



Toolkit for Teachers

Dealing with Homophobia
and Homophobic Bullying
in Scottish Schools

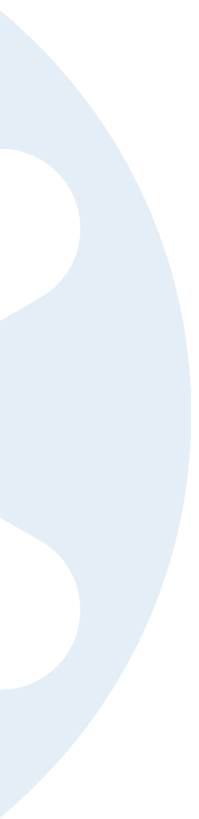


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Toolkit for Teachers

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and Homophobic Bullying
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toolkit contents

Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools

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This resource was developed with the following points in mind:

- Homophobic bullying cannot be tackled without examining and challenging more general expressions of homophobia in the school.
- Anti-homophobia and homophobic bullying work in schools needs to be based upon and driven by the leadership and support of national and local government and the school management team (see Fig. 1).
- It is the commitment, drive and consistency of an informed staff team that will ensure that anti-homophobia work is successful.
- Anti-homophobia work will be most successful if the range of strategies suggested in this resource are used in combination – challenging homophobic comments alone, for example, will have less impact than challenging homophobic comments while providing accurate information about LGBT issues in lessons and demonstrating visible support to LGBT young people.
- Proactive and preventative approaches are most useful in tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying.
- Rather than being addressed in isolation, homophobia and homophobic bullying should be embedded within and should complement the wide range of equality, inclusion and anti-bullying work already taking place in schools.

'I don't think many teachers felt comfortable enough to talk about LGBT issues, or had the necessary knowledge or resources to actually discuss it in the first place.'

(Female, 17 years)

'The homophobic issue, it's new in schools, we don't know how to deal with it, what's the most appropriate way ... and it's that that takes confidence away from teachers, they don't know how to deal with it because it hasn't been in place. I mean everyone's looking for guidance on how best to deal with it really.'

(Headteacher)

Also available as part of Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools is a range of lesson plan suggestions and guidance on addressing anti-homophobia and LGBT issues with young people.

