

Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

Our Approach to Inclusion

The School is committed to the inclusivity of the entire LGBTQIA+ community. This Policy covers sexuality and sexual orientation. Matters relating more directly to gender identity are addressed in the [Inclusivity Policy: Gender Identity](#).

This Policy is intended to support and facilitate an LGBTQIA+ identifying student to engage positively and fully with their course of study and to fulfil the learning expectations. It also aims to support and facilitate the experience of current and prospective staff of the School.

Whatever the individual circumstances, the School is committed to being flexible, and supportive, and making clear that discrimination and harassment on the grounds of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/identity will not be tolerated.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to students studying on a course of Higher Education who are registered students of the School. This policy also applies to staff employed by the School, particularly those who manage staff or support or teach students.

This policy relates to sexuality and sexual orientation and covers only those aspects of sexual orientation directly related to learning, teaching, assessment, and employment at the School.

Supporting Coming Out

It is important to respect how an individual wants to come out. They may choose to come out in some areas in their life, for example at school, and not others, for example at home. There is no wrong or right way to come out. It is imperative that the person's confidentiality is respected.

It is a sign of trust when someone comes out to you and you might be the first person, or amongst the first people, they tell. Everyone's journey is different and different people will need differing levels of support. You should take the responsibility of supporting someone who has come out to you very seriously.

Central is committed to providing a supportive environment for students and staff who wish to publicly come out. However, individuals have the right to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexual orientation. To 'out' someone without their permission is a form of harassment, it will be treated as such and may result in disciplinary action.

Fostering Inclusion

Derogatory and homophobic language has no place in Central School of Ballet. This type of language is not only levelled at people who identify as LGBTQIA+ but also at anyone considered different. This type of language should not be excused as banter. Regardless of intention, it causes harm to the individual and to society more broadly.

It is important to avoid gender stereotypes and heteronormative language and assumptions. For example:

- Avoid associating strength, violence, or aggression with masculinity and demureness, fragility, and gentleness with femininity.
- Avoid gender specific language when discussing relationships and families- say partners or significant others rather than boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife, and parents/guardians rather than mother and father.
- Avoid assumptions such as: gay men don't like sports, lesbian women dress masculinely, or bi people are promiscuous
- Do not assume that everyone experiences emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction. This can be extremely harmful to asexual and aromantic people's sense of self.

Staff and Student Recruitment and Progression

Under the Equality Act, the recruitment, selection and promotion of staff, and the recruitment, selection and progression of students must be based on relevant criteria only, which do not include sexual orientation.

Similarly, under the Equality Act, all benefits and conditions of service will apply equally to all staff (and students where applicable), and same sex partners should be considered in the same way as partners of heterosexual staff.

The Effects of Historic Bullying

It is essential to recognise that before students or staff join the School, they may have experienced significant levels of bullying and harassment that has left them with significant trauma. This can be particularly true for LGBTQIA+ people. The [2017 Stonewall School report](#) showed that nearly half of bullied LGBTQIA+ learners in sixth form colleges (47%) and nearly two in three bullied LGBTQIA+ learners in FE colleges (63%) said this bullying had a negative effect on their plans for future education.¹

The report goes on to say that LGBTQIA+ children and young people 'experience particularly high rates of poor mental health'. 60% of LGB young people and 84% of trans young people have deliberately harmed themselves at some point. More than 20% of LGB young people and more than 40% trans young people have attempted to take their own life. One in three non-binary young people and nearly half of disabled LGBT young people have tried to take their own life.

¹ Stonewall, *School Report (2017) The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans pupils in Britain's schools*, (June 2017): <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

Curriculum

As a School we work to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive of a wide range of sexualities and does not fall into stereotypes. Caricatures are unacceptable and only serve to uphold constraining and damaging heteronormative structures.

Informed academic debates about sexual orientation within the context of learning and teaching should be encouraged to take place within a culture of dignity and respect for all individuals.

Intersectionality

Individuals are never just one thing - we are a combination of all our various identities, and this affects how we walk through the world. Two women, for example, will experience misogyny very differently dependent on their ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender history, socio-economic background, religion, disability status etc.

Consequently, people may experience multiple linked forms of discrimination and therefore everyone has their own unique experiences with discrimination and oppression. These unique experiences should be respected, acknowledged, and validated.

Healthy Relationships

Consent is important in all relationships. Unwanted advances or similar behaviours constitute sexual harassment and are equally unacceptable irrespective of the sexual orientation of the victim or the perpetrator. Careful consideration should be taken as to what the right support might be for the individual person. People may wish to be supported in different ways and it is important to be led by this.

Creating a Supportive Space

People who are forced to hide their sexuality orientation, for personal, cultural, or societal reasons, can be at increased risk of experiencing toxic or otherwise unhealthy behaviour in their relationships. This can be for many reasons such as:

- Lack of confidence in seeking external support
- Internalised homophobia
- A lack of healthy relationship modelling and advice due to a heteronormative media, sex and relationships education, and ultimately, society.

It is therefore important to be vigilant and sensitive to those around you. When people feel that they are in an inclusive and supportive environment, they are more likely to have the confidence to seek support.

Protection Against Harassment and Bullying

All staff, students and other stakeholders should expect to be treated with respect at all times. All complaints of harassment or bullying will be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. Disciplinary action can be taken in cases where bullying/harassment have been proved.

Any act of harassment or bullying toward a person based on their sexuality will normally, in first instances, be dealt with under the School's [Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours Policy](#).

In conclusion

This policy demonstrates Central School of Ballet's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of its community, ensuring all students and staff can achieve their full potential.

Reviewed by: Dr Jamieson Dryburgh

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