



Fylde Coast Academy Trust

FCAT

The best we can be

(FCAT)

**Trans Equality Policy
2023 – 2025**

Issue Date	April 12th 2023
Electronic copies of this plan are available from	FCAT CENTRAL Academy group / shared drive
Hard copies of this plan are available from	FCAT CENTRAL
Date of next review	April 2025
Staff responsible for Policy / review	GFL / LF

Equality Statement

Commitment to trans equality

FCAT is committed to promoting equality, diversity and good relations in everything it does – a community leader, as a provider of excellent education, and as an employer.

FCAT is committed to equality of opportunity for trans students and people throughout recruitment and employment, including supporting trans students and staff through any transitioning process. FCAT will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the basis of a person's gender identity, gender expression or trans status.

FCAT seeks to provide a supportive environment for trans students and staff and to create a culture and environment where trans students and staff are able to thrive and are well supported during any process of transition.

The purpose of this guidance is to assist academy students and staff in FCAT with practical information on workplace support.

Definitions

The term transgender, or more commonly now trans, is an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary people are people who do not fall into the binary categories of man/woman or male/female. Non-binary people may feel they are not exclusively male or female, and may embody elements of both.

Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. A trans person can be gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian or any other sexual orientation. You cannot tell if a person is trans just by looking at them; trans people do not look a certain way or come from any one background.

The word 'transition' describes the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Every person's transition is unique and will involve different things. There's a lot of focus on medical transitions, but not all trans people want or can access hormone therapy and surgeries. Someone's transition may involve purely social aspects, such as telling friends, family and colleagues; dressing differently; and changing names, pronouns and official documents. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to transition. With more young people exploring their gender identity, the need for knowledge, experience and guidance in FCAT schools is crucial.

FCAT recognises there is no right or wrong way to transition and is committed to supporting each individual in their decisions.

Please see the glossary (appendix 1) for further information.

STAFF (Employee)

If an employee states that they are intending to transition at work, their line manager, in conjunction with other appropriate colleagues, should aim to make this process as smooth as possible. SLT should be aware that it can be an extremely difficult step for someone to approach their line manager about transitioning. They are likely to worry about the response.

FCAT is committed to reassuring all staff that they will be supported and respected. The transition process will be led by the individual concerned.

Telling colleagues

FCAT and the employee will discuss the individual's preferences in relation to informing others, including SLT, line managers, colleagues and other relevant contacts. They will agree whether the employee will do this, whether they would prefer a manager or a work colleague to do this, or a mixture of these options. They will also get express written agreement from the employee about when and how this will happen, including the details of the message and who it will be shared with. Levels of disclosure may vary in detail for different types of contacts and will be agreed in advance.

Uniforms and dress codes

If a uniform is in place for the role, managers will ensure that the trans employee has access to the uniform that is most appropriate at all times. Some trans employees may need access to both the male and female uniforms. Managers will be flexible, and will support the preferences of the trans person wherever possible. Trans staff have the right to comply with any dress codes in a way that reflects their gender identity and gender expression.

Changing facilities, toilets and other single sex facilities

Trans people are entitled to use single sex facilities in accordance with their gender identity. For non-binary people, this might mean using gender-neutral or accessible facilities, or using a combination of different facilities. However, trans people will never be required to use gender neutral toilets unless they wish to do so. All employees are entitled to have all their workplace records changed to reflect the name, title and gender that they have adopted. There are, however, some documents, such as pensions, National Insurance and tax-records, that require a Gender Recognition Certificate in order to be amended. In cases where an employee has changed their personal information on some documents but not others it is important for employers/managers and HR staff to consider how these different documents are stored and who has access to them so that the employee is not inadvertently "outed" if a member of staff is able to link up old and new documents. The employer/manager or HR staff should also inform the transgender employee which documents contain old information.

Updating records

All employees are entitled to have all their workplace records changed to reflect the name, title and gender that they have adopted. There are, however, some documents, such as pensions, National Insurance and tax-records, that require a Gender Recognition Certificate

in order to be amended. In cases where an employee has changed their personal information on some documents but not others, FCAT will consider how these different documents are stored and who has access to them so that the employee is not inadvertently “outed” if a member of staff is able to link up old and new documents. The employer/manager or HR staff will also inform the transgender employee which documents contain old information.

