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Skirts for boys at private Highgate School under plans for gender-neutral uniform



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Highgate School is drawing up plans for a gender-neutral uniform CREDIT: YUI MOK/PA ARCHIVE

By **Olivia Rudgard**, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

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Anorth London private school has drawn up plans to introduce gender-neutral uniforms in response to a growing number of pupils questioning their gender identity.

Highgate school currently has an option for girls to wear a grey pleated skirt, but the school is consulting on a mix-and-match uniform policy which will not specify a different requirement for boys and girls.

Girls can currently wear grey trousers or skirts as well as the dark blue jackets and ties which make up the rest of the uniform. Boys may not wear a skirt and also have to wait until they are 16 to wear earrings.

Adam Pettitt, headmaster at the school, told the *Sunday Times* (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/gender-in-classroom-private-trans-children-highgate-school-skirts-for-boys-as-pupils-query-identity-3kj5dzw2z>): "This generation is really questioning [if we are] being binary in the way we look at things."

He said some former pupils had complained about the changes. "They write in and say if you left children to their own devices they would grow up differently and you are promoting the wrong ideas," he said.

Some parents did not know that their children were questioning their gender identity, he added, forcing the school to mediate between parents and pupils.

The school already allows children to request that staff address them by a name of the opposite gender, which around half a dozen have done. One boy has also been allowed to wear a dress to school.

Other private schools have already drawn up policies to deal with children who were questioning their gender identity.

St Paul's Girls' School has a gender identity protocol that allows female pupils to be called by boys' names and wear boys' clothes.

The Girls' Schools Association has advised members to stop using the word "girls" and address children as "pupils" instead. Brighton College also replaced its uniform, which had been in place for 170 years (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/12109564/Brighton-College-scraps-century-old-uniform-code-to-accommodate-transgender-pupils.html>), for a gender-neutral one.

Last year it was revealed that around 80 state schools were allowing pupils (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/12/now-boys-can-wear-skirts-to-school---as-new-gender-neutral-unifo/>) to wear clothes of the opposite gender.

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