

Shirley-Anne Somerville
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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11th August 2022

Dear Miss Somerville,

We are a grassroots organisation of parents, educational and child protection professionals in Scotland. We were established to support parents and teachers to hold schools and others to account regarding safeguarding of children and young people in education. Our focus has been on safeguarding around gender identity ideology and the impact that this has been having.

Today we are writing to you to call for a thorough inquiry and review into why so many children and young people in Scottish schools are identifying as the opposite sex, or no sex at all, and the harm this causes. We are also calling for you to remove the Supporting transgender young people in schools: guidance for Scottish schools, which we believe promotes affirmation with little evidence of the suitability of this approach.

As you will no doubt be aware, there is an independent review being carried out by Dr Hilary Cass which is looking at the impact of the care of children and young people provided by NHS England. The interim report and resulting evidence have given rise to the Gender Identity Development Service at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust being ordered to close over concerns it is unsafe for children. We have similar concerns about the treatment of children and young people who have attended the Sandyford Clinic for 'gender care' and where their incongruence with their sex started and heightened.

The concerns and increasing evidence of children and young people being placed at risk of misdiagnosis and harm does not begin at the door of the NHS. An affirmation approach to the care of children and young people experiencing distress with their sex has been adopted by many schools, encouraged on social media where increased usage by children and young people during lockdown has impacted significantly, and most obviously through the promotion and acceptance of the Scottish Government's school guidance.

It is our experience that there has been a stifling of critical thinking across education in Scotland, which has resulted in many children and young people being bullied if they do not agree with the current gender identity ideology dogma. Many children who are often autistic or who are feeling socially excluded, or have experienced trauma, are finding themselves drawn to a 'trans identity' as a way to find social acceptance. Instead of addressing bullying and social media use, schools are often facilitating the affirmation of this new identity above all else. This can only increase the likelihood of children cementing the identity before they have seen a single clinician or therapist to support exploration in to underlying causation.

We have spoken to many parents and teachers who have experience of the issues gender identity ideology is having on their children and their schools. They have told us about LGBT Youth Scotland giving lessons that advise pupils to police each other's language regarding pronoun use, which has resulted in increases of bullying in schools, even though they attend schools in the guise of anti-

bullying. We have written to *respectme* and are now pursuing an official complaint through SAMH due to evident conflict of interest that LGBT Youth Scotland, as partners in *respectme*, present.

Recently, Suella Braverman made a very evidence based and legal statement regarding the misinterpretation of the Equality Act 2010, by schools, that has resulted in many of them – incorrectly believing that they have a legal obligation to treat all children by their preference where gender identity ideology is concerned. We agree with her statement and conclude that Scottish schools have done the same. The Equality Act is as applicable in Scotland as it is elsewhere in the UK, and we urge you in the strongest terms to consider this as a priority.

We will also be writing to COSLA to remind them of the potential consequences to councils should parents and/or pupils pursue legal compensation for mistreatment at school.

The promotion and acceptance of an ideology as fact has already impacted on children feeling and being safe in school and as parents and teachers, we are demanding that there is an independent investigation conducted into how this has been allowed to happen.

Safeguarding Our Schools – Scotland.

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