

- Business Community
- Careers
- Jobs board

Education

Coming out trans at school: Student stories show why Tory plans to out trans kids are so, so wrong

Jun 08 • Written by Maggie Baska

Share Save for later Listen



Three young people share their experiences of coming out trans at school. (Getty)

As the government prepares to release restrictive new guidance for schools on

Advertisement [Remove ads](#)

Related articles



Politics

Anti-trans Tory MP Miriam Cates doesn't want children 'changing gender in school'

May 27 • 3 min read



trans students, three young people share their experiences of exploring their gender while in education.

In March, prime minister Rishi Sunak promised schools would **receive new guidance** after a report by the right-wing lobby group Policy Exchange, cynically titled “Asleep at the Wheel”, which claimed schools are compromising “fundamental safeguarding principles” by not outing trans kids to their parents.

Leaks have suggested the government guidance, which will cover state and independent schools, would bar **trans children from using toilets or changing facilities which align with their authentic self**, prevent trans girls from playing certain sports with other girls, and discourage schools from allowing students to change their names and pronouns.

The Policy Exchange report that appears to have inspired this opened with a foreword by gender-critical MP Rosie Duffield and based its findings on freedom of information requests sent to schools. However, there was no clear input from young trans people or their parents.

So PinkNews asked trans and non-binary ambassadors for **Mermaids** – who are either in education or have just left school – about how they’ve been supported in the UK education system, and how it could be better for those in the future.

When Chase Evans, 16, first came out to his friends, they were “really supportive” – having people who would correct others “when [he] felt too awkward to” made him feel more comfortable in sharing his truth.

“Some of my teachers also went above and beyond when trying to make me feel supported when I first came out, and I was really appreciative that nobody made it a big deal,” says Chase.

A group of students in a UK school gather together to take their GCSEs

Chase Evans thinks it’s important for schools to support trans pupils because it “allows them to do better”, which is “what they should want for their students”. (Getty)

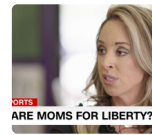
However, beyond their name change, Chase has had to ask his school “for every accommodation that has been made over the past two years” – nothing was offered to him unprompted, he says.



Politics

Rishi Sunak asked to condemn schools simply for supporting trans kids

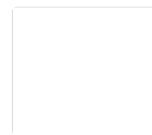
May 24 • 2 min read



US

Conservative group Moms for Liberty claims Joe Biden is trying to turn kids trans and gay

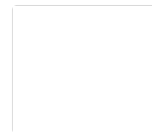
May 24 • 1 min read



Education

Tory MP Nick Fletcher wants pronouns taken out of all schools: ‘We’re confusing people’

May 24 • 2 min read



Education

Teacher sacked for refusing to use trans pupil’s correct pronouns takes legal action

May 13 • 2 min read

Advertisement [Remove ads](#)

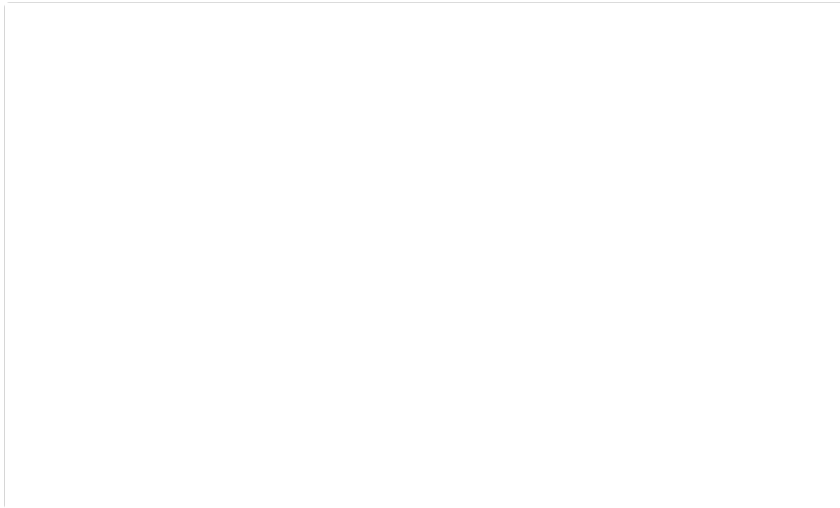
“I don’t think I realised this until I became ill, and my school was really supportive of that and offered me things I didn’t even need to make my day easier and more comfortable,” they add.

