

Guiding Principles on Biblical Sexuality



Association of Christian Schools International



The principles contained in this document are intended to serve as global guidelines for Christian school associations and schools in matters of human sexuality. These guidelines pertain to the K-12 education of the child in partnership with the child's home. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) supports the application of the truths found in Christian biblical orthodoxy to the discipleship of current and future generations.

ACSI fully recognises the rights and responsibilities of parents as the first and primary educators and actively supports parents seeking to raise their children in conformity to the Christian faith.

This document seeks to guide Christian schools to follow the example of Jesus, who is the fullness of grace and truth in His incarnation (John 1:14). Jesus Himself is the truth (John 14:6), which is effectively communicated to us through the Scriptures, which are inspired by the Holy Spirit and illuminated for us by the same Spirit. The Bible is the medium through which the truth of God's character, His teachings, and His redemptive plan for humanity are revealed to us. Through this divine revelation, we can comprehend and embrace the truth that is found in Jesus Christ. We submit our beliefs and behavior to this supreme and authoritative revelation. God's creation also points to Him and His truth. As beings created in God's image, our understanding of who we are is shaped by what God reveals about us and Himself. To fully grasp our purpose and meaning, we need to acknowledge and embrace the truth about God and His story.

Christian schools discipling within the biblical worldview seek to be communities that display grace to all who experience confusion, disorder, or desires, or those who struggle in their own beliefs about themselves contrary to the truth of God's loving command and the reality of His creation. Jesus Christ came to forgive the sins of any and all who call upon Him in repentance. Christian schools are called to share this good news with every student, to inspire them to follow Him, to come into accord with His loving commands, and to live free of guilt or shame by the fact of their repentance and His forgiveness.



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Our Beginnings: Creation

Our created sex and sexuality are good gifts from God. We are created in the image of God, male and female (Genesis 1:26-28). Our gender is an inherent part of this good gift and defined by our biological sex. God intended people for intimate community, free from shame, with Himself and others (Genesis 2:25). The expression of this intimacy in human sexual union is found only in marriage between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). God's good purposes for sexuality also include the fruitfulness of family, a partnership in extending God's rule on the earth, and chaste singleness (Genesis 1:28). Sons and daughters are born into and entrusted to the care of families (Proverbs 17:6).

Our Distortion: The Fall

When man and woman sinned, they suffered a devastating loss of intimacy with God, of relationship with ourselves and with one another (Genesis 3:7). Each one of us, being children of Adam and Eve, is born in sin (Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12), and we all bear the consequences of the brokenness that exists in human sexuality. There is no exhaustive list of the expressions of sexual sin and brokenness, but it includes both human behavior and the human condition, body, and mind. All human sexual union outside of marriage between one man and one woman is a distortion of God's good gift and is sinful (Romans 1:24-27). Sexual sin, within marriage or outside marriage, stands in opposition to God's good purposes for sexuality.

Our Redemption: Jesus

God is restoring His creation, including His purposes for sexuality, through Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel (Romans 1:16-17; 8:19-23). There is no hope for our sexual sin and brokenness apart from Jesus. Through the completed work of Jesus, God lovingly calls us to repent of our sins, restoring intimate relationships with Himself and each other. For those who are in Jesus, even their bodies belong to Jesus, and every believer's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that is to be presented to God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service (1 Cor. 6:19-20, Romans 12:1). We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to make choices that reflect submission to God's good design for our sexuality. It is our privilege to choose in community to "walk by the Spirit" and by so doing "not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). Every person who struggles with sin, sexual or otherwise, is to be treated with compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31, 1 Corinthians 6:11).

Our Hope: Fulfillment

Our redeemed sexuality points to a greater intimacy promised to us in the coming kingdom. Until that day, we have been given earthly images of this future reality. As followers of Jesus, we are invited to live as family with one another (Matthew 19:29) in a community of faith as a representation of God's truth, love, and healing (Matthew 19:29; John 13:35; 1 Timothy 3:15). The love and sacrifice in an earthly marriage serve as a picture of the love and sacrifice Jesus makes for His church (Ephesians 5:26-28). Chaste singleness points to the sufficiency of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 7:32) and opens unique capacities to serve God's kingdom (Matthew 19:12). The potential for human fruitfulness in bearing children is ultimately reflected in Jesus's transforming sinners into new children of God (John 1:12-13). One day, we will all enjoy perfected intimacy as the church is fully united to Jesus as His bride (Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 19:7).

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES

Christian schools recognise the specific issues for students regarding the faith perspective described here and seek proactively to prepare to support young people who experience conflict in their own beliefs about their God-given identity and sexuality. This preparation will be through discipleship within a loving Christian community that includes training staff to dialogue and support such pupils, to consider specific risk assessments regarding students' mental health, and to form policies with external advice.