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/homophobicbullyingtoolkit>

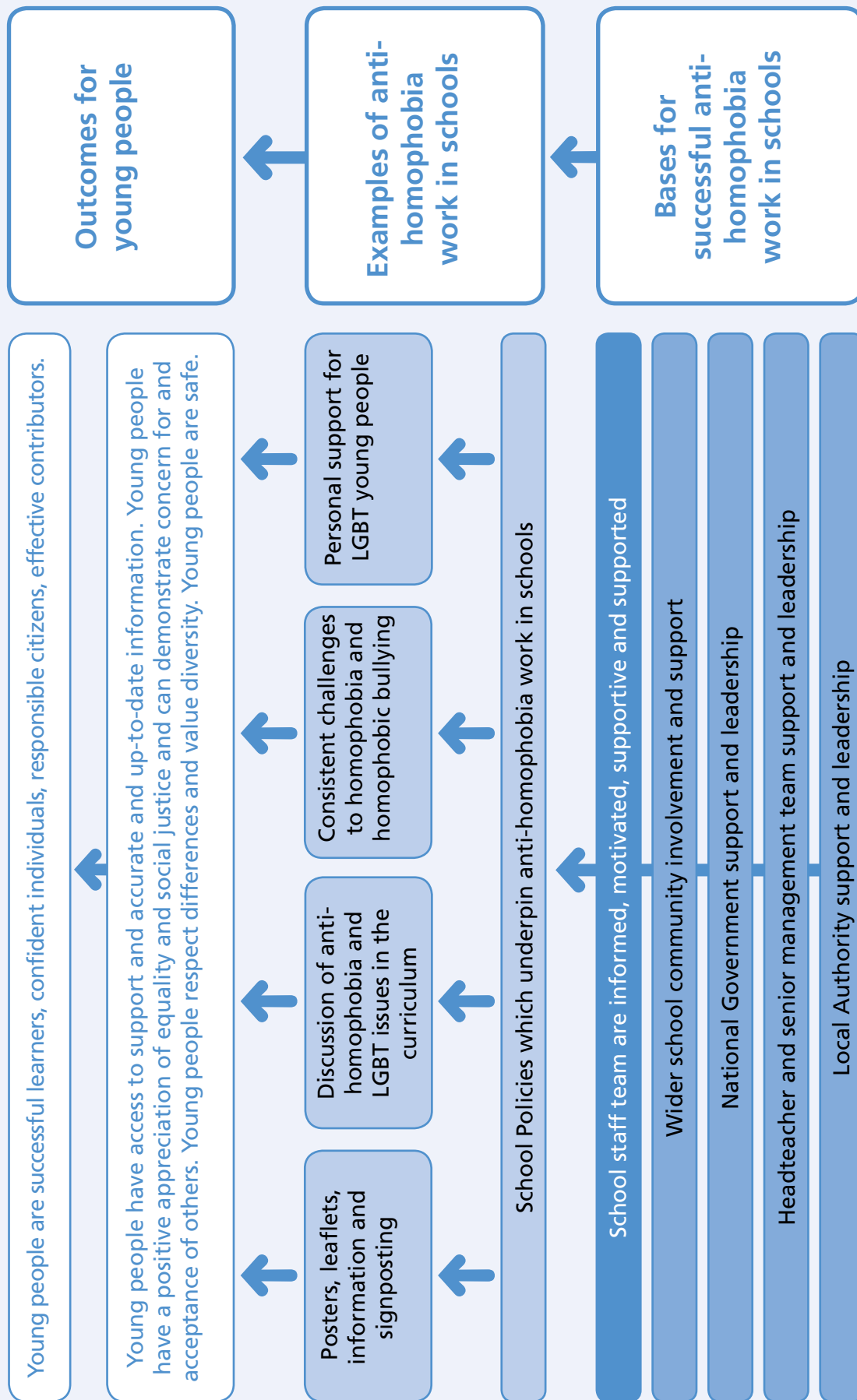


Figure 1: Dealing with homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools: the wider picture

