



Castlerea Community School

LGBTQ+ Policy

CCS Mission Statement

Castlerea Community School is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in education in a caring environment of mutual respect so as to foster the full potential of its students and staff. In partnership with Parents we strive to create a desire for life-long learning, respect for the individual, an awareness of the needs of the disadvantaged, concern for the environment and an appreciation of our own unique culture.

Phobailscoil an Chaisleain Riabhagh, scoil ata dirithe ar sar-oideachas a chur ar fail I dtimpeallacht chaoín, air a bhfuil comheas I reim I dtreo is go gcothaítear lan chumas na ndaltaí agus na mbaill foirne.

I bpairtiocht le tuismitheoirí deanamí ar ndícheall chomh maith le meas ar fheiniúlacht an duine, airdeall ar an te ta faoi leatrom, curam dar dtimpeallacht agus tuiscint ar ar gcultúr.

1. Rationale for this policy

Sexuality is an intrinsic part of what it means to be human and it is during post-primary years of education that the majority of young people go through puberty and begin the process of maturation. It is also a time when young people come to an understanding of their sexuality and their sexual orientation. For many LGBTQ+ young people this time can present challenges.

2. Aim of the Policy

The school (CCS) will endeavour to provide a safe, caring, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students and staff. CCS will do all that is practicable/appropriate to support LGBTQ+ students enrolled in CCS. The aim of this policy is to support CCS in its work to safeguard and respect the physical and emotional wellbeing of all students, including a transgender student or young person who may be transitioning in their gender identity.

3. Legal Framework

The Gender Recognition Act 2015, provides a legal framework for persons, over the age of 16 years, who wish to have their preferred gender choice recognised. The new Act compliments other legislation such as The Education Act, (1998), The Education Welfare Act, (2000), the Equal Status Act, (ESA) (2000) and the Data Protection Acts, (1998) and (2003), all of which, impacts directly on policies and practices in schools.

Equal Status Act

According to the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2004 there are nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited:

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller Community.

3.1 Leadership:

BOM:

The Board of Management manages the school on behalf of the patrons (Sisters of Mercy & Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board) and is accountable to the patrons and the Minister. The Board must uphold the characteristic spirit (ethos) of the school and is accountable to the patrons for so doing.

Principal:

The principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, including providing guidance and direction to the teachers and other staff of the school and is accountable to the Board for that management. The Principal will ensure:

- That this Policy is in place and communicated to all stakeholders.

- That inclusivity and respect for diversity is communicated clearly across the school community and all relevant policies.
- That CCS is fully aware of its legal obligations in respect of the Gender Recognition Act, 2015 and other relevant legislation.
- Strategies are in place to provide pastoral care for all transgender students irrespective of age. Consideration will be taken of the school's legal obligations under the relevant legislation which takes account of the different age groups: students under 16 years of age, students between 16 and 18 years of age and students over 18 years of age.
- That professional and respectful dialogue is actively promoted in relation to transgender students and related issues.
- That due diligence is exercised in respect of data protection and with issues of confidentiality in relation to the transgender student.
- That the wellbeing of the transgender student is safeguarded by implementing the anti-bullying policy, which addresses homophobic and transphobic bullying in a robust and fair manner.
- That all official documentation and correspondence relevant to the student with the Department of Education (DoE), and with other relevant external bodies is conducted appropriately, having regard to data protection, to confidentiality and is in compliance with relevant legislation.
- In relation to the name to be used on all school and official documentation, the wishes of the transgender student's and of his/her/their parent's/guardian's, if appropriate, will be respected in as far as it is practicable or legal in doing so.

3.2 Role of Student Support Team (SST) will be as follows:

Student wellbeing is the responsibility of the whole school community and all relevant supports will be made available to a student. This may involve the Student Support Team supporting the student in their physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing to enable them to reach their full educational potential.

- The following members of staff form the CCS Student Support Team:
 - Principal
 - Deputy Principal
 - Home School Community Liaison
 - Guidance Counsellor
 - Chaplain
 - Learning Support Coordinator
 - Year Heads
- To be the link team for the student, parents, staff and school community, the SST may draw up a student centred care plan as appropriate for the

student(s). This plan will include input by the student and parents/guardians as appropriate.

- The following elements may form part of a student support plan as necessary, appropriate and required:
 - The student and/or their parents/guardians will communicate with CCS how they would like their transition or their transgender status to be managed.
 - An outline of how CCS will support the student will be set out in the plan.
 - How other staff, students and class members will be informed of the change as appropriate.
 - Arrangements with regard to uniforms.
 - Arrangements for the use of toilets as required will be assessed on a case by case basis.
 - Arrangements for the use of changing rooms by transgender students will be assessed on a case by case basis.
 - The plan for the student's participation in the school's sporting and cultural activities as appropriate.
 - Arrangements for enabling transgender students to participate in CCS residential trips. Care through discussion and preparation in advance is required to enable transgender students to participate in residential trips. As appropriate risk assessments may be carried out by the (SST) prior to a trip in order to make reasonable adjustments as necessary in advance.
 - How CCS will continue to support the student as appropriate.

3.3 Individual Student

A student who identifies as transgender or is transitioning to a changed gender identity will be offered support. The primary focus will be on the individual student's care and wellbeing.

3.4 Curriculum and Extra Curricular

- The principles of inclusivity and respect for diversity are integrated across the curriculum and the school community with particular emphasis in the wellbeing subjects. Teachers are actively encouraged to integrate the principles of inclusivity and respect for diversity in their teaching methodologies and materials in all subject areas.
- In RSE in CCS we ensure that sexual orientation is addressed in a positive and open way when talking about human sexuality.
- SPHE teachers are supported in attending in-service training on sexuality and sexual orientation.
- Well-being/SPHE/CSPE: LGBTQ+ experiences should be integrated in all areas of the curriculum.

- Cognisant of the minority status of transgender students CCS will be attentive to any violations of the rights and dignity of transgender students. CCS will address transphobic bullying through CCS's Anti-Bullying policy and in the Code of Behaviour.
- CCS will actively encourage and support the engagement of transgender students in participation in the sporting and cultural activities of the school.

3.5 CCS Student Body

- The SST will devise a plan, as required, in consultation with the transgender student and with parents/guardians as appropriate, in relation to communication with his/her classmates as necessary.
- CCS uphold the values of inclusion and the social integration of the transgender student, CCS will guard against isolation or bullying
- CCS will continue to foster a spirit of inclusivity and tolerance among the student body both inside and outside the classroom.

3.6 CCS Staff and the wider CCS Community

- The Principal will ensure that staff, students, parents and the wider school community are informed about the CCS LGBTQ+ policy.
- The SST will keep staff and teachers informed of all of the changes and arrangements that may occur as appropriate.
- CCS will facilitate CPD and training for staff to develop awareness and understanding of relevant issues relating to inclusivity and respect for diversity including transgender issues. Ongoing staff training is encouraged to empower teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues.

3.7 LGBTQ+ Teachers/Staff in school

Schools that are inclusive and supportive of LGBTQ+ students are also supportive and inclusive of all LGBTQ+ people, including teachers and staff members. It is never acceptable for any comment to be addressed to any member of staff that is derogative of their sexual orientation/gender identity. Any such behaviour will be treated as a very serious breach of dignity in the workplace by school management.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16th May 2024.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)