

# GENDER AND SEXUALITY POLICY



(October 2019)

**EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
GENDER AND SEXUALITY POLICY**

**1. BACKGROUND**

Emmanuel Christian Community School exists to provide a Christian education by helping our students to see Christ as central to, and sovereign over, all aspects of their lives. As Christians, we accept the authority of Scripture – the Bible, comprising both the Old and New Testaments – and seek to be guided by it in every aspect of belief and behaviour. The School is committed to applying scriptural principles to inform and guide our convictions and conduct towards questions of gender and sexuality. We do this because we believe we find God's best for us when we follow God's design of us.

**2. RATIONALE AND SCOPE**

Emmanuel Christian Community School acknowledges the significant discussions society is having about gender and sexuality at the present time. The purpose of this policy is to provide compassionate and clear principles, derived from Scripture, describing our convictions and conduct toward questions of gender and sexuality.

This policy applies to all parents, students, and staff.

**3. POLICY STATEMENTS**

- a) We do not and will not primarily view a person through the lens of their gender or sexuality. Our primary lens is that a person is created by God in His image and is therefore worthy of respect.
- b) We recognise that issues of gender and sexuality are complex with varied understandings as to causes, effects, and expressions. We also recognise that every part of us is touched and tainted by sin and brokenness and this therefore must include our sense of identity and our sexuality.
- c) We believe we find God's best for us when we follow God's design of us. Our understanding from Scripture is that humanity has been created and purposed as male and female, which God asserts in Genesis 1:27 and Jesus affirms in Matthew 19:4. Sexual expression is created and reserved for the marriage relationship, which God defines in Genesis 2:24 and which Jesus affirms in Matthew 19:5-6.

- d) The call to follow Jesus includes both how we express gender (through expressions of masculinity and femininity that honour God's creation of us as male and female) and how we express sexuality (through faithfulness in marriage and abstinence in singleness). We do not affirm the expression of a gender identity in discord with one's biological sex nor do we affirm sexual expression in discord with God's placement of it in biblical marriage.
- e) As we lead and love people in how gender and sexuality is to be understood and expressed, we will follow Jesus' example by showing grace and sharing truth (John 1:14,17). In other words, our attitudes and actions will seek to be both compassionate and clear – kind and candid – loving and truthful (Ephesians 4:15).

#### **4. PROCEDURES**

In all cases where staff may be required to deal with an issue related to gender or sexuality, the approach should be compassionate, loving, and with a view to affirming God's good plan for men, women, sexuality, and marriage, remembering that all students have been created by God in His image and are therefore worthy of respect.

The scenarios below are not intended to be exhaustive, but to help staff deal with circumstances as they arise.

##### **4.1 Where a Student Approaches a Staff Member Privately**

Scenario: A student has approached a trusted staff member privately for the purpose of raising an issue related to their own or another's sexuality and/or gender identity. In these or similar situations, staff should:

- a) listen to and acknowledge the student's concerns in a compassionate way. The student should be informed that they can also speak to the School Chaplain, Classroom/Form Teacher or The Deputy of Students, and be encouraged to speak to their parents if they have not done so already;
- b) discuss the School's policy and explain the Biblical basis for this;
- c) if the staff member has formed a reasonable belief that the student's concerns are ongoing and unresolved, inform the student that the issue will be referred to the Principal. This may take more than one conversation with the student;
- d) where the issue has been referred to the Principal, the Principal may arrange to meet with the student and at least one other party, this being any combination of the original staff member, Chaplain, or

Deputy of Students. The Principal may also choose to speak to the student's parents depending on the circumstances and propose a resolution as he or she deems appropriate.

#### **4.2 Where a Student Has Raised the Issue of Gender and/or Sexuality in Class**

Scenario: During a class activity or discussion, the topics of gender and sexuality has arisen. In these or similar circumstances, the teacher should:

- a) create an atmosphere where students are free to discuss the issues. The teacher's role is then to facilitate and guide discussion towards a Biblical worldview and to reaffirm the Schools policy. Students should show respect to their peers by listening before replying. At no time should a student be ridiculed or put down for their opinion.
- a) ensure that all participants listen to and acknowledge the opinions and concerns of others in a compassionate and Christ-like way;
- b) reaffirm the School's policy and guide the discussion towards the Biblical basis for this;
- c) inform students that they will be available to talk further at the end of class, in which case the procedure outlined in section 4.1 would apply.

#### **4.3 Where Parents Have Communicated Circumstances to the College**

Scenario: The parents of a student have approached or written to the Principal to explain that their child has come to them identifying as homosexual, or expressing a sense of gender dysphoria and have requested that the School acknowledge their child as such. In these or similar circumstances, the Principal should:

- a) arrange to meet with the parents at the earliest opportunity. At the meeting the Principal should:
  - i. have an Administration Assistant or other staff member present who can take minutes;
  - ii. aim to clarify the parents and student's position and any requests being made of the School in order to provide an appropriate response and minimise the potential for confusion; and
  - iii. discuss the School policy, explaining how the Biblical basis for this means that the School cannot affirm a student identifying with a gender other than their biological gender, or sexual orientation that is in discord with God's plan for men, women, and marriage.