

COMMON DECLARATION ON A GENDER AWARE AND LGBT FRIENDLY POLICY IN EDUCATION

STARTING POINT:

With this declaration the education sector expresses its engagement to pay adequate attention to gender and LGBT issues by conducting a comprehensive policy relating to the different pillars within an educational institution or organisation: education, accompaniment and care, rules and regulations, structural measures. These goals will be achieved via among others the interdisciplinary and cross-curricular attainment goals and development goals in special needs education.

ENGAGEMENTS:

The Flemish minister for Education and Equal Opportunities and following organisations¹:

de Algemene Centrale der Openbare Diensten – Onderwijs (ACOD – Onderwijs), de Christelijke Onderwijscentrale (COC), het Christelijk Onderwijzersverbond (COV), de Federatie Centra voor Basiseducatie, het GO! onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, de GO! Ouders vzw, de Koepel van Ouderverenigingen van het Officieel Gesubsidieerd Onderwijs (KOOGO), het Onderwijssecretariaat van de Steden en Gemeenten van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap (OVSG), het Overleg van de Kleine Onderwijsverstrekkers (OKO), het Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen (POV), de VCLB-koepel, de Vlaamse Confederatie van Ouders en Ouderverenigingen (VCOV), de Vlaamse Hogescholenraad (VLHORA), de Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (VLIR), de Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (VLOR), de Vlaamse Scholierenkoepel (VSK), het Vlaams Secretariaat van het Katholiek Onderwijs (VSKO), het Vrij Syndicaat van het Openbaar Ambt – sector Onderwijs (VSOA), de Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten (VVS)

declare that they will in their organisational activities

whether actively as directly concerned, or whether as mentor, seconder or intermediary

and each within their proper responsibilities and abilities:

- create a climate of tolerance, openness and respect towards diversity in sexual orientation* as well as gender identity**;
- discuss LGBT and gender issues and provide nuanced information;
- treat all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, respectful and equal and fight and reject all forms of discrimination on those grounds;
- protect and shelter pupils, students, personnel that are bullied or discriminated based on sexual orientation or gender identity, as a part of a bullying prevention strategy;
- cultivate gender awareness among pupils, students and personnel in order to clarify how gender expectations influence personal decisions and sustain societal inequalities;

¹ Note: the names of the different organisations were not translated, but they represent the vast majority of stakeholders in the educational field, such as the minister for Education, the representatives of the different educational portals, the Flemish Interuniversity Council, The Flemish Education Council, education trade unions, representatives of students and parents boards

- actively pursue the elimination of gender stereotypes and mechanisms in view of a double result:
 - young people can make study and other (life)choices, without being limited by gender expectations or related norms;
 - the elimination of resistance towards LGBT and transgender people as many of these reactions are dictated by gender expectations.

(Signatures)

(*) Sexual orientation stands for hetero- and homosexuality.

(**) Gender identity stands for the degree you identify as a girl, boy, both or none. For most people their gender identity aligns with their biological sex, but that is not the case for everyone. Gender stands for the cultural and social construct of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.