“I think it really highlights the fact that not all needs are treated the same in school.

“I don’t feel like asking to be respected in the place where I spend most of my day should be controversial or considered as me asking too much.”

They add: “Personally, I think that I started enjoying school more and did better when I came out, as I wasn’t constantly reminded of things like my deadname.

“I think that not supporting trans students makes it really difficult for them to do as well in school as they could be doing, as they don’t feel valued or respected in that environment. They might not try as hard as they don’t see the point in it. I feel that if schools want their students to do well, they should support trans people.”



LGBTQ+ rights advocates, trans people, students and educators have protested against the rising tide of right-wing voices attacking queer-inclusive policies in educational settings. (Getty)

According to a report in [The Times](#), the new government guidance will warn schools that allowing children to use new names and pronouns could cause psychological harm, despite studies showing that using the correct pronouns for trans and non-binary youth reduces the risk of suicide.

It will also reportedly introduce rules for when schools “must inform parents about their children questioning their gender”.

For Jamie Jewkes, one of the defining moments of his school experience was when his teachers “listened to [him] with regard to [his] boundaries” about his name.

“I wanted to be out at school, but wasn’t ready to be out at home yet, so the teachers let me have control and choose what situations I could use

my name for,” they explain.

“It allowed me to go for a prefect role, without fear of being unwillingly outed. It allowed me to relax at school.

“It made me feel so much more at home in school, and helped my academic focus and mental health so much.”

Being able to explore his identity at school helped Jamie, now 20, figure out who they are. But just a few short years on, Jamie has seen how things have “changed so much”, even without the forthcoming restrictions.

He describes seeing online posts from trans kids “every day about the fear they have” in “toxic” spaces.

“The omnipresence of media transphobia has such a big impact on our community’s mental health,” they add.

“It’s detrimental, especially to trans youth, who may be coming out into such an environment, and may not have had positive trans experiences yet.”



The harmful impact of Section 28 still looms across the UK as LGBTQ+ and trans rights advocates fight for queer inclusion in schools. (Getty)

Caleb Howard is also 20 years old. In January, he visited his old sixth form to talk to some of the staff about his experiences.

He found they were “all very open and welcoming and wanted to know how they could make things better for students”. It mirrored a meeting he had before he’d even started the school, which he joined for sixth form, to discuss adjustments that could be made for him.

Caleb says it’s important for trans students to be supported because schools are there to “promote education and enable them to learn”.

“School should be a safe place for all, and students shouldn’t have to worry about how their identity should affect the level of education and teaching that they receive.

“It may be one of the few places they can be themselves if they don’t have a supportive family.”

Julie McCulloch, director of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, said any guidance must be underpinned by “fairness, respect and safety”.

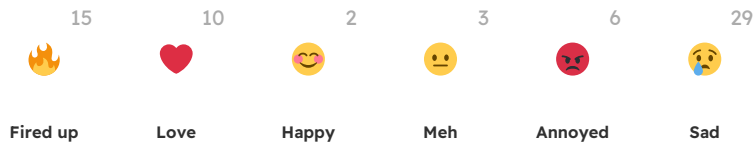
“It is crucial that there is full consultation with school and college leaders and teachers in advance of publication to ensure the guidance is deliverable,” [McCulloch told PinkNews](#).

“A compassionate and practical set of guidelines to help schools navigate this sensitive territory, where every pupil is treated with dignity, is what is required.”

More:

[tories](#) [trans youth](#)

How did this story make you feel?



