

We have a student LGBT/LGBTQ group to support children in school

Children who are questioning their sexuality may benefit from an LGB support group. However, schools should be aware that any group specifically set up to provide support on issues around sexuality is likely to be targeted by those who seek to groom and abuse children. Some children may have been groomed or exposed to inappropriate content online and may have absorbed very harmful messages that are then shared with other children in the group. This may occur between children of the same age, or when children are grouped across a wider age range. All adults involved must be aware of these risks and have procedures in place to mitigate them.

A student support group for children who are questioning their 'gender identity' has a considerable number of additional safeguarding risks.

[Children with gender dysphoria have clinically significant distress.](#) Children who are experiencing this level of mental distress should not be expected to be 'supported' by other children, particularly those who may themselves be experiencing significant distress. It is an abject failure of safeguarding to expect clinically distressed children to provide support to other clinically distressed children; at the very least, any such support group would need to be closely supervised in a clinical setting, circumstances which clearly are not possible in a school.

In addition to the distress of gender dysphoria, children who are trans-identified are disproportionately likely to have undiagnosed autism, to have suffered sexual abuse or trauma, or have comorbid mental health issues. Again, children experiencing these issues cannot be expected to support each other outside of a closely supervised clinical setting.

It is likely that children in an LGBT support group will encourage each other to socially transition. There is no long-term evidence base to support the affirmative approach to gender, and social affirmation can lead to a gender identity becoming embedded, which in turn increases the risk that the young person will seek to medically transition in future. Schools must not create situations in which children are facilitated to encourage social transition.

My child's school says:

Transgender policies

The [Cass Review](#) Interim Report, published 10 March 2022 makes this considered point regarding social transition of children and young people:

“This may not be thought of as an intervention or treatment, because it is not something that happens within health services.

However, it is important to view it as an active intervention because it may have significant effects on the child or young person in terms of their psychological functioning. There are different views on the benefits versus the harms of early social transition. Whatever position one takes, it is important to acknowledge that it is not a neutral act, and better information is needed about outcomes”.

- How will the school ensure that children do not encourage each other to socially transition?
- How will the school oversee children's interactions online with groups that encourage transitioning, often by romanticising the idea of a 'true self' that will be publicly 'celebrated' once a child has transitioned?
- How will the school oversee children's interactions online with groups that view any questioning of gender ideology as 'transphobic' and encourage children to separate from their parents unless they are immediately affirmed? How will the school oversee children's interactions online with groups that promote adult involvement with children's emerging sexualities?