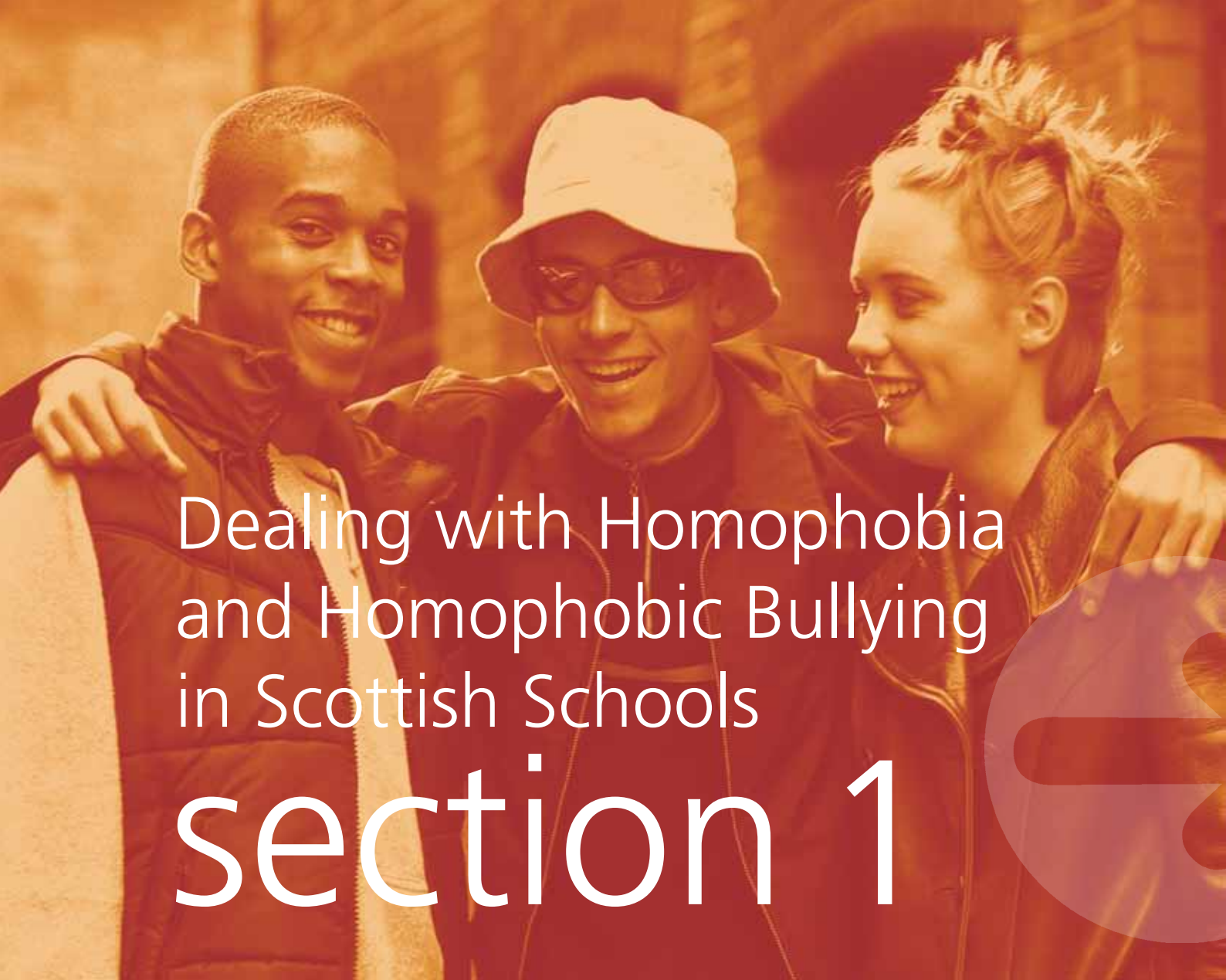
Summary of Toolkit Resource

Homophobia and homophobic bullying will be most effectively dealt with when they are addressed in a range of ways throughout the school.

Listed below is a summary of the key points addressed in this toolkit. All of these approaches are useful when thinking about addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying in your school.

- **Leadership and support** Anti-homophobia work in schools can only be successful with the leadership and support of the headteacher and school management team.
- **Staff support, commitment and motivation** Staff who are well informed about the need for this work, the issues facing LGBT young people and the consequences of homophobia will be best placed to move this work forward.
- **Inclusive anti-bullying policy** Underpinning and supporting all work in this area should be a school anti-bullying policy that addresses homophobia, homophobic bullying and LGBT young people, and clearly states procedures, actions and sanctions in the event of homophobic bullying.
- **Avoid assumptions** Any young person in the school could be LGBT or questioning or have LGBT family or friends. This is also the case for any staff member or other member of the school community.
- **Consistent and confident challenges to homophobia** Prompt, confident and consistent challenges to every instance of homophobia and homophobic bullying are required from every staff member in the school.
- **Addressing and exploring homophobic attitudes** Getting to grips with why young people are using homophobic language and displaying homophobic attitudes or behaviours is the most effective way of challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying amongst young people.
- **Discussing anti-homophobia and LGBT issues with young people in a range of curriculum areas** High quality and accurate information about anti-homophobia and LGBT issues will enable young people to respect diversity and have a positive appreciation of equality and social justice.
- **Support, information and signposting for LGBT young people** Access to up-to-date, accurate and relevant LGBT related information and resources will provide support for LGBT young people.





Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools section 1

No one in Scotland should be targeted or victimised because of their sexual orientation or gender identity ... We want to challenge the negative attitudes within society that make some people think it's ok to harass or bully LGBT people. Homophobic bullying is completely unacceptable, whether in schools, the workplace, or any other environment.

Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing

The Scottish Government wants all children in Scotland to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. To achieve this all our young people need to have equal opportunities to learn and demonstrate respect for each other and themselves.

Scotland's schools must be inclusive, welcoming places where everyone can work and learn, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Making these resources available in our schools will be reassuring for both pupils and parents and I am sure that teachers will find this information very helpful.

Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills

1.1 Introduction

Homophobia is the dislike, fear or hatred of lesbian and gay and bisexual people. It is often used to describe prejudice towards transgender people too.

Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/gender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate him or her. It can also be more indirect: homophobic language and jokes around the school can create a climate of homophobia which indirectly excludes, threatens, hurts, or humiliates young people.

This toolkit has been developed as one of a number of equality projects covering a range of issues. It follows research to identify policy, practice, awareness and confidence around dealing with homophobic incidents. The research suggested that in relation to bullying and discrimination, the issue of sexual orientation is less embedded compared to other equality strands such as gender, disability and race, and teachers were less confident in dealing consistently and effectively with homophobia. The need for greater awareness, clear guidance and training on anti-homophobia and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues emerged as key priorities from the research.ⁱ

The aim of this resource is therefore to provide confidence and skills to support school staff in recognising, preventing and dealing with homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools in the context of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The toolkit has been developed by LGBT Youth Scotland, the national youth organisation for LGBT young people,ⁱⁱ in partnership with LTS and funded by the Scottish Government. This resource is based on research with teachers, education authority staff and young people.

Contained within this toolkit are materials designed to build confidence in the following areas:

- challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying
- supporting LGBT young people in your school
- including homophobia and homophobic bullying in school policy
- including LGBT issues and anti-homophobia work in the curriculum through lesson plans that support *Curriculum for Excellence* experiences and outcomes.