Attendance at appointments and time needed for treatment and surgery

If an employee who is transitioning may need to take time off to attend appointments and treatment, as these are specialist appointments, they may be at short notice, not able to arrange outside of working hours and may involve travelling a long distance. Any request for time off should be made and managed in accordance with FCAT’s Special Leave Policy.

In addition, trans staff are entitled to the same sickness absence and pay as other staff.

People may need reduced hours or duties, or other changes to usual working arrangements, for a temporary period following some treatments. Any support can be considered and discussed in terms of reasonable adjustments either as part of absence management discussions or day to day line management discussions.

Advice can be sought from HR.

Action plan or checklist

The trans employee and their line manager might find it helpful to put in place an action plan, or to agree a checklist to clarify the actions that will be taken over the course of the employee’s transition, dates by which these will be done, and the person who will take responsibility. Please see appendix 2 for an example, which can be modified to suit the individual’s needs.

Discrimination and abuse

FCAT has a zero-tolerance approach towards discrimination and harassment based on gender identity, gender expression or gender history. Inappropriate behaviour or language may constitute discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. Discrimination including harassment, third party harassment and victimisation are covered by the Equality Act 2010. FCAT are responsible for taking timely action where misconduct occurs on the grounds of an employee’s gender identity, in line with the FCAT Disciplinary Policy.

Recruitment

People who have already transitioned have no obligation to disclose their gender history. Job applicants and interviewees will not be asked their gender during the recruitment process – it is not a relevant criterion in selection. There is also no obligation for a transgender person to disclose that they are trans as a condition of employment. If they choose to disclose, this is not in itself a reason for not offering employment, and non-disclosure or subsequent disclosure is not grounds for dismissal. Appointing officers who become aware that an applicant is trans will maintain full confidentiality in relation to this.

References

Where a reference request is received for an existing employee who has transitioned, FCAT

will respect the employee's privacy and only respond using the employee's correct name and gender in the reference. Disclosure on sickness absence will not include time taken off for medical appointments related to transition. This information is strictly confidential and SLT/Line managers must be very careful of any record keeping in this.

When FCAT requests a reference, we will make the request using the prospective employee's name and gender since transitioning. We will not mention previous names or gender identity, unless specifically asked to do so (in writing) by the trans person.

Criminal record checks/disclosure and barring

If the appointment requires a DBS check, then previous names are a legal requirement of the DBS application. We will highlight to all applicants the confidential procedure available to trans people.

Qualification certificates

FCAT recognises that it can be difficult and expensive for a trans person to change their qualification certificates. If these are in a former name then, where possible, a record will be made that the certification has been seen, but a copy will not be taken. If it is absolutely necessary for FCAT to store a copy, they will be stored securely and only accessed by named persons.

Roles and responsibilities

Professional registration

If the employee's job involves professional registration, we will check whether the registration body has a specific confidential process for gender transition.

Pensions and national insurance

Where pensions, national insurance contributions or other benefits are dependent on legal sex, trans people will be advised of the different implications of whether they do or do not have a Gender Recognition Certificate.

Employee

- Engaging with managers and HR around the logistics of transitioning in the workplace.
- Reporting any instances of harassment, victimisation or discrimination.

SLT / Manager / Trust / HR

- Ensuring that colleagues are informed about the employee's transition in a manner that best suits the employee.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times including securing paper documents and files.
- Thoroughly investigating any instances of harassment, victimisation or discrimination.
- Supporting the employee in any way that is necessary and appropriate.

- Ensuring that this policy is followed at all times.
- Providing trans equality training as a general part of the equality and diversity training programme within FCAT.

IT Department / Support Services

- Changing names, titles and pronouns on email and other systems.
- Issuing updated security passes and ID badges.

Trade unions

- Supporting the employee in any way that is necessary and appropriate.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Supporting the employee if they experience harassment, victimisation or discrimination.

Support for employees with a dependent who is transitioning

If an employee is supporting a dependent who is transitioning, they may need to take time off to attend appointments and treatment or give assistance following surgical procedures. As these are specialist appointments, they may be at short notice, not possible to arrange outside of working hours and may involve travelling a long distance. Any request for time off should be made and managed in accordance with FCAT's Special Leave Policy.

Students

FCAT will:

- Listen to the child or young person, counsellors / support workers, their parents, carers and siblings.
- Take steps to meet the needs of trans students using a similar approach to 'reasonable adjustments'
- Wherever possible follow their lead and preferences.
- If the student has not informed the parents or carers, FCAT will not do so without the young person's consent.
- No child or young person will be made to feel that they are the ones who are causing problems or that they owe anything to their academy in return for being treated with the equality they deserve and are legally entitled to.
- Avoid seeing the student as a problem and instead see an opportunity to enrich the school community and to challenge gender stereotypes and norms on a wider scale through training and support groups.

