



St. Mac Dara's Community College

LGBTQIA+ Policy

St. Mac Dara's Community College, through a comprehensive education programme, provides as far as possible, educational opportunities to meet the needs of each individual student. It is a multi-denominational, co-educational college. The following is the Mission Statement of St. Mac Dara's CC.

Mission Statement

"We, the community of this College, through a caring and collective approach, aspire to provide a broad-based education for all, to foster respect and dignity and to promote a safe and just environment by positively encouraging all to realise their potential."

School Ethos

As part of the DDLETB schools we also proudly endorse our school ethos which is underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Respect, Equality and Community. St Mac Dara's is a multi-denominational, co-educational school under the aegis of the Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education Training Board. The college recognises its obligation to all its students and its positive ethos is based on the quality of its relationships, both the professional relationships between teachers, the relationships between teachers and students and the relationships between teachers and parents/ guardian(s). This collaborative approach is reflected in the college's mission statement.

Introduction and Legislative Framework

Through cooperation and mutual respect between the partners in education, the students, teaching staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management, we strive to ensure that each student achieves his/her full potential. The school reserves the right to adapt or modify this policy in response to emerging patterns of behaviour among students, reflective of society.

This policy applies to students of the school when in school and in school uniform and on school activities and trips.

This policy relates to the following legislation:

- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
Schools have a duty to promote the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in their care, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils and those experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic (HBT) bullying.
- The Equality Act 2010
Schools are required to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment. This includes tackling HBT bullying. Schools are also required to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This means that schools should go beyond tackling HBT bullying and take proactive steps to promote respect and understanding of LGBT people and issues.

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other school policies including:

- The Child Protection Policy
- The Bí Cineálta Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- The Code of Positive Behaviour
- The Suspension and Expulsion Policy
- Inclusion Policy

This is not an exhaustive list of related policies.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice (RP) is about building positive relationships and taking a positive and solution-focused approach. St. Mac Dara's CC have engaged at whole-staff level in an RP professional learning programme, in association with NUIM 2021 – 2024 and new members to the team are supported to develop the skills of RP. At all times the school, as a community endeavours to employ a restorative approach to promote positive behaviour and restore relationships when the need arises. RP is at the core of our school's Code of Positive Behaviour. It creates an ethos of respect and inclusion in line with our core values and presents an opportunity for all involved to be accountable and responsible for their behaviour.

Inclusion of all students

St. Mac Dara's Community College places a high value on respect and on embracing diversity which is central to the practices in the school. Our activities endeavour to meet the diverse needs of all our students.

The school aims:

- To provide an inclusive environment in which LGBTQIA+ pupils and staff are valued and respected;
- To promote understanding of and support the needs of LGBTQIA+ pupils and staff

- To normalise LGBTQIA+ awareness and issues through the provision of an inclusive curriculum;

- To monitor and tackle HBT language and bullying.

St. Mac Dara's endeavours to follow the aims of the 2023 SPHE Specification (Junior Level), the Transition Year Programme Statement 2025 and the 2024 SPHE Specification which provides inclusion for all.

The school seeks to achieve these aims:

- By ensuring that school policies and practices are inclusive and supportive of LGBTQIA+ people and explicitly state that HBT language and bullying are unacceptable;

- By providing training to staff in supporting LGBTQIA+ pupils, developing an LGBTQIA+-inclusive curriculum and tackling HBT language and bullying;

- By providing support structures and information/resources to LGBTQIA+ pupils on LGBTQIA+ issues and support services (Google Classroom has become the focus of help seeking behaviour during COVID)

- By providing pupils with LGBTQIA+-inclusive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) opportunities to discuss gender identity and sexuality, and including LGBTQIA+ people and themes in the RSE and wider curriculum where relevant;

- By providing multiple ways for pupils to report HBT language and bullying, monitoring (including through staff and pupil surveys) and recording HBT language and bullying, as well as ensuring that pupils are aware that HBT language and bullying are wrong;

- By ensuring that assemblies, projects or displays which celebrate diversity or tackle bullying are LGBTQIA+-inclusive;

- By maintaining a gender-neutral uniform and ensuring that unnecessarily gendered aspects of school life are avoided, encouraging all to flourish.

- The well-being Committee, management, guidance, the SPHE Coordinator and student council all provide active roles in the implementation of this policy. The SPHE Coordinator will encourage staff to get the relevant training.

How the school has worked towards these aims:

Policy and Key Documents

- A student-friendly version of the school's anti-bullying policy is to be displayed during Bi Cinealta Week

- All policies will be audited and updated to be fully LGBTQIA+ inclusive;

Research & Training

- Staff members have attended Belong To's "Stand Up" online training and more staff will be encouraged to attend.

- The Student Council are actively raising awareness across the school community and have for years promoted the idea of a gender-neutral uniform. The student voice is valued in St Mac Dara's

- The school uniform can be worn in a gender-neutral way.

Raising Awareness

- LGBT Week 'Stand Up' was celebrated throughout the school.

- Terms related to LGBTQIA+ are displayed on the school door.

2024 – the establishment of the GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club), a social group

LGBT+ Terms and Definitions:

Here are some of the words and acronyms that are commonly used for LGBT issues. LGBT+, LGBTQ, LGBTQIA+, TBLG: These acronyms refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Asexual or Ally. Although all the different identities within "LGBT" exist as part of LGBT, they can share sexism as a common root of oppression; there are specific needs and concerns related to each individual identity.

Asexual: A person who generally does not feel sexual attraction or desire to any group of people. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy.

Aromantic: A person who generally does not feel romantic attraction or desire to any group of people.

Ally: Typically, any non-LGBT person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people, though LGBT people can be allies, such as a lesbian who is an ally to a transgender person.

Biphobia: Aversion toward bisexuality and bisexual people as a social group or as individuals. People of any sexual orientation can experience such feelings of aversion. Biphobia is a source of discrimination against bisexuals and may be based on negative bisexual stereotypes or irrational fear.

Bisexual: A person who is attracted more than one gender. Also called "bi".

Cisgender: Types of gender identity where an individual's experience of their own gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Coming Out: The process of acknowledging one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity to other people. For most LGBT people this is a life-long process.

Gay: A person who is attracted primarily to members of the same gender. Although it can be used for any sex (e.g. gay man, gay woman, gay person), "lesbian" is sometimes the preferred term for women who are attracted to women and is sometimes used as an umbrella term in reference to sexuality.

Gender expression: A term which refers to the ways in which we each manifest masculinity or femininity. It is usually an extension of our "gender identity," our innate sense of being male, female, etc. Each of us expresses a particular gender every day – by the way we style our hair, select our clothing, or even the way we stand. Our appearance, speech, behaviour, movement, and other factors signal that we feel – and wish to be understood – as masculine or feminine, or as a man or a woman.

Gender identity: The sense of "being" male, female, genderqueer, agender, etc. For some people, gender identity is in accord with their sex assigned at birth, or the body that they were born into. For transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are separate and that you cannot assume how someone identifies in one category based on how they identify in another category.

Genderqueer: A term which refers to individuals or groups who "queer" or problematize the hegemonic notions of sex, gender and desire in a given society. Genderqueer people possess identities which fall outside of the widely accepted sexual binary (i.e. "men" and "women"). Genderqueer may also refer to people who identify as both transgendered AND queer, i.e. individuals who challenge both gender and sexuality regimes and see gender identity and sexual orientation as overlapping and interconnected.

Heterosexual: A person who is only attracted to members of the opposite gender. Also called "straight."

Homophobia: A range of negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality or people who are identified or perceived as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). It can be expressed as antipathy, contempt, prejudice, aversion, or hatred, may be based on irrational fear and is sometimes related to religious beliefs.

Homosexual: A clinical term for people who are attracted to members of the same gender. Some people find this term offensive.

Intersex: Intersex is an umbrella term for differences in sex traits or reproductive anatomy. Intersex people are born with these differences or develop them in childhood. There are many possible differences in genitalia, hormones, internal anatomy, or chromosomes, compared to the usual two ways that human bodies develop.

In the closet: Describes a person who keeps their sexual orientation or gender identity a secret from some or all people.

Lesbian: A woman who is primarily attracted to other women.

Queer: 1) An umbrella term sometimes used by LGBTQA people to refer to the entire LGBT community. 2) An alternative that some people use to "queer" the idea of the labels and categories such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. Similar to the concept of genderqueer. It is important to note that the word queer is an in-group term, and a word that can be considered offensive to some people, depending on their generation, geographic location, and relationship with the word.

Questioning: For some, the process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Pansexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, and/or physical attraction for members of any gender identities/expressions, not just people who fit into the standard gender binary (i.e. men and women).

Sexual orientation: The type of sexual, romantic, and/or physical attraction someone feels toward others. Often labelled based on the gender identity/expression of the person and who they are attracted to. Common labels: lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, etc.

Transgender: This term has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to men and women who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system

Non-Binary: Non-binary refers to those who identify outside the male/female binary. It can come under the trans umbrella, though not all non-binary people identify as trans. People who are non-binary may use they/them pronouns

Transphobia: The fear or hatred of transgender people or gender non-conforming behaviour. Like biphobia, transphobia can also exist among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people as well as among heterosexual people.

Transsexual: An outdated term which is commonly considered offensive today, traditionally meaning a person whose gender identity is different from their biological sex, who may undergo medical treatments to change their biological sex, often times to align it with their gender identity, or they may live their lives as another sex.

Please Note: It is very important to respect people's desired self-identifications. One should never assume another person's identity based on that person's appearance. It is always best to ask people how they identify, including what pronouns they prefer, and to respect their wishes. Parents, as the main caregivers are central at all stages.

Ratification of LGBTQIA+ Policy

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 10/09/26

Signed: [Signature] (Chair)

Signed: [Signature] (Principal)

Date of Review: _____