

Court rules transgender teenager can cut off contact with adoptive parents

Judge says best chance of future reconciliation is to respect boy's current wish to shun parents who kept using his old name

Press Association

Thursday 10 March 2016 08.54 EST

A transgender teenager who wants to cut off all contact with his adoptive parents has won the backing of the high court.

The boy, referred to as PD, was referred to the Tavistock gender identity clinic with gender dysphoria in 2014 and later changed his name by deed poll.

His parents, who adopted him when he was six, struggled to come to terms with the decision and called him by his previous name, to his "very great annoyance and distress", said Mr Justice Keehan in a ruling made public on Thursday.

PD, now 16 and who cannot be identified, came to the conclusion that he no longer wished them to be involved in his life or receive any information about it.

His parents accepted that they should not receive any medical information, but in the hope that they would one day be reconciled they asked the court in London to allow them to receive quarterly updates on PD's life and welfare.

But PD, who has taken two overdoses and now lives with foster carers, did not agree, said the judge. So strongly held were his views that he did not even want his parents notified if he needed emergency medical treatment.

"The depths of his wishes are conveyed by his view that if he suffered a serious accident and underwent emergency surgery he would not want to wake and find his parents at his bedside," Keehan said.

The judge said the situation was extremely difficult for everyone. PD struggled to understand the lack of support and understanding shown by his parents, and they struggled with his feelings and decision about his gender.

"The upshot is that he, at 16 years of age, has decided to completely disengage from family life with them." He said it was a decision that PD was perfectly entitled to reach and that the court must respect.

The judge said he was pleased that the parents had expressed a willingness to engage with the Tavistock clinic, which might help them come to understand how PD felt when they called him by his previous name.

“Like the parents, I very much hope the time will come when a reconciliation is effected between PD and the parents. In my judgment, however, the surest way of seeking to secure that outcome is to respect PD’s current wishes and feelings.”

It was for PD to decide what, if and when any details about his life were given to his parents, and it would be wholly contrary to his welfare, his privacy rights and any hope of a reconciliation for the court to override his views and allow the local authority to provide information to his parents, Keehan said.

“I know that this decision will be a source of real disappointment and distress to the parents. I hope, however, they will understand the reasons for my decision in the fullness of time.”

More news

Topics

Family law Transgender Adoption Human rights

Save for later Article saved

Reuse this content