MEPA TRAINING

GENDER IDENTITY & SEXUALITY POLICY

THIS POLICY IS WRITTEN FOR AND APPLIED TO MEPA STUDIOS, MEPA ACADEMY AND MEPA COLLEGE.

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POLICY STATEMENT

MEPA Training is committed to creating learning, performing and working environments that are inclusive and support the needs of all members of MEPA Training community irrespective of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation.

MEPA Training does not promote any one Gender Identity or Sexuality over another.

This Gender Identity and Sexuality Policy applies to all students, staff and visitors to MEPA Training.

MEPA Training will at no time discriminate against people on the grounds of their sexuality, gender identity or gender expression. Where this policy refers to 'trans people', it refers to a broad range of people whose gender identity is not expressed in ways that are typically associated with their assigned sex at birth (see Appendix 1 - Terminology). This includes those who have non-binary, gender non-conforming, non-gender or gender fluid identities.

MEPA Training will protect the rights of trans people and to ensure that no individual is subject to discrimination or victimisation as a result of the gender in which they present themselves.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEPA TRAINING:

- MEPA Training will ensure that its environment, in terms of its pictures, images, publicity materials and literature, reflects the diversity of its staff and students. MEPA Training will display suitable signs, notices and posters to demonstrate its inclusive approach to different gender identities and sexualities. MEPA Training will endeavour to promote understanding and awareness of different gender identities and sexualities as part of its' overall awareness training for staff.
- MEPA Training will keep under review, and seek to assess the potential impact of, policies and procedures and any changes to them on staff members who identify as LGBTQIA+.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS AND STAFF:

- Staff and students are encouraged and expected to respect other people's gender identity and sexuality and anyone expressing discriminatory views will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedures.
- If any staff member or student feels that their sexuality or gender identity is not being accommodated for at MEPA Training the staff member or student should raise the matter with MEPA Training by contacting Mandy Ellen, The Principal in the first instance.

MONITORING

MEPA Training does not seek to obtain information about the sexuality of students, staff or job applicants, however it does now monitor gender identity along with a number of other protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010, as part of its' overall commitment to equality and diversity and to enable it to examine how policies and practices are working.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO THE POLICY

EQUALITY ACT 2010

MEPA Training embraces its legal responsibility to uphold the Equality Act 2010 - Gender Reassignment and Sexuality are both listed under the nine protected characteristics within the Act.

The definition of Sexual Orientation means a person's sexual orientation toward persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex, or persons of either sex.

The definition of Gender Reassignment within the Equality Act gives protection from discrimination to a person who has proposed to undergo, started or completed a process to change their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

The Act also protects:

- trans people who are not under medical supervision
- people who experience discrimination because they are perceived to be trans
- people from discrimination by association because of gender reassignment
- Public Sector Equality Duty

These characteristics are also included in the Public Sector Equality Duty;

- The duty aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people.
- The duty applies to the public sector and also to others carrying out public functions.
- The duty applies to all nine areas of discrimination listed in the Equality Act 2010.

GENDER RECOGNITION ACT 2004

This legislation allows trans people (aged over 18) to change their legal gender. The Act gives trans people the right to obtain a new birth certificate, affording them recognition of their acquired gender in law for all purposes. However, a trans person need not possess a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) and whether they have one or not should have no bearing on their employment or employment protections, apart from providing an extra layer of privacy. Employers should not ask trans staff if they have a GRC and should treat people in accordance with their gender identity. When someone does have a Gender Recognition Certificate it is an offence to disclose any information which has been obtained in an official capacity, about that person's gender history, without prior consent of the person involved.

MEPA TRAINING PROCEDURES:

APPLYING TO STUDY AT MEPA:

The MEPA Application Form for students has been designed to be inclusive in terms of Gender. The form asks about Title and Gender. The Title question lists the options; Miss, Mr, Mrs, Ms, Mx, Other - Please Specify and the Gender question lists the options; Female, Male, Trans, Other – Please Specify. The options, barring other, are listed in alphabetical order in accordance with Direct.Gov guidance.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

All members of MEPA Training community have the right to privacy and MEPA Training will respect the confidentiality of all trans staff and students and will not reveal information without the prior agreement of the individual. It is also worth noting that information about

a student's transgender status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth also may constitute confidential medical information.

When a person initially discloses their trans status, it is important to talk to them about confidentiality and who, if anyone, they would like information to be shared with. Trans and gender questioning staff and students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share information.

CHANGE OF NAME AND OR GENDER AND PRONOUN USAGE

All members of MEPA Training community have the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to the person's gender identity. A legal name or gender change is not required, and the student need not change their official records. The use of pro-nouns for transitioning students should be discussed with individual students on a case by case basis.

Members of MEPA Training community who are transitioning either socially or medically are encouraged to disclose this to MEPA Training so that appropriate measures can be put in place to ensure they receive suitable support. Staff members who are transitioning are encouraged to notify their Line Managers and students who are transitioning are encouraged to disclose this to Mandy Ellen, The Principal.

Members of MEPA Training community should strive to use the preferred pronoun for a trans person. In addition, staff should think carefully about the language they use and where possible use language which does not reinforce a binary approach to gender.

