

7. Transgenderism: School Guidelines for Gender Identity

Rationale:

At the heart of a Catholic school's unique educational charism is integral formation of the whole human person. The Church instructs us:

Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.¹

Because a child's formation includes the integrity of body, spirit, and moral development, Catholic schools have a proper concern for each student's behavior and development in the complex area of human sexuality. As a Catholic institution, we believe that human bodies are gifts from God and temples of the Holy Spirit.² All men and women are called to a life of chastity appropriate to their vocation as single, married, or consecrated religious. The Church defines chastity as "the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being."³

All members of the school community are expected to strive to live a life of virtue guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church in all aspects of their lives. Our school's pastoral and policy practices are written in fidelity to the moral guidance and teachings of the Catholic Church in all areas that touch on human flourishing. Our school establishes an environment of encouragement, mercy, healing, and love to accompany its members as we journey on the path toward holiness.

As such, the proper understanding of human sexuality requires personal integrity and full integration of body and soul as created male and female by God. According to the Church, "the chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it."⁴

Guidelines

1. Behaviors that are contradictory to Catholic morality and the expectations of our school includes expressing a gender that is discordant with one's biological sex. Our school will interact with students, faculty, and staff according to their biological sex as based upon physical differences at birth. A member of the school community who wishes to express a gender other than his or her biological sex is understood as operating outside of the "reality deeply inscribed" within.⁵ Assisting the person in his or her disconnect with this reality, however sincerely experienced, by agreeing to participate in any efforts to change natural gender expression is contrary to the pursuit of truth. Authentic love, a gift of the self for the good of the other, requires that we compassionately dwell in the truth and assist those we love to do the same.

¹ Liberia Editrice Vaticana, Code of Canon Law, Canon 795.

² 1 Cor 6:19

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2337.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World, #8.

Our school recognizes that occasionally there may be instances where young people experience dissonance between their biological sex and the roles and norms advocated by society.⁶ Some young people might feel drawn to dress, act, and even manipulate their physical bodies in ways contrary to God's plan. Our school advocates that young people, working with their parents, bring these types of issues to their pastor as well as to other trained professionals who might best assist them in clarifying and defining issues of self (and sexual) identity in accord with Catholic teaching and God's natural plan. Schools' pastoral and counseling services are available to all members of the schools' communities.

2. A Pastoral Response

We encourage a pastoral approach that seeks to find a balance between recognizing the person and staying true to the mission of the Church. This calls us to learn how to communicate with parents, students, and the public in a way that is respectful while at the same time being clear about our teachings about human sexuality, creation, and the human person. Therefore:

- Our schools will identify where reasonable accommodations can or should be made as well as where they cannot for non-conforming persons, and be willing to embrace the consequences for “non-compliance” (consistent with the advocacy/legal position and Catholic moral teaching).
- Our school acknowledges the need to address both the Church's embrace of those who struggle with gender dysphoria and same-sex attraction while at the same time articulating ever more clearly a Christian anthropology of the human person. Our institution should be a place where people are “accompanied” in difficult situations while being led to live their lives in complete union with Christ.

3. Conclusion

Our school recognizes the inherent value and dignity of all members of the human family and value equal opportunity for all members of all races, cultures, and ethnicities.

While our school prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran, we reserve the rights and protections granted in the areas of admissions and employment practices by applicable laws and constitutional provisions to act in furtherance of its religious objectives.

⁶ Pontifical Council for the Family, Family, Marriage and 'De Facto' Unions, 2000, #8.