

Identity Diversity at St Patrick's College

Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*: *“Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone.”*

He encourages us as Catholics to show acceptance, mercy and compassion, not condemnation, in the same way as God endorses each person with love. These qualities are an integral part of our identity as a Marist College.

The Church teaches that:

1. Every person is created in the image and likeness of God and is accepted as a gift and a blessing.
2. Our sexuality is a gift from God. It is an incredibly important part of who we are.
3. The family is of special importance for raising children.

We accept that:

1. No person's identity can be reduced to their gender or sexuality, just as they should not be labelled by any other single aspect of their personhood - for example intelligence, sporting ability or ethnicity.
2. We live in a time when some young people are particularly vulnerable when they consider that their own gender and sexuality does not fit traditional binary categories. There are a number of children and young people who report that the gender (or genders) that they identify with, does not match their biological sex. Non-conformity of gender identity and others reactions to this can cause significant stress, anxiety and depression. Psychosexual development is a unique and special journey for each person. Questions about gender identity may emerge as part of this journey for some young people in primary or secondary schools.
3. Bullying, ostracising and teasing are always wrong. These cause significant harm and will not be tolerated.

So given we have a responsibility as a Catholic school to provide a safe environment for all, we need to ensure that:

1. We love and support all people, especially the young. We accept all people as they are.
2. We treat every person as a unique individual, recognising that some people will need additional support. This may include those whose gender or sexuality does not fit the traditional categories.
3. We do our best to ensure no student is ridiculed, ostracised or bullied. We do not accept gender or sexuality based put downs.

4. We will support all our students and do our best to ensure that everyone – regardless of ethnicity, beliefs, origin, sexual identity or situation – are all treated with the same care they deserve as children of God.
5. We will try to provide a safe and supportive environment for all staff and students so they all feel supported by other staff and their peers. We will also network with *Rainbow Youth* and other faith based school Rainbow groups as necessary.
6. While there will be a wide range of different views about identity diversity held within our school community, we expect all staff and students to be tolerant of different views and to remember that our prime focus is to look after the well-being of every one of our community members.