The curriculum is the totality of experiences that are planned for children and young people through their education, including the ethos and life of the school community, curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning and opportunities for personal achievement. The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community, including those of parents. All members of staff should contribute to this through open, positive, supportive relationships where children and young people will feel that they are listened to. They should promote a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure, model behaviour which promotes effective learning and wellbeing within the school community and ensure that they are sensitive and responsive to each young person's wellbeing.ⁱⁱⁱ

As such, this resource seeks to address the broad issues of ethos, climate and policy beyond the classroom and across whole school communities, as well as more specific examples and suggestions for lesson plans. The Scottish Government's curriculum framework sets out what the child or young person should be able to do and the experiences that contribute to their learning, rather than detailed definitions of content or prescribed hours of study. The lesson plans are hopefully innovative and creative suggestions as to how the curriculum experiences and outcomes could be delivered (and adapted) including the use of history, literature, media reports, international perspectives, case studies and scenarios.

The mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of young people is an essential pre-condition for success in the health and wellbeing of the school community as a whole.

HMIE, *Journey to Excellence*

1.2 About the toolkit

1.2.1 Audience

This toolkit is designed to be used mainly by teachers but also by local authority staff and others working in schools, such as youth workers, police and health promotion officers.

1.2.2 Using the toolkit

This is a flexible resource, with each section able to 'stand alone' or be used alongside other sections. The 'also of interest' boxes throughout the resource highlight connected themes and issues that are expanded upon elsewhere.

It is recommended that you familiarise yourselves with 2. The Key Issues, and 3. Questions and Answers in the first instance. These sections provide information on the issues facing LGBT young people and will act as the bases for using other sections of the toolkit.

1.2.3 Key points covered in the toolkit

This resource provides tools with which to support, protect and celebrate LGBT young people. Relevant research and quotations from young people are included throughout the resource.^{iv}

Listed below are some of the key points addressed in the toolkit.

- **Curriculum for Excellence**
- **The Key Issues**
 - Defining and understanding the impact of homophobia and homophobic bullying
- **Questions and Answers**
- **Including Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in School Policy**
- **Practical Guidance**
 - Using language
 - Challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying
 - Involving parents and carers
 - Supporting LGBT young people
 - Confidentiality and information sharing
- **Good Practice** Suggestions and examples of good practice in this area
- **Further Resources** Glossary of terms, websites, newspaper articles and useful contacts.

Also available as part of *Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools* is a range of lesson plan suggestions and guidance on addressing anti-homophobia and LGBT issues with young people.

These are available here:

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/homophobicbullyingtoolkit>

1.3 Curriculum for Excellence

Anti-homophobia work in schools, alongside all other anti-bullying and anti-discrimination work, supports the achievement of the four capacities in our children and young people.

- Homophobic bullying has proven links with low attainment, truancy and early school leaving. LGBT pupils who feel happy and safe in school are more likely to be **successful learners**, determined to reach their full potential.
- Homophobic bullying can cause LGBT young people to feel that they are of less value than their peers; this can damage their confidence and self-esteem. A school with a clear, inclusive ethos in which bullying and homophobia are consistently challenged will support pupils to develop into healthy and **confident individuals** with positive values and attitudes.
- A school environment where homophobia goes unchallenged limits all pupils' ability to express themselves freely and can crush pupils' ambitions and confidence. An open, inclusive school community where every pupil's contribution is valued and developed helps lay the foundations for each pupil's achievement and development of the skills they need to become **effective contributors** to Scotland's future social and economic success.
- An ethos of equality and dignity for all pupils in your school will help young people exercise their own rights responsibly and with respect for the rights of others. This will enable them to develop into **responsible citizens** who participate fully in the life of Scotland.



Figure 2: The purposes of the curriculum 3–18 ^v

1.4 Policy that supports practice

Also of interest: Appendix 1

Tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying can help to promote and protect the wellbeing of young people and staff in Scottish schools.

The following policy areas support good practice in addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying.

- **Learning, attainment and achievement:** Homophobia impacts negatively on young people's lives and can be a barrier to participation at school. Ensuring that homophobia is addressed and challenged will result in an inclusive and safe environment for pupils and staff.
- **Public policy and education policy – *Curriculum for Excellence*:** Education policy and standards for teaching state that schools must include and support all pupils and tackle prejudice, discrimination and bullying.
- **Respect, equality and inclusion:** Scotland strives to be a fair and equal society where everyone can be successful. Challenging homophobia wherever it exists is one step towards a society in which all young people can be accepted as themselves.

Anti-homophobia work in schools fits with other types of anti-discrimination and anti-bullying work and provides a way in which young people can be enabled to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

1.4.1 Learning, attainment and achievement

It is every child or young person's right to achieve a good education; it is also every parent or carer's aspiration, every school's purpose and every teacher's objective. It is also in our whole society's interest. A good education that actively supports all children and young people to achieve the four capacities^{vi} of *Curriculum for Excellence* is the foundation for:

- a skilled and economically successful society
- healthy, confident and achieving citizens
- a fairer and more humane society, where people respect themselves and each other
- a vibrant population that continually innovates and develops.

