“It’s like being in the wrong body. If you were a girl, you expected to have a boy’s body and you were put in boy’s clothes, you obviously feel more feminine, and you’d want to change,” Darby said.

During Darby’s time at KHS, he began to make the transition from female to male. There was only so much he could do, at $5,000 in surgery was too expensive. Despite this, Darby still found ways to get the transition started.

“I’m hoping sometimes next year I can start transitioning,” Darby said. “From eighth grade to freshman year, I started bleaching and cutting my hair. I was as much as much comfortable I felt so much better about myself.

Even without surgery or hormone therapy, Darby was able to pass as a male in public, using male bathrooms by dressing like a guy, getting his hair cut and wearing chestbinders, undergarments that flatten a woman’s chest.

“Making me feel so much better, that I can pass as a guy in public,” Darby said. “I know my body is still there, and it just wanted a lot about me getting bullied.”

While’s parents may have been worried about his decision, they supported him from afar. “My parents were scared,” Darby said. “But they supported me from the distance.”

Darby’s mom was supportive. When he told her he was transgender, she said, “I’ve never gone through a very difficult time and needs all the support he could get. He still gets support from his grandma to his whole family. He’s still my child. Once you love your child, that doesn’t change. Darby said the Kirkwood community was accepting and it seemed to him at first glance.

“Kirkwood seems like, ‘We’ve got this big group of happy smiling people. It seems like that way, but you in the middle of it and have to deal with people who you’re going through, it’s not as accepting as it seems to be.” (But) how can you support them, then it happens you deny that’s not worth supporting.”

Things like emotionally using female pronouns, or worse, “combined with lack of support from his parents, discouraged Darby from making the transition during his time at high school.

“The pieces of it in showing someone I’m having transitioning, I can just tough it up and suck it up and deal with (transformation).” It’s gotten to the point where he’s realized he’s not going to put myself through that just because a few people might not like it.”

Darby said, “I feel like people who are labeled when it’s unnecessary. Why can’t I just be person?”

According to Emily Wiltse, a senior, “I don’t really care. If it makes them happy, that’s great.”

Several people who disapproved of things about LGBTQ sex education and a transgender person covered gay man, lesbian, a bisexual person, and transgender.