

Leibler Yavneh College Policy for The Wellbeing of LGBTI+ Students

Using [“The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils – A Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools”](#) by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, produced with LGBT+ Jews (UK, September 2018).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Leibler Yavneh College is committed to creating a safe and inclusive community for all students, staff and community members.
- 1.2 Our school community is diverse. We equally respect and value LGBTI+ students, staff and community members.
- 1.3 It is our responsibility to put in place effective measures to prevent the harmful effects of bullying, name-calling and insensitivity. These measures must be embedded in the way the College educates, engages with, and supports students.
- 1.4 Leibler Yavneh College’s Positive Relationships (including Anti-Bullying/Harassment) Policy’s definition of discrimination includes “Homophobia and other hostile behaviours towards students relating to gender issues and sexuality”.
- 1.5 In September 2018, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis produced “The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils – A Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools” together with LGBT+ Jews (“The Chief Rabbi’s Guide”).
- 1.6 This Policy aims to incorporate the Chief Rabbi’s Guide in the College’s holistic framework for addressing the individual learning and wellbeing needs of all students. It should be read in conjunction with the College’s Positive Relationships Policy and Procedures Manual.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 ‘Students’ for the purpose of this Policy means all children at the College, including those aged 18 years and older;
- 2.2 ‘Discrimination’ refers to using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, even when used without malicious intent. It also refers to prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about LGBTI+ students. It may be targeted at students who are LGBTI+ or are perceived to be LGBTI+. It can also be targeted at staff and people who have LGBTI+ family members who are LGBTI+ or are perceived to be LGBTI+, and at students who may be unsure of their sexuality or gender identity, students who do not conform to gender stereotypes or are seen to be ‘different’ in some way. Refer to pages 9-10 of the Chief Rabbi’s Guide for examples of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.
- 2.3 ‘The College’ means Leibler Yavneh College;
- 2.4 ‘College Employee’ or ‘Staff’ means a member of the College Executive, employee, third party contractor or volunteer.

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2.5 'Community Members' includes extended members of the school community, such as parents/carers or other family members of students or staff.

2.6 The College's 'Pastoral Care Team' consists of a Primary Class Teacher, Secondary Class Teacher, Head of Year, Head of School, College Psychologist or Counsellor.

2.7 'LGBTI+' refers to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersex, with the '+' denoting additional identities, such as those who are gender-fluid, non-binary or questioning their gender or gender identity. LGBTI+ is the term increasingly being used in Australia, rather than just LGBT+. Whenever the Chief Rabbi's Guide refers to LGBT+, it should be understood as LGBTI+. Appendix 4 of the Chief Rabbi's Guide ("Sex, gender and sexuality – a glossary") should be referred to for a glossary of commonly used terms.

3. College Ethos

3.1 The College is committed to the development of a warm and nurturing school environment for all students which, leading by example, encourages the practice of Derech Eretz (ethical behaviour), adherence to Halacha, and a commitment to Religious-Zionist ideals.

3.2 The Chief Rabbi's Guide makes it clear that caring for the wellbeing of LGBTI+ students does not negate or detract from our commitment to Torah or Torah values. It is our obligation, as part of our commitment to Torah.

4. Obligations of Leibler Yavneh College

4.1 Research has found that LGBTI+ students are particularly vulnerable to bullying and harm, as are children of LGBTI+ parents. As a result, there is overwhelming statistical evidence that LGBTI+ students experience higher rates of absenteeism, poorer mental health outcomes, and increased risk-taking behaviour including self-harm and suicide. All young people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, can be affected by anti-LGBTI+ bullying, which can be used to aggressively enforce gender stereotypes and limit young people's academic, career and personal life aspirations.

4.2 Note: Appendices 1 and 2 of the Chief Rabbi's Guide were written for schools operating under UK Law.

4.3 The College is mandated under the [Sex Discrimination Act \(Cth\) 1984 \(SD Act\)](#) to commit to protecting all students from all forms of discrimination. The SD Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people because of their:

- sex - male or female;
- intersex status;
- gender identity; and/or
- sexual orientation

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4.4 The College does not tolerate any discrimination, harassment or bullying on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, whether it is targeted at a student, member of staff, or community member. Any behaviour of this nature will be addressed in accordance with the College's Behaviour Education Policy, Positive Relationships Policy, Child Protection Policy, and Code of Conduct.

4.5 All staff have the responsibility to:

- understand the current legislation informing this policy
- familiarise themselves with the Chief Rabbi's Guide (other than appendices 1 and 2)
- model appropriate behaviour at all times
- be vigilant in monitoring students
- address any reported and observed incidents of discrimination or bullying or harassment in accordance with the College's Behaviour Education Policy, Positive Relationships Policy

5. Resources for Supporting Individual Students

5.1 Staff can prepare to have important conversations supportively with LGBTI+ students by using Appendix 6 of the Chief Rabbi's Guide ("Supportive conversations with LGBT+ young people in Jewish schools").

5.2 Students and staff can raise wellbeing concerns with members of the College's Pastoral Care Team.

5.3 Questions relating to Halachic Policy in the College should be brought to the Senior Rabbi of Mizrachi

5.4 It is important that the student and their parent(s) / carer are at the centre of discussions to plan and provide on-going support for the student.

5.5 If required, a support team for the student will be established and communicated to the student and parent(s) / carer at the earliest opportunity. This team may consist of the following:

- The primary student's class teacher
- The secondary student's Head of Year,
- The Head of School,
- College Psychologist,
- A Rabbi on the Senior Leadership Team,
- External agencies
- Any other College employee from whom the student would like to seek support

5.6 A student's right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected within the team assigned to support the student, without limiting any other legal obligation.

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6. Prevention (Inclusive) Strategies

The following initiatives form part of our overall strategy in creating a safe and inclusive community:

- educating and training, and professional development of staff
- educating students and families
- Fostering a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive Relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers.
- Promoting responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers
- Responding to discrimination by enacting the Positive Relationships Policy
- Maintaining records of reported incidents
- Providing a strong Pastoral Care Team

7. Review and Resolution Panel

7.1 This document should be reviewed annually by a panel consisting of the following panel members or their appointed representatives: College Principal, College Chair, College Psychologist or Counsellor, and the Senior Rabbi of Mizrachi.

7.2 Should any matters require resolution between reviews, they should be addressed by the same panel.

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