- Provide support to a trans student at any particular point in time although this does not signal that they are or will conform to any single trans identity or follow any particular path of transition.
- Offer a uniform of the gender a student identifies with and a 'gender neutral' option.
- Avoid where possible gender segregated activities and where this cannot be avoided, allow the student to access the activity that corresponds to their gender identity.
- Challenge bullying and discrimination.
- Promote positive attitudes to gender diversity by including trans issues within activities relating to discrimination, hate crime, diversity, inclusion, and PSH

Reassignment

The legislation states that FCAT must not discriminate against a student because of their transgender status. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but puts a student with a particular protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and it cannot be justified as a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim.

School attendance

FCAT will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and external sources in line with their absence policy. Sensitive care will be taken when recording the reason for absence.

Transphobia

FCAT has a robust anti-bullying policy. In line with this policy, transphobic incidents will be recorded and dealt with in the same manner as other incidents that are motivated by prejudice, e.g. racist or homophobic incidents.

Training

In order to ensure all staff have the skills to deal with transgender issues, FCAT will hold training sessions on topics such as:

- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Gender Identity
- Tackling transphobia
- Relevant legislation

The Curriculum

The issues connected to transgender will be visited for all students during curriculum time during the PSHE or equivalent programme within each academy. These issues will also be touched upon during other subjects.

Physical education

Sports and Physical Education is a key aspect of the national curriculum and the physical and mental well-being of young people. Physical education develops students' competence and confidence to take part in a range of physical activities that become a central part of their lives, both in and out of school. A young transgender student has the same right to Physical Education as other young people.

With regard to young trans people at school, there should be reasonably few, if any, issues regarding participation within the sports of their gender identity. There may be sports where, as puberty develops, MTF transgender participants may have a physical advantage over other girls but this should not present a problem within a carefully and sensitively managed lesson context.

The issue of physical risk within certain sports should also be managed properly within the lesson context rather than preventing young transgender people from participating (which would be discriminatory). It may be that due to the nature of contact and physicality of sports such as rugby, the school would consider whether a trans student participating in full contact lessons is appropriate towards the latter stages of puberty. This is something that FCAT will take a view on prior to the delivery of those lessons, in discussion with parents or guardians.

The use of changing room facilities will also be carefully considered. Facilities for trans participants will be sensitive to their needs and also recognised FCAT staff will ensure there is appropriate sensitive provision available.

The only thing regarding changing rooms that may cause a problem is if the only changing rooms available are open and do not have cubicles. This is due to issues about gender dysphoria mentioned above, and reactions from other students. In this case, the student will be offered alternative changing facilities. The young person will not be told that they must use the changing rooms that correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Work experience

As already stated, the Equality Act 2010 encompasses every environment that pupils will be working in; therefore all placements should be aware of their duties and responsibilities.

Where an academy within FCAT is considering allowing a trans student to attend a work experience placement the academy will complete a suitable

assessment on the potential placement to establish if there is any risk to the student, taking account of the students right to privacy – as a general principle, personal information on the young student must not be shared.

FCAT will be sensitive to this in their planning before any student is placed in any business or organisation. Careful discussion about the placement with the student and parents / carers and supporting stakeholders will occur to find the most suitable way forward to ensure the placement is successful.

Toilet facilities

There are no issues under child protection or safeguarding that prohibit trans students from using the toilet which reflects their identity – the student will be consulted of their preference. There is provision within FCAT for unisex (non gender specific) toilets. Trans students will be able to use these facilities which have been labelled sensitively and appropriately.

Residential trips and overseas trips

Ahead of any residential trip, staff will talk to trans students to discuss practical arrangements and to identify whether they have any concerns. FCAT will ensure that trans students can access the sleeping accommodation they feel most comfortable in, which could be accommodation aligned with their gender identity, or a gender-neutral or private space.

Trips overseas may need some thought in advance. Some aspects may cause worry for a trans student, such as their documentation not corresponding to their gender identity or how they look. Staff will discuss this with the student, parents / carers and be aware of legal protections afforded to LGBT+ people in the country they are visiting. Risk assessments will consider any additional steps to ensure the students safety, for example in relation to harassment or discrimination.