Different pupils need different kinds and levels of support to learn, achieve and grow; this is why the *Curriculum for Excellence* clearly emphasises that personal support is the condition for pupils to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that schools and their partners can offer. However, the minimum condition for learning is safety from discrimination and bullying.

Homophobic bullying in schools can have a damaging impact on young people's educational attainment, mental health and, ultimately, their life chances.

Homophobia and homophobic bullying can:

- cause pupils to be afraid to come to school, often resulting in truancy or early drop-out
- cause them distress and anxiety which interferes with their ability to engage and learn
- mean that they will not participate in exams and therefore leave school with no qualifications
- mean that, because of peer pressure on others, they have few or no friends, and feel lonely and isolated.

I felt scared, ashamed, low self-confidence, ultimately bitter about education. It took university to change that. (Male, 19 years)

I suffered severe depression, I felt as if I was a bad person and because I couldn't talk it over with anyone, I tried to kill myself – three times or so. I felt angry at myself, I felt frustrated that I was gay. (Male, 16 years)

1.4.2 Public policy and education policy

The policy landscape surrounding anti-homophobia work in schools and education authorities has changed significantly over the last decade. Since the repeal of section 2A of the Local Government Act 1986^{vii} (commonly known as Section 28) in Scotland in 2000 there has been recognition that prejudice and inequality present barriers to young people's learning, achievement and life chances. There have been further developments in public policy since 2000 which highlight the need for schools to tackle homophobic prejudice, discrimination and bullying.

Education Policy – Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence aims to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum focused on the needs of the child and young person and is designed to enable them to develop the four capacities. The aims for *Curriculum for Excellence* include that every child and young person should:

- know that they are valued and will be supported to become successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

Every child and young person is entitled to expect their education to provide them with:

- opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which *Curriculum for Excellence* can provide.

All staff share a responsibility for identifying the needs, including the care and welfare needs, of children and young people and for working in partnership to put support in place to meet those needs. With this in mind, the health and wellbeing framework identifies experiences and outcomes which are the responsibility of all practitioners. *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential*^{viii} describes standards of support for children and young people in Scottish schools; schools need to plan and meet the support needs of children and young people.^{ix}

Other significant policy drivers include the *Health Promoting Schools* agenda and the Standards in Scotland's Schools, etc Act 2000 (see Appendix 1 for more information).

In **Professional Standards and Practice**, there is an increasing focus on schools' equality practice across the statutory equality strands^x and on teachers' obligation to equitably support all pupils and demonstrate an anti-discriminatory ethos in their work at all times.

How Good is our School: The Journey to Excellence Part 3 (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), 2007) inspection framework includes a quality indicator on equality and fairness (QI 5.6), which requires schools to be proactive in promoting equality for all pupils. The inspectors' illustration of what is required to achieve a Level 5 rating makes explicit reference to the sexual orientation strand:

We welcome and celebrate diversity. Learners, parents, and staff are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. In our school, culture and language, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and additional support needs do not become barriers to participation and achievement.

QI 5.6 Level 5 Illustration^{xi}

The *Standard for Full Registration* (General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), 2006) requires registered teachers to treat all pupils equally, fairly and with respect, and without discrimination, and again this explicitly includes sexual orientation;^{xii} the *Code of Professionalism and Conduct* (GTCS, 2008) makes absolutely clear that dealing with learners must not be prejudiced by factors such as a pupil's sexual orientation.^{xiii}

Finally, **Human Rights and Equality** legislation places a clear set of obligations on schools, backed up by legal remedies for individual pupils and their parents or carers. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 explicitly prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in admission and access to any type of benefit or service, or any other detriment.^{xiv} This includes discrimination on grounds of a pupil's parents, siblings or friends' sexual orientation and also on grounds of perception. Guidance issued to schools by the Scottish Executive has clarified that this requires schools to treat incidents of homophobic bullying as seriously as any other forms of bullying.^{xv} In terms of conflict with religious freedom, the guidance also clarifies that:

The intention of these regulations is to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against on the grounds of their own, or their parents', sexual orientation. They do not prevent denominational schools from delivering appropriate teaching in accordance with their beliefs. In Scotland, denominational schools teach religious and moral education according to the 5–14 National Guidelines, or in the case of Catholic schools the religious education guidance agreed with the Scottish Catholic Education Service. This framework is considered sufficient to ensure that schools deal appropriately with subjects and situations where sexual orientation is a relevant issue.

