

We are Safe Schools Alliance UK, a group of concerned parents, grandparents, teachers, governors, health professionals and education professionals. We are from a range of different backgrounds and have no religious or political affiliation.

We are a grassroots movement, formed of people from around the UK, who have come together because we are concerned about the influence of transgender ideology in our schools. We have challenged the current guidance in many local authorities around the UK, and as a result it has been suspended in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. We are also aware that it has been withdrawn in Birmingham, pending review, and we know of other Local Authorities which have serious concerns about it.

The SSA campaign is focused on working with schools and educators to ensure that school policies meet the safeguarding needs of all students whilst taking into account the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. We are therefore concerned that teachers and other school staff are currently being given one-sided and potentially damaging guidance on how to deal with children who question their gender identity. Teachers do not have the training, or the time, to become experts on gender identity issues, and so expect to be able to rely on the guidance which is provided to them on this. However, many of the guidance documents currently used by local education authorities and schools are written by, or in close partnership with, trans lobby groups, and strongly promote the affirmation model as “good practice”, stating, incorrectly, that it is required by the Equality Act 2010.

In fact, we know that there are many different possible outcomes, in adulthood, for children who question their gender identity, and these are not all best served by an affirmation approach (1). Directing teachers to affirm an identity in a way that can put children on a pathway to unnecessary, life-altering drugs and surgery is in itself a safeguarding failure.

As such, we were relieved to read that GIDS had issued a media briefing at the Science and Media Centre (2), which was reported in the Telegraph on the 17th July as highlighting the risks of socially transitioning young children (3). They report that you have said that “many such children end up preferring to remain the biological gender they were born, and that to formally socially transition before puberty risks pre-determining the outcome.”

Dr Wren is also reported as saying “We have never recommended complete social transitioning but it has become a really popular thing and many advocacy groups really promote it. We take the long view because our concern has been that what might work to lower anxiety in a younger child may become the thing that is problematic when they get older. It can become harder for children as they move into adolescence, they are moving into puberty and the young person suddenly faces a wall of puberty.”



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These comments are extremely welcome as they acknowledge that affirmation is not a neutral, supportive option, but an action which has consequences.

However, the guidance on supporting trans-identifying and gender-questioning children which is sent to schools does not currently acknowledge this. For example, the influential Allsorts Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit 2019 (4) says “The right time to transition will be when the child or young person feels they are ready.” This puts the decision solely with the child, and does not allow for the responsible adults to suggest that not transitioning might be in the best interests of this child. It also says, “Remember that a pupil who identifies as a girl but was assigned male at birth is not a ‘boy dressed as a girl’ but is a girl”. This is an absolutist viewpoint which, if reinforced, will inevitably make it more difficult for that child to explore different options or to change their mind.

In light of the GIDS media briefing it is clear that schools need to know that the affirmation model pushed by trans lobby groups is not the approach recommended by NHS staff. However, we have been unable to find any written statement from GIDS about this, either on your website or elsewhere.

We would very much appreciate clarification, in writing, of your position on the affirmation model. This is essential for schools and LEAs to be able to make evidence-based decisions.

Yours sincerely

Safe Schools Alliance UK

(1) https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s10508-019-01517-9?author_access_token=sV1x8HKbegOcrAPUaDyELPe4RwlQNchNByi7wbcMAY7Qt5kJQq2-9M3weJ6DneKBtAtsVkiheShdsyxBMNjudT7lp-JJHUKFJbJUwb1074sItiDaC35S0jSTUCoukRnT2AEAqw9wN9_P7sLFIJ5Vig%3D%3D&fbclid=IwAR0rj7SZiWErI0Lor68U3E-AqvQ4hymdZwbbZ_V9h4jtQeShkxCGBb9jkNk

(2) https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/gender-dysphoria-in-children-and-young-people-what-goes-on-at-the-gender-identity-development-service/?fbclid=IwAR0N3btFHZkd0pLID_FAT9bPpqI6IFgkDQCTHJi_1tiMt3cks2eHtRlxJXU

(3) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/07/17/encouraging-children-socially-transition-gender-risks-long-term/>

(4) <https://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk/resources/toolkits-booklets-guides>