Comments (0)

MyPinkNews members are invited to comment on articles to discuss the content we publish, or debate issues more generally. Please familiarise yourself with our [community guidelines](#) to ensure that our community remains a safe and inclusive space for all.

You must be a **MyPinkNews** member to comment.

[Become A Member](#)

Already a member? [Sign in here](#).

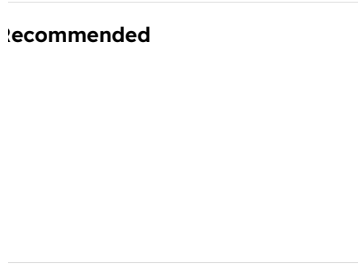
Loading Comments



What to buy now

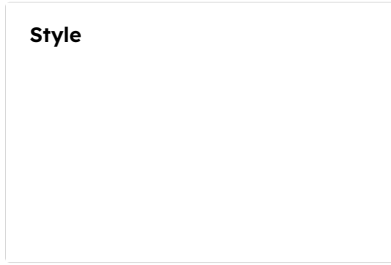
uncover the best deals on tickets, fashion, beauty and more





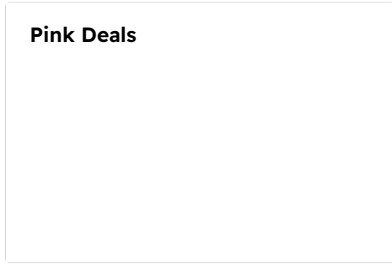
Recommended

June Month 2023: all of the brands releasing collections and supporting LGBTQ+ charities
16 • 10 min read



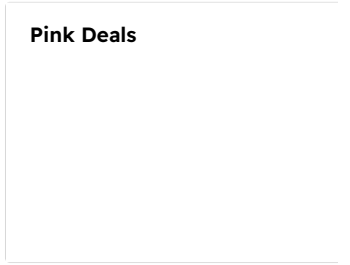
Style

Everyone is buying this Uniqlo crossbody bag for the same reason
Apr 20 • 2 min read



Pink Deals

Hot Octopuss launches huge sale to ramp up your pleasure this Masturbation May
May 05 • 2 min read

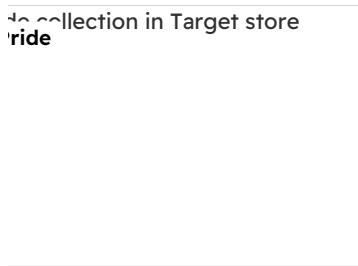


Pink Deals

This easy fitness app is rewriting the rules for working out
Apr 19 • 2 min read

Pride

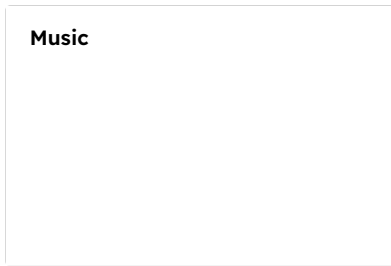
Celebrating LGBTQ+ communities around the world



Pride

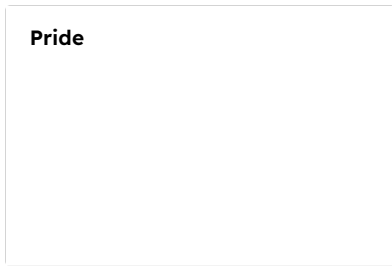
Princess collection in Target store

the brands homophobes and transphobes have attempted to boycott, from Bud Light to Build-A-Bear
04 • 2 min read



Music

Taylor Swift shares heartfelt Pride Month message for queer fans on Eras Tour: 'Such solidarity'
Jun 03 • 1 min read



Pride

NYC Pride's first asexual grand marshal explains why including ace people at Pride is so important
Jun 01 • 3 min read



Two children wearing pride flag UK

LGBTQ+ kids become unhappy adults if not supported by families and schools, research finds
Jun 01 • 4 min read



Download the PinkNews app
Award winning LGBTQ+ journalism



[About us](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Work for us](#)

[Terms and conditions](#)

[Privacy policy](#)