The regulations do not prevent a teacher from expressing views on sexual orientation, based on their particular religion, provided this is done in an appropriate manner and context (for example when responding to questions from pupils, or in a religious and moral education class). However, conveying a belief within an educational context in a way that harasses or berates a particular pupil or group of pupils is unacceptable and may constitute unlawful discrimination.^{xvi}

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) applies directly to all UK public authorities through the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, public authorities are obliged to carry out their functions in a manner that is compatible with Convention rights, which include the right to life, the prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to education, and others.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) formulates the rights that every person under the age of 18 should be guaranteed by their respective state and includes, among other entitlements, the right to education, the right to be kept safe from harm and the right to have a say in decisions affecting one's own life. In 2008, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, commenting on a report from the UK on its progress in implementing UNCRC, specifically highlighted discrimination experienced by LGBT young people in the UK and the need for action in this area:

the Committee is concerned that in practice certain groups of children, such as: Roma and Irish Travellers' children; migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children; lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender children (LGBT); children belonging to minority groups, continue to experience discrimination and social

stigmatization ... The Committee recommends that the State party ensure full protection against discrimination on any grounds, including by ... strengthening its awareness-raising and other preventive activities against discrimination and, if necessary, take affirmative actions for the benefit of [these] vulnerable groups of children.^{xvii}

In **conclusion**, recent education and equality policy as well as professional standards for teachers have firmly embedded equality and diversity, and respect for the rights and dignity of every pupil in the legal and professional framework governing Scotland's schools. Teachers can challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying in Scottish schools with confidence and authority, and with the certainty that the law and the ethos of the profession backs up their positive equality practice. Broadly, all the policy drivers that are mentioned above:

- state the standard of care which children and young people can expect from those who are responsible for looking after them
- agree that children and young people have a right, without question, without exception and regardless of their age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation, to education, safety from harm, protection from violence and proper care from those looking after them
- agree that children and young people have a right to access to clear, accurate, relevant and up to date information
- affirm the importance of ensuring that sexual orientation or gender identity is not a barrier to education and will not stop young people fulfilling their full potential
- affirm the importance of support for all young people.

1.4.3 Respect, equality and inclusion

Sexual orientation as an equality strand is a fairly recent development; however, the law has moved fast on outlawing discrimination on this ground, which mostly – though not exclusively – affects lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Legal protection against unlawful discrimination is now in place and covers employment and further and higher education (2003)^{xviii} as well as the provision of goods, facilities and services, including school education, other public services and premises (2007).^{xix} A positive duty on public authorities to promote equality on grounds of sexual orientation, in line with the existing duties covering race, gender and disability is forthcoming in the UK Government's proposals for an Equality Bill, which is likely to be passed by the Westminster Parliament before the 2010 election. The situation for transgender people is somewhat different, though employment and further and higher education (1999)^{xx} and the provision of goods, facilities and services (2008)^{xxi} are now also covered in discrimination law, and the Gender Equality Duty includes equality for transgender people.

However, despite the significant progress in terms of LGBT law reform over the last decade, pervasive change in social attitudes across the whole of Scottish society is a longer, more complex process. Schools are key in the endeavour to make Scotland a better, more equal place to live for all people, a place where everyone's rights and human dignity are respected and valued and where everyone can enjoy the same degree of choice, control and freedom, without unfair limits imposed by other people's prejudices.

Challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying in Scottish schools can ensure that schools are safe learning environments where all young people can equally thrive and develop their skills, personality and character. A school system that returns young people who respect themselves and others, and who have a well-developed sense of social justice makes an important contribution to the future wellbeing and prosperity of Scottish society. While no one can reasonably expect schools to go it alone, this toolkit aims to support Scottish schools' contribution to a fairer, more equal Scotland, where all young people's diverse needs are met and no young person's life chances are damaged because of other people's prejudices.



The Key Issues

section 2

2.1 Defining homophobia and homophobic bullying

In order to develop a shared understanding of homophobia and homophobic bullying, the following definitions are identical to the ones used in lesson plans.

Also of interest: 7.1 Glossary

2.1.1 Prejudice and discrimination

- People are being prejudiced when they make negative assumptions about others before they know anything about them.
- Prejudices are usually based on seeing people as different from oneself.
- Prejudice usually involves viewing people as part of a group – for example ‘all people who live in Edinburgh are like this’.
- Discrimination is when people *act* on the prejudiced things that they think and treat others differently or unfairly because of their prejudices.
- Discrimination is when people’s prejudices negatively affect and have an impact on a group of people.

