

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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12th July 2023

Dear Prime Minister

We write to you to urge you to take this opportunity to fix, once and for all, the problems created by unscientific and ideological approaches to sex and gender in schools. That means clear, workable and sustainable rules, not a fudge. If you miss this opportunity, another may not come for a long time. **That will expose the nation's children to ongoing harm.**

In recent years classroom lessons and school practice have been taken over by a dangerous and regressive new doctrine which states that:

- Human beings do not come in two sexes.
- Self-declared gender identity is what makes someone a boy or girl, male or female.
- Children can discern their gender identities by comparing themselves with sexist stereotypes.
- Anyone who disagrees with all this is a bigot.

The result is:

- An epidemic of trans identification, with related body dissociation and mental-health problems. **We know of state schools where a fifth of the girls say they do not identify with their sex.**
- A crisis in safeguarding. It is impossible to assess risk accurately without complete clarity about everyone's sex. When it comes to who uses which facilities, and which children share sleeping accommodation on overnight trips, it can never be appropriate to conceal any child's sex. **We have heard of girls coerced into accepting a male classmate in their dormitory because that boy identifies as a girl.**
- Widespread indoctrination. Our schools are supposed to be non-partisan, and yet children are being taught a fringe ideology incubated in university gender-studies departments as if it is scientific fact. Many RSE and PSHE lessons use loaded phrases such as "gender

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assigned at birth” and tell flat falsehoods such as “sex is a spectrum”. Dissent is framed as bullying. **We know of teenage girls who were told by a teacher that they were “despicable” for saying that a person’s sex is a matter of biology, not identity, and a young man who was expelled from his school for insisting that there are only two sexes.**

We understand that the DfE is working on trans guidance to help schools support all children and stay within the law. We are reassured to hear it will direct schools to tell boys who identify as girls that they cannot compete in girls’ sports, and to forbid children from using spaces designated for the opposite sex.

These steps are essential to safeguard all children, especially trans-identified ones, and to ensure safety and fairness for girls.

But we are deeply concerned to hear that schools may have to accept children’s “preferred pronouns” (perhaps subject to certain conditions). This sounds like a harmless matter of individual choice. **In fact, directing schools to use “preferred pronouns” for any children will undermine everything else in the guidance and make it impossible to follow in practice.**

Schools are rules-governed institutions that must think of the welfare of *all* children. Doing so sometimes requires sex-based rules that cover all children, with no exceptions. Such sex-based rules are justified in many situations, for example for the safety, privacy and dignity of children when undressing, washing or toileting; and for fairness for girls in sports.

1. **If some children can be treated as exceptions to a sex-based rule, that undermines the legal justification for having the rule.** Whether a child has parental consent or medical supervision has no bearing on whether a sex-based rule is justified, since it makes no difference to other people’s safety, privacy or dignity, or to whether the rule is fair.
2. **Children who want to be referred to by pronouns that do not match their sex are not merely expressing an individual preference; they are trying to compel other people’s speech.** They are laying claim not just to certain pronouns, but to all words that relate to the sex they claim to be, rather than the one they actually are. The girl who says her pronouns are he/him is claiming to be a boy, a son, a brother, male and so on. Likewise, the boy who says his pronouns are she/her is claiming to be a girl, a daughter, a sister and female. They regard the use of reality-based words for them as bullying, harassment and discrimination.
3. **Schools and teachers who acquiesce with the demand to never refer to a trans-identified child’s sex cannot do their jobs.** Many classrooms now have at least one trans-identified child, and an individual teacher will interact with dozens, perhaps hundreds, of children in a week. It is not possible to run a school efficiently while remembering which children to refer to as the opposite sex, or as “non-binary” (they/them or neopronouns such as zie/zir), or gender-fluid (changing identity, perhaps hourly).
4. **It is impossible in practice to separate how a child’s sex is described and which sex-based rules that child is to obey.** If a boy is being called a girl, and referred to by female pronouns, the school will be unable to explain why that individual cannot use female spaces and

participate in girls' sports "like other girls". It will create unhappy children who seek to push at boundaries that do not make sense. This is a recipe for conflict and misery.

5. **Calling some girls boys and some boys girls makes safeguarding impossible.** To put it plainly, boys can get girls pregnant, and most violence and harassment experienced by girls is at the hands of boys. Clear, honest language is the only way to prevent worst-case scenarios. Safeguarding discussions between education professionals must not be hampered by the fear of "misgendering". Written references to children's sex must be accurate, because risk assessment is sometimes paper-based (for example, a teacher allocating sleeping accommodation on an away trip for children they do not know).

If children wish to ask their friends and family to refer to them by particular terms, that is a private matter. **But schools must not acquiesce to or institutionalise this demand.** We implore you to direct the DfE to produce clear guidance for schools that is grounded in these facts:

- Children should not be taught lies about the human condition.
- Humans come in two immutable sexes.
- Clarity about sex matters for all pupils' safety, dignity, privacy and fairness.
- Children who are unhappy about their sex must be supported with kindness and sensitivity, but cannot be treated or referred to as if they are members of the opposite sex, or do not have a sex.

We believe that this is not only the sole sustainable, safe and fair approach, but the type of leadership the nation's parents deserve from their government.

Yours sincerely



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