The following questions and concepts are intended to shape the contextualization of theology into policy and practice for ACSI related associations and schools.

Every policy or practice enacted by a school or association in matters of sexuality will be developed with the aim of pointing students and their families to Jesus, His character, and His finished work.

- How does this policy or practice reflect the character of Jesus?
- Is this policy or practice consistent with and reflective of Scripture?
- How does this policy or practice help a student to understand the gospel?
- How does this policy or practice help us to be a community that is full of grace and truth?
- How does this policy or practice help families understand their calling and duties (Proverbs 22:6)?

Every school or association must understand their own legal framework.

- What are the laws that govern human sexuality in your context?
- How can the rights of students and parents under the UN Universal Declaration of Humans Rights and any relevant international treaties be upheld in your context?
- What are the local inspection requirements relevant to sex and sexuality?

All school staff must understand and adhere to the biblical framework for sexuality and the school's own statement and policies around sexuality. As leaders and role models within a Christian learning community, a shared theology and pastoral approach from staff are non-negotiable.

- How will staff come to understand biblical sexuality and to reflect it in their own lives and professions, and to impart it to students and the wider community?
- How will staff be held accountable to the biblical framework for sexuality?
- What interview questions can be used to gain an understanding of a person's understanding of and faithful adherence to biblical sexuality?

Sexuality-related issues are matters of discipleship and schools are to partner with parents in age-appropriate, ongoing education.

- What do you want your students to know about sexuality in each grade?
- What curriculum is available for you to use?
- How will parents come to understand how you are discipling their children in these matters?
- How will you inform parents when a child raises issues about their sexuality or related questions?

Every school or association must determine a response/care plan for those struggling with sexual sin or who question the congruence of their identity with their biological sex. This response/care plan should always start with grace and move towards the gospel.

- Schools are to be communities of grace in which those who experience same-sex attraction or incongruence with their biological sex are supported, counseled, and encouraged to pursue Christian holiness in a manner consistent with orthodox Christian beliefs. Such people need schools to be communities where they are able to appropriately share and explore their stories with followers of Jesus to help each other grow together into maturity in Christ.
- Repentance and forgiveness are necessary for all forms of sexual sin. It is important to avoid the erroneous notion that same-sex or transgender sins are beyond redemption. The emphasis is on acknowledging that all individuals have the opportunity to find redemption and forgiveness through repentance.
- Schools should commend and inspire to holiness all those who are unmarried to live chaste while single and to highlight the way singleness reveals the sufficiency of Jesus. Marriage is to be esteemed as it reflects the shape of the gospel.

- Schools are to understand and anticipate that students may struggle in understanding God's good purposes for their sex and sexuality. The expectation should be that students are willing to follow the school code of conduct during their enrollment and the hope is that they, like all of us who may choose to live outside God's good purposes in areas of our lives, will come in due course to see the need to be transformed and live in accordance with biblical truth. We urge gentleness, patience, and ongoing care during this process at the same time avoiding confusion or sending mixed signals (I Cor. 14:8). Schools will want to apply biblical standards for sexuality with grace and mercy, consistently, and in alignment with the truth.
- What will the care plan look like for those who are struggling with these issues or who confess sexual sin?
- What will the care plan look like for those unwilling to submit to the school code of conduct?
- What will be the limitations of care for students, particularly if that care imposes obligation on others or potentially violates their privacy or other rights?

Footnotes

"In Gen. 2, a clear distinction is made between male and female, and sexes are understood to be biologically fixed, with the scope of their sexual interaction being limited to heterosexual monogamy. ... These biological distinctions ... are affirmed by Christ (Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28) and explicated by Paul (Rom. 1:24-31)." ([ACSI Biblical Unity Statement](#), page 9).

"...(M)arriage is made possible by the sexual complementarity of man and woman, and that the comprehensive, multi-level sharing of life that marriage includes bodily unity of the sort that unites husband and wife biologically as one. This is because the body is no mere extrinsic instrument of the human person, but truly part of the personal reality of the human being." ([Manhattan Declaration](#)).

"Sexuality in the Bible has to do with forming an indissoluble union in a marriage between one man and one woman and is given a place in this light. Thereby the Biblical precepts are binding for sexual life. This sexual morality means that the marriage relationship is respected. One's fellow man is approached with respect (also chastely and with purity). This rules out sexual jokes and harassment. Nor is there any room for casual sexual contacts, because monogamous marriage is seen as the God-given form of intercourse between man and woman. God wants us to accept our bodies, which we have received from Him, and also keep them pure and holy as a temple of the Holy Spirit. In our outward appearance we also express the distinction between man and woman as laid down in creation." (*Identity Profile*, Vereniging Gereformeerd Schoolonderwijs (VGS), page 5).

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