2.1.2 Homophobia

Homophobia is the dislike, fear or hatred of lesbian and gay people. It is often used to describe prejudice towards bisexual and transgender people too, but the terms **Biphobia** (the dislike, fear or hatred of bisexual people) and **Transphobia** (the dislike, fear or hatred of transgender people) are becoming more commonly used.

Although this toolkit is primarily about sexual orientation and homophobia, it will also at times discuss the closely related issues of gender identity, transgender young people and transphobia. Throughout the resource we will use homophobia as shorthand for discrimination towards LGBT people.

Also of interest: 3.2 Gender, transgender young people and transphobia

Homophobia, like all other forms of prejudice, can manifest itself in a range of ways. Although this toolkit focuses on identifying and dealing with personal and direct expressions, it is useful to consider the range of ways in which homophobia can be expressed and the ways in which this can contribute to personal and direct homophobic attitudes and behaviours.^{xxii}

Just like other forms of prejudice, homophobia and/or heterosexism can be expressed in a range of ways.

- *Institutionally*: for example, an employer not allowing LGBT employee to take 'family days'.
- *Culturally*: for example, television shows and advertising in which all relationships are heterosexual.
- *Directly and personally*: for example, name calling, exclusion and physical abuse.
- *Indirectly and subtly*: for example, assuming that someone's partner is of the other sex or that young people will grow up to be heterosexual.
- *Silently*: for example, somebody preferring to remain silent when homophobic attitudes or behaviours are displayed.
- *Internally*: for example, when young people internalise negative messages about being LGBT, leading to negative feelings about themselves.

2.1.3 Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/ gender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate him or her. It can also be more indirect: homophobic language and jokes around the school can create a climate of homophobia which indirectly excludes, threatens, hurts, or humiliates young people.

Homophobic bullying relates to a defining element of a person's identity, targeting his or her 'inner being'. It is similar to sexist bullying or racist bullying in this way. Young people's sexual orientations or gender identities are not a choice but an innate part of who they are. Bullying on these grounds is an example of prejudice based bullying.

Any young person can be homophobically bullied, whether they are LGBT or not. Sometimes young people can be homophobically bullied because others think that they are LGBT, because they have LGBT family or friends or often because they are seen as different or not conforming to traditional gender stereotypes – not a 'proper boy' or a 'proper girl'.

Also of interest: 3.2 Gender, transgender young people and transphobia

I haven't been bullied in that way but I've heard it and don't like to hear people being called 'gay' 'cause I've got family members who are gay and would be insulted by that. (Male, 11 years)

Sometimes homophobic bullying happens simply because accusing someone of being gay and using homophobic language towards them is powerful, hurtful and stigmatising.

Bullies especially call other people gay and lesbian when they are not and then they get worried. (Female, 13 years)

Homophobic bullying can include some of the following behaviours:

- name calling, rumour spreading and gossip about a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity
- using threatening homophobic language or behaviour
- physical or sexual assault based on someone's perceived sexual orientation or gender identity
- not letting someone join in with activities and games because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity
- stealing from someone because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or damaging their property with homophobic graffiti
- using email, texts or online technologies to threaten someone or spread rumours about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity
- 'outing' or threatening to 'out' someone as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender to their peers, teachers or family.

I felt very lonely, no one stood by me. I had no friends at school. The teachers did not listen. I felt let down by everyone and everything that possibly could let me down. I started self-harming at the age of 14. (Female, 20 years)

Homophobic bullying is not:

- acceptable
- inclusive
- character-building
- a normal part of growing up
- a normal part of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
- the fault of the person being bullied
- a positive way for young people to live, grow up and learn.

A lot of kids call me a freak and throw bottle lids at me. They make fun because I'm often on my own and they hiss at me. (Female, 13 years)

Blatant and obvious homophobia can be more readily recognised and challenged. However, more subtle forms can be more difficult to recognise and challenge as they can be embedded in particular communities or have roots in shared vocabulary and humour. Often the most difficult behaviour to challenge is from people who think that their words or actions are 'just a joke' and not homophobic. However, the impact that their words and actions have on LGBT people, and other people who hear them, can be damaging.

[in the class there was] *revulsion over the idea of sex between men; 'accusations' made that particular teachers 'are gay'; use of the word 'poof' as a general derogatory term; and violence being threatened against particular pupils who were 'suspected' of being gay ... Many pupils are exposed to and are the target of homophobic comments on a regular basis.*^{xxiv}

Also of interest: 5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying and 5.6 Supporting LGBT young people

2.1.4 Addressing language ‘that’s so gay’

Also of interest: 5.2 The use of language and 5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying

The common use of the word ‘gay’ to mean sub-standard, uncool, or inferior may seem harmless but LGBT young people who hear the word ‘gay’ used in an insulting way can feel that it applies directly to them.