With regards to a visit abroad, anyone can be searched at borders and other places. Different countries will have policies and procedures they will follow. FCAT will contact the relevant border control or agency in advance to ensure that any policy or risk assessment completed by the school is accurate for that visit.

There are countries that are not legally and culturally open as the UK. Some have laws that make it illegal to be part of the transgender community. Some countries even make it an offence not to report to the authorities that someone is part of the transgender community. FCAT will consider and investigate the laws regarding transgender communities in any country considered for a visit.

School Uniform

A trans student may take steps to change how they dress or the uniform they wear to school, college or setting. They are much more likely to feel comfortable when all approved uniform items are available to all children and

young people, regardless of gender. This is something that benefits all children and young people, not just those who are trans. Trans students will be expected to follow the academy uniform policy, which covers uniform, make-up and jewellery.

There is a generally broad range of uniforms available for all genders (i.e. girls and boys can wear trousers and skirts, and all students must wear a blazer, shirt and tie etc).

Academy Photos

Trans students may feel fine with having their photograph taken at school but steps will be taken to ensure that these images do not reveal any confidential information. FCAT will consult with children, young people and their parents/ carers whether they wish images to be used on school websites or newsletters.

Name changing and exam certification

If a trans student wishes to have their preferred name recognised on school systems, this will be supported and will feed on to letters home, report cycles, bus pass information etc. Furthermore, the change of name and associated gender identity will be respected and accommodated by the academy. It is a real indicator that the transgender student is taking steps to, or proposing to move towards a gender they feel they wish to live in.

Technically, students can be entered under any name with an Examination Board. However, it is a very complex matter. Once a result is accredited it will need to be linked with a Unique Pupil Number (UPN) or Unique Learner Number (ULN) which existed in the school census information submitted in January of the examination year. UPNs and ULNs are only linked with legal names, not preferred names. It is possible for examination certificates to be issued in the preferred name, but any young student finding themselves in this position should discuss this issue with their academy / counsellor / support worker and parents or guardians to ensure the best way forward.

Academies are encouraged to ensure a strategy is agreed with the student and their counsellor / support worker / parents or guardians, then agreed with the various Examination Boards prior to starting GCSE courses as some examinations may be sat in year 10 and the length of time the process re-registering may take. Schools will also need to be aware that the DfE analysis of school performance may still present the student in the gender registered by their UPN.

It is possible for any documentation to be changed to reflect the chosen name of the young student. Changing the gender recorded on a birth certificate is not possible until a Gender Recognition Certificate has been issued. In order to change a name on other official documents such as a passport, it may be necessary for evidence of change of name to be produced. There are two

ways in which this can be done: by deed poll and by statutory declaration. The Citizens Advice Bureau and other transgender support organisations will have more information on this subject. A student under 16 years of age cannot change their name legally without the consent of a parent.

Vaccinations

FCAT will allow any gender specific vaccinations to be carried out at the GP's surgery in order to eliminate any anxiety issues.

Legal protection for trans people

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The UK Gender Recognition Act (GRA) enables people aged over eighteen to gain full legal recognition for the gender in which they live. Applications are considered by the Gender Recognition Panel. Once a person receives a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC), they are legally of that gender for every purpose and have all the rights and responsibilities associated with that gender. Although the current GRA is UK-wide, it's important to note that the GRA is a devolved matter and that devolved governments have committed to reforming the process of gender recognition.

Employment rights do not depend on whether a person has a Gender Recognition Certificate. Employers should not ask for a person's GRC and it should never be a pre-condition for transitioning at work. To make an application for a GRC, a person needs to show they have been living – and working - in that gender for at least two years. So being asked to show a GRC as a condition of changing employment details is like being asked to show a full driving licence before you can apply for a provisional one.

The Gender Recognition Act gives anyone applying for or holding a Gender Recognition Certificate particular privacy rights. It is a criminal offence to pass on information acquired 'in the course of official duties' about someone's gender recognition, without the consent of the individual affected.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (England, Scotland and Wales) protects against discrimination because of gender reassignment in employment and service delivery. It bans direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation. There is similar protection in Northern Ireland under the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (NI) 1999.

The Act makes clear that it is not necessary for people to have any medical diagnosis or treatment to gain this protection; it is a personal process of moving away from the gender assigned at birth to the correct gender. People discriminated against because they are wrongly perceived to be trans, or who are discriminated against because of their association with trans people or issues, are also protected.

Genuine Occupational Requirements

In the vast majority of cases, the gender of a worker is of no relevance to their ability to do a particular job. However, the Equality Act 2010 does allow for an exception where being of a particular sex is an 'occupational requirement' of that post. If this is the case for an employee transitioning at work, they will be redeployed into a suitable position.

Data Protection Act 1998 (UK)

Information about a person's trans status is considered 'sensitive personal data' and is subject to tighter controls than other personal data. Everyone's confidentiality should be respected. Explicit consent is required before it can be collected, used and shared.

Personal data must be looked after properly following the eight data protection principles, which include ensuring personal data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully.

Failure to change a person's title, name and gender when requested could lead to the following offences under the Act:

- Disclosure of personal information that is used, held, or disclosed unfairly, or without proper security
- Failure to ensure personal information is accurate and up-to-date
- Processing of data likely to cause distress to the individual.

Information about a person's gender identity, gender history or sex characteristics is considered to be confidential. Many staff will have access to the student data management system and therefore may be able to view information regarding gender identity, however all staff are trained and bound by data protection laws. Those working in an official capacity, must seek the permission of the trans, intersex or gender nonconforming person to disclose any information to others. This should be on a confidential, strictly 'need to know' only basis. Disclosure of a person's trans status without permission is a violation of FCAT policy.

There is no obligation to inform colleagues or students that a staff member or a student is trans, intersex and/or gender non-conforming.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The following Articles from The Human Rights Act 1998 support the rights and needs of transgender people to live their lives in their true gender.

- Article 8: right to respect private life and family life.
- Article 10: freedom of expression.
- Article 14: the prohibition of discrimination.

Appendix 1: Glossary

Gender identity: a person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth

Gender expression: a person's external gender-related behaviour and appearance, including clothing

Transgender or trans person: a person whose gender identity does not conform to the sex they were assigned at birth. These are inclusive, umbrella terms, including people who describe themselves as transsexual, cross dressing people, and people who have a more complex sense of their own gender than either 100% female or 100% male

Gender binary: the classification of sex and gender into two distinct and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine

Gender variance: gender expression that does not match society's norms of female and male

Non binary person: a person who does not identify as solely male or female. They may identify as both, neither or something entirely different

Gender fluid: having a gender identity which varies over time

Transsexual person: legal/medical term for someone who lives (or wishes to live) permanently in the 'opposite' gender to that assigned at birth

Gender dysphoria: medical term for deep-rooted and serious **discomfort or distress**

because of a mismatch between a person’s biological sex and gender identity;
overwhelming desire to live in a different gender to that assigned at birth

Gender reassignment: the process of transitioning from the gender assigned at birth - the steps taken by a trans person to bring their gender presentation or personal data records into alignment with their gender identity.

Legal sex: The sex recorded on your birth certificate. Rarely relevant at work. Currently binary in the UK. Changed by applying to the Gender Recognition Panel.

Gender Recognition Certificate: issued by the Gender Recognition Panel – signifies full legal rights in acquired gender and allows the issuing of a replacement birth certificate.

Appendix 2 – Action Plan (Employee) TEMPLATE

Are there any temporary or permanent changes / reasonable adjustments to the role which should be considered to support the employee? Considerations should include security aspects such as lone working, night working. These should be discussed and agreed in conjunction with the Headteacher and HR.
Is any time off required? If so, how will this be managed? Consider flexible working methods, if appropriate)
What will the employee’s title and name be? What pronouns will be used? When will they start using these? Will there be any phasing?
Are there any dress codes to be considered? Are new uniforms needed?
If applicable, how will single sex working requirements be managed?
When and how should colleagues be informed of the transition?
Is there any guidance material which the employee wishes to share with managers and colleagues?

Should the employee encounter unacceptable behaviour towards them (colleagues or service users) who should this be reported to?
Are there any other actions not covered by above?
Is there an agreed date for when this action plan will be disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998?
Actions agreed
Date of next meeting

Who needs to know?

	Who will tell them?	When?	Date completed
SLT			
HR Representative			
Line manager			
Team members			
Other colleagues			
Others (specify)			

Changes to records

	Who will do this?	When?	Date completed
HR Records			
Name badge			
IT systems including email			

Website			
Voicemail			
Internet/intranet address entry			
Union membership			
Pension scheme			
Certificates/awards			
Personal file and related data			
Other:			

Details of meetings

Date	Comments	Actions	Date of next meeting

FCAT LGBT+ Staff Support

Support for SLT / Managers and Staff

The term transgender, or more commonly now trans, is an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-binary people are people who do not fall into the binary categories of man/woman or male/female. Non-binary people may feel they are not exclusively male or female, and may embody elements of both.

Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. A trans person can be gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian or any other sexual orientation. You cannot tell if a person is trans just by looking at them; trans people do not look a certain way or come from any one background.

The word 'transition' describes the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Every person's transition is unique and will involve different things. There's a lot of focus on medical transitions, but not all trans people want or can access hormone therapy and surgeries. Someone's transition may involve purely social aspects, such as telling friends, family and colleagues; dressing differently; and changing names, pronouns and official documents. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to transition. With more young people exploring their gender identity, the need for knowledge, experience and guidance in schools and colleges is crucial.

How to relate to a trans person

It is very hard to come out to people as transgender. They trust and/or respect you very much to have come out to you. Treating them with respect and dignity will mean a lot to them, because you mean a lot to them.

Respect their gender identity

Think of them as the gender they refer to themselves as and refer to them with their chosen name and gender pronoun (regardless of their physical appearance) from now on unless they are not out, or tell you otherwise. Ask to be sure.

Watch your past tense

When talking of the past try not to use phrases like "when you were a previous gender" or "born a man/woman," because many transgender people feel they have always been the gender they have come out to you as, but had to hide it for whatever reasons- or at least be aware of when you do it. Ask the trans person how they would like to be referred to in the past tense. One solution is to avoid referencing gender when talking about the past by using other frames of reference, for instance "Last year", "When you were a child", "When you were in high school", etc. (If you must reference the gender transition when talking about the past, say "before you came out as current gender", or "Before you began transitioning" (if applicable)).

Use language appropriate to the person's gender

Ask what pronouns the trans person prefers to have used in reference to them and respect that choice. For example, someone who identifies as a woman may prefer feminine words and pronouns like she, her, actress, waitress, etc. A person who identifies as a man may prefer masculine terms like he, his, etc. Non Binary terms like they, them etc.

Your friend Jack has just come out as a trans person, and now wishes to be called Mary. From this point on, you do not say "This is my friend Jack; I've known him since grade school." Instead, you say, "This is my friend Mary; I've known her since grade school." Table any awkwardness you feel for another time when you and Mary can talk privately. Definitely, if you want to remain friends, you will

need to respect Mary's wishes and address her as who she is today, not the person you used to know; despite the fact that the transgender person IS the person you used to know, you just know them better now.

Don't be afraid to ask questions

Some, but certainly not all transgender people will answer questions related to their identity / gender. Don't expect the transgender person to be your sole educator, however. It is your responsibility to inform yourself. Also, if a trans person doesn't feel comfortable answering your question, don't try and "force it out of them." Lastly, questions about genitalia, surgeries, and former names should usually only be asked if you need to know in order to provide medical care.

Respect the trans person's need for privacy

Telling people you are trans is a very difficult decision, not made lightly. "Outing" them without their permission is a betrayal of trust and could possibly cost you your relationship with them. It may also put them at risk, depending on the situation, of losing a lot - or even being harmed. They will tell those they want to, if or when they are ready. This advice is appropriate for those who are living full-time or those who have not transitioned yet. For those living full-time in their proper gender role, very many will not want anyone who did not know them from before they transitioned to know them as any other than their current, i.e. proper, gender.

Don't assume you know what the person's experience is

There are many different ways in which differences in gender identity are expressed. The idea of being "trapped in a man/woman's body", the belief that trans women are hyper feminine/trans men are hyper masculine, and the belief that all trans people will seek hormones and surgery are all stereotypes that apply to some people and not to others. Be guided by what the person tells you about their situation, and listen without preconceived notions. Do not impose theories you may have learned, or assume that the experience of other trans people you may know or have heard of is the same as that of the person in front of you. Don't assume that they are transitioning because of past trauma in their lives, or that they are changing genders as a way to escape from their bodies.

Begin to recognise the difference between gender identity and sexuality Do not assume that their gender correlates with their sexuality - it doesn't. There are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and asexual trans people. If the person comes out to you about their sexual orientation, use the terms they use.

Treat them the same

While they may appreciate your extra attention to them, they don't particularly appreciate you making a big deal of them. After you are well-informed, make sure you're not going overboard. Trans people have essentially the same personalities as they did before coming out. Treat them as you would anybody else.