

FAO the Head Teacher and Board of Governors

Re: Stonewall School Champions scheme

I am the Director of Transgender Trend, an organisation that calls for evidence-based treatment of children with gender dysphoria. You may be aware that I was granted permission by the High Court to act as an Intervener in the recent judicial review Keira Bell & Mrs A v the Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust. You may also be aware of the judgment handed down in that case, that children under the age of 16 are highly unlikely to be able to give informed consent to treatment with puberty blockers which almost inevitably lead to the next stage of 'transition', cross-sex hormones, leaving a child infertile, with loss of sexual function and a lifetime on medication with unknown effects on their health. The court ruled that clinicians must also make application to the family court in the case of 16 and 17 year-olds.

You may not be aware of the highly irresponsible response to the Keira Bell court judgment from transgender and LGBT organisations who continue to claim that puberty blockers are reversible and life-saving. Stonewall on Twitter direct people towards disgraced GP Helen Webberley who has vowed to continue supplying puberty blockers privately to children despite the court finding that children cannot consent. Stonewall's tweet is archived here: <https://archive.is/eE4rh>. This puts children at risk. The campaign aims of these lobbying groups do not concern the welfare and safeguarding of children, but rather the promotion of trans activist demands through political channels.

In light of this, I write to express my concerns about Stonewall as a suitable organisation to be advising schools.

We have analysed all Stonewall's schools guides since 2015 and published a report which you may view here: <https://www.transgendertrend.com/product/stonewall-schools-guidance-a-critical-review/>

This is a summary of our findings:

We found that Stonewall eschews biological and scientific facts in favour of a message to children that their inner feelings override their biological sex. Stonewall presents the idea that everyone has an internal 'gender identity' as fact, that it is this feeling which defines human beings as either male or female, and that biological sex is merely 'assigned' at birth and may be 'reassigned' at will. Stonewall does not provide any evidence for this claim. There is no scientific basis for the idea that human beings have an innate sense of being male or female independent of their biology or socialisation as boys or girls. Schools are effectively using pseudoscience to educate children about how to understand themselves.

We found legal inaccuracies and information about legal duties which would potentially be misleading for schools, including misinformation and misrepresentation of protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 (EA2010) which could confuse schools about protected groups and their rights. Conflicts of rights, for example the right of girls to single-sex facilities, are not referenced, so schools would be in breach of their Public Sector Equality Duty by failing to show 'due regard' if they implemented Stonewall policies without considering the impact on other protected groups. Misleading information about Equality law leaves other protected groups unaware of their rights.

Stonewall fails to inform schools that girls (including lesbians) are legally defined and protected as the female sex in the EA2010 under the protected characteristic 'sex.' Under the banner of 'LGBT' Stonewall redefines the legal meaning of 'LGB' and extends legal protection to the concepts of 'gender' and 'gender identity.' Legal sex-based protections for girls are ignored in Stonewall guidance, and lesbians also have their legal identity removed. 'Gender', 'gender identity' and 'transgender' are not referenced or defined in the Equality Act and are not protected characteristics.

Stonewall presents an 'affirmation' approach as the only legitimate approach towards children with gender dysphoria without including information that this approach is new and experimental, or any evidence to support their advice. Stonewall advises the encouragement of children towards transition, socially and medically, as the normal and only way to support a child who is distressed or confused about their gender and offers no alternative. 'Affirmation' and social transition is an approach developed and promoted by activists, it is not the established clinical approach which is 'watchful waiting.' This puts vulnerable children at risk. Stonewall also advocates 'transitioning' a child at school without informing parents, in breach of government statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. Stonewall's advice is incompatible with DfE Relationships and Sex Education guidance which states that children should not be taught that their bodies are 'wrong'.

Implementation of mixed-sex toilets, changing-rooms and residential accommodation is in breach of DfE Relationships and Sex Education guidance on positive action to safeguard girls from sexual harassment, and creates a hostile and degrading environment for girls.

Stonewall is a political lobby group that campaigns to remove the sex-based exemptions in the Equality Act, thus taking away existing rights and protections of women and girls. It is unacceptable for a school to be guided by an organisation that seeks to remove rights from girls, and for a school to implement this erosion of rights in school policies on facilities and accommodation.

Following Stonewall guidance could put the school at risk of failing in its Public Sector Equality Duty to show due regard to all protected groups equally, lay the school open to legal action for direct or indirect discrimination, and expose a school to judicial review.

I urge you to read in more detail the risks a school is taking through membership of the Stonewall School Champions scheme in this analysis by lawyer Naomi Cunningham:

<https://legalfeminist.org.uk/2021/02/01/submission-and-compliance/>

Yours faithfully

Stephanie Davies-Arai

Director

Transgender Trend

<https://www.transgendertrend.com/>