The word ‘gay’ was used frequently as a derogatory term. The people doing the bullying often had no reason to think that the person they were bullying actually was gay, it was just a term that was used. (Female, 18 years)

Some children are more aware than others – some say ‘you’re so gay’ or ‘you poof’ as insults and don’t necessarily know what that means. (Teacher)

This phrase can be used without malice or understanding but this does not mean that it has no impact on LGBT young people who hear it used in this way and who may internalise these negative messages. Although younger pupils may not know what they are saying or what the word means they are learning that there is a connection between the word ‘gay’ and ‘bad’ or ‘rubbish’.

Some argue that as the phrase has now been embedded in youth vocabulary there is nothing that adults can do about it. The BBC Board of Governors argued this in 2006 when they defended Chris Moyles, a Radio 1 DJ, who called a mobile phone ringtone ‘gay’ on air. Tim Lusher, in *The Guardian*, argues that the consequences of casual language can be enormous:

Does any of this matter? Is it so bad if the meaning of ‘gay’ changes, if the intent is not homophobic? Damilola Taylor comes to mind, bullied at school and called ‘gay boy’.^{xxv}

Language changes with time and words go in and out of fashion but words previously popular with young people are now seen to be unacceptable – for example, the use of racist language is now more likely to be noticed and challenged. Acknowledging that ‘gay’ as a synonym for ‘bad’ is damaging regardless of intention, challenging its use and exploring the use of the word with pupils are all steps that can limit the damage which it can do.

2.1.5 A hidden kind of bullying: reporting homophobic bullying

Also of interest: 5.5 Recording and monitoring homophobic incidents and homophobic bullying 5.6 Supporting LGBT young people and 5.8 Confidentiality and information sharing

Young people often do not report incidents of homophobic bullying because they are not confident of being taken seriously or because they fear that reporting the bullying will make it worse. In some cases it is because of the perception that nothing will be done. In recent UK research, 62 per cent of 1145 lesbian and gay pupils surveyed reported that nothing happened to the bully after telling a teacher about homophobic bullying.^{xxvi}

It was only challenged when reported and not too seriously dealt with – they just called it name-calling. They said it will be addressed later. I'm still waiting. (Male, 19 years)

Importantly, young people's fears around being known to be LGB or T can influence whether they report homophobic bullying or not. For a young person, reporting homophobic bullying at school is tantamount to telling a teacher that he or she is LGBT or that somebody thinks that he or she is LGBT.

I wasn't out at the time and if I reported it everyone would assume I was gay, which I didn't want at the time. (Male, 18 years)

I don't feel happy with informing the school of my orientation, I haven't come out to my parents and know they would be involved. (Male, 15 years)

- **What is important to LGBT young people?**

LGBT young people stated in a 2007 survey that their key priorities for change were **improving schools to make them more welcoming towards LGBT young people** and **changing public attitudes towards LGBT people**.^{xxvii}

2.2 The impact of homophobia and homophobic bullying

2.2.1 Young people's health and wellbeing

It made me feel ashamed of what I really am!! (Female, 15 years)

Professionals need to stop the stupid rumours and stereotypes that people spread and help us feel better about ourselves. Reassure us that we are normal and that we shouldn't be ashamed of who we are. (LGBT young person)

Experiencing homophobic bullying has a negative effect on the health and wellbeing of young people and of those around them. It can mean that young people internalise homophobia as they negotiate their identities at school.

A life of secrecy and lies can hinder young people's emotional development, reinforce their own homophobia, undermine their self-esteem and confidence, and inhibit them from connecting with the lesbian and gay 'community'.^{xxviii}

LGBT young people report feelings of anxiety, worthlessness, isolation, shame, fear, anger and feelings of difference and abnormality.

Why do I feel like this when normal people are straight? (Male, 14 years)

Ensuing behaviours for some young people include depression, self-harm, eating disorders and suicide attempts. Suicide and attempted suicide are far more likely in those young people who identify as LGBT than in the general youth population. In one study, over 50 per cent of LGB people who had been bullied at school had considered self-harm or suicide and 40 per cent had attempted self-harm at least once.^{xxix}

In a recent English study of a representative sample of 1860 young people, Rivers^{xxx} found that LGB youth were significantly more likely to report a range of psychological and somatic issues when compared with non-LGB peers and the averages for the county in which the study was conducted. In addition, LGB students were almost three times more likely to report being bullied 'once a week or more' when compared to non-LGB controls and county wide averages.

- ***Young people's calls to ChildLine about sexual orientation, homophobia and homophobic bullying^{xxxix}***

'An estