



Wellington College Belfast

Transgender Policy

1. Rationale

Wellington College Belfast is committed to fostering a respectful community, where we encourage all our students to ASPIRE for excellence together. This is reflected in our motto Una Discamus – We Learn Together.

The College seeks to balance a focus on academic achievement with an ethos of personal development. In supporting each student to fulfil their potential the College takes into account pastoral and emotional needs as well as academic pathways and support. The College strives to signpost all students to the appropriate tools and frameworks to support them in fulfilling their potential academically, so they are able to contribute positively to College life and make a difference in their lives beyond school.

Everyone within the College, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, gender orientation, appearance, ability or disability, has the right to learn in a safe, caring and nurturing environment; one which is free from the threat of harm, both physical and emotional. All members are valued and their rights protected.

The College acknowledges that there are students for whom school can be a difficult place and seeks to support all students to develop an accurate sense of self-worth and belonging, knowing that they are valued and supported both in policy and practice.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure that all members of the school community support a culture of respect
- ensure that students questioning their gender identity or suffering from gender dysphoria are appropriately supported by the College
- foster an ethos of caring amongst members of the College community
- raise awareness of strategies and decision making to support students

3. Procedures

- A meeting with parents and student should be set up with the Vice Principal or a designated person to discuss individual needs and requests to enable the College to ensure that the student is supported in school and is treated with dignity and respect.

- In readiness for any meeting the Vice Principal or designated teacher will consider any matters noted internally in relation to the student and any parental correspondence issued in this regard.
- It is best practice to develop a support plan. This can help set clear expectations for the young person and for staff, and help avoid any misunderstandings or breaches of confidentiality or consent. This plan will take note of EANI guidance.
- In advance of the meeting the designated person should consider the advice of any medical professionals already involved with the young person e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Knowing Our Identity Service (KOI) or the Gender Identify Development Service (GIDS).
- The meeting shall encourage parents to access support through GP and KOI (Knowing our Identity Service) before any change to the student's birth name.
- If following medical consultation parents and the student wish to be called a preferred name other than the one assigned to them at birth, then staff and students will be informed to use this preferred name and SIMS will reflect this.
- It is important that wider implications of name change including for examinations are considered and shared.
- A support plan will follow EANI guidance and may reference the following:
 - Staff will be mindful of how they address groups of students and will seek to use gender inclusive terms.
 - Transgender students can opt to wear specified regulation uniform according to their chosen gender.
 - Unisex toilets are available for use.
 - Unisex or separate changing rooms will be available.
 - Where possible, arrangements will be put in place for school trips to ensure that all students are accommodated appropriately.
 - All decisions should be made in the best interests of the child, taking into account the rights and duties of their parents.
 - The rights of other students to gender specific spaces will be acknowledged and respected.

4. Guidance and support

- The College pastoral framework of Tutors and Heads of Year is our primary means of identifying and addressing students in need of support. Appropriate internal referrals of concern should be made to SLT Links or the Designated Teacher Team.
- The school counsellor is available for all students and can signpost transgender students to specialist external agencies.
- Recognising that issues of identity are sensitive and specialist, designated staff should signpost a young person and their parents to wider support, such as their GP, CAMHS, GIDS or KOI.

It is acknowledged that not all young people may wish to be identified or labelled, and that approaches may vary by age and stage. The primacy of the parent is assumed within Key Stage 3 and 4, but thereafter approaches may vary as a young person approaches

adulthood. In all cases however the College will seek to foster partnership and transparency with families.

5. Roles and Responsibilities:

Staff, students and parents have a shared responsibility to ensure that all students are treated equally and with dignity. For this policy we are referring specifically to students identifying as transgender, recognising the challenges that they, along with other LGBTQ+ students may face. The College will provide training for pastoral leaders on how best to support transgender students in line with College policy.

Staff of the College will:

- be alert to any signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying and respond swiftly according to the anti-bullying policy.
- be alert to any safeguarding or child protection concerns and deal with these in line with College policy.
- demonstrate by example the College's ethos of respect and ensure that language and action reflects this.
- develop an ethos of respect and inclusivity through the taught curriculum.
- foster the values of self-esteem and self-respect in all students.

Parents can support their children and the College by:

- watching for any signs of distress which might be evidence of bullying
- providing feedback to pastoral staff with regards to the student's well-being and enjoyment of school
- informing the College of any recommendations from mental health or other medical professionals who are working with the student
- attending meetings with senior staff to support their child

6. Review and Evaluation:

This policy is informed by the best practice guidance developed by Education Authority

NI

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/policies-and-guidance/supporting-transgender-young-people>

This policy will be under review by the Board of Governors and will be kept under close review by senior members of staff who will keep the Governors informed of any issues that may arise.

Reviewed March 2025