Requests to change name or gender on records will be handled promptly and staff and students will be made aware of any implications of the changes. Students must note that if they chose to use alternative names or known as names, they will need to have them formally changed in order for a Diploma or Degree certificate to be issued in a name that is different to the one with which they registered.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Depending on the individual, the choice to begin dressing in the clothes associated with one's chosen gender can be a very big step and potentially very daunting. This can often represent one of the earliest stages of transition and is a profound statement of acceptance of one's identity and commitment to it. In doing so though, sometimes people are making themselves more visibly different from much of MEPA Training community and effectively 'outing' themselves to the rest of MEPA Training as trans.

Care must be taken to ensure that trans identified people are supported fully during this time. Trans and gender questioning people have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. Staff will be expected to adhere to the Dress and Appearance Statement in the Staff Handbook and MEPA Training provides a choice of approved items of uniform, allowing students to choose what they wish to wear, this will allow for regulated structure but without exclusion.

Staff training is paramount to ensure that all staff have an understanding of what it means to be trans and exactly why a student may be dressing differently. It is important to note that a student who identifies as a trans female but was born a genetic male, is not a 'boy dressed as a girl', but is a girl who outwardly at this point resembles a boy. By allowing a trans student to dress in clothes which they feel comfortable with, MEPA Training aims to

empower them to express themselves by bringing their outward appearance in line with that of their internal gender identity at that point in time.

Staff and students should be encouraged to understand gender expression and consider the distinction between student's personas as an individual and in a professional sense. With this in mind students attending auditions inside or outside of Training should dress appropriately for the role which they are auditioning for.

USE OF TOILETS AND CHANGING ROOMS

Staff, students and applicants have the right to access the toilet that corresponds to their gender identity. Any member of MEPA Training community who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided access to an individual toilet, but no one should be required to use such a toilet.
The use of changing rooms by trans students or applicants should be assessed on a case-by case basis in direct discussion with the student or applicant. The goal is to maximise social integration and promote an equal opportunities environment, ensuring the safety and comfort, and minimising stigmatisation of the student or applicant. In most cases, trans students or applicants should have access to the changing room that corresponds to their gender identity. This approach is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010, whereby refusing a person access to the changing room of their true gender identity would constitute an act of discrimination.

Any student or applicant who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided with a reasonable alternative changing area, such as the use of a private area e.g. individual toilet. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the student or applicant's ability to keep his or her trans status confidential.

GENDER SEGREGATED LESSONS

Although gender segregated classes at MEPA Training are rare, trans students should be supported to enable equal access to lessons and reasonable adjustments should be made to enable students to participate in the activity which corresponds to their gender identity if this is what they request. These adjustments will be made in accordance with health and safety requirements and it will be essential that a resolution is found that ensures there is no breach to health and safety legislation or guidance, and any risk remains within a level that is acceptable to the College.

LEAVE FOR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS RELATED TO TRANSITION

MEPA Training recognises that staff will from time to time need to attend medical appointments, whenever it is possible to do so, staff should endeavour to arrange such appointments in their own time or, if this is not possible, then at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the College. However, MEPA Training accepts that it is not always possible or practical to arrange medical and other similar appointments outside working hours, it will permit reasonable time off work for such appointments. MEPA Training recognises that Gender Reassignment is a long-complicated process and that people often have to wait extended periods of time before receiving appointments, so MEPA Training will seek to accommodate the requirements of staff where possible. MEPA Training will treat absences for Gender Reassignment in the same way as absences from work for other reasons in accordance with the leave / absence policy detailed in the Staff Handbook.

For students; in accordance with the college's attendance policy absence is not normally allowed for any reason other than medical or serious personal reasons. If a student has a medical appointment then they should make every effort to arrange appointments for the beginning or end of the day to avoid major disruption to their lessons. In this instance, students must email confirmation of their – for full details please refer to MEPA Training Attendance Policy.

COMPLAINTS

Should anyone experience behaviour towards them that they consider to be discriminatory based on their gender identity or sexuality they should raise a complaint by following the MEPA Training's complaint procedure.

APPENDIX 1 - TERMINOLOGY

- Ally - a (typically) straight and/or cis person who supports members of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Asexual - someone who does not experience sexual attraction.
- Bisexual - refers to an emotional and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.
- Cisgender or Cis - someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Nontrans is also used by some people.
- Gay - refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.
- Gender - often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.
- Gender Expression - how a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not confirm to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.
- Gender Identity - a person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.
- Gender Nonconformity - behaviour or gender expression by an individual that does not match traditional masculine or feminine gender norms attributed to their ascribed sex.
- Gender Spectrum - a way of describing gender without conforming to the gender binary, it denotes gender as a continuum that includes male and female, but without establishing them as absolutes or polar opposites.
- Heterosexual / straight - refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards people of the opposite gender.
- Intersex - a term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.
- Lesbian - refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.
- Non-binary - an umbrella term for a person who does not identify as only male or only female, or who may identify as both.
- Queer - in the past a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBT young people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation but is still viewed to be derogatory by some.

- Questioning - the process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Trans - an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.
- Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) Transgender, Transsexual, Gender-queer (GQ), Gender-fluid, Non-binary, Gender-variant, Crossdresser, Genderless, Agender, Nongender, Third gender, Two-spirit, Bi-gender, Trans man, Trans woman, Trans masculine, Trans feminine and Neutrois.
- + - the + in the LGBTQIA+ acronym refers to anyone with a sexuality or gender identity that is not already accounted for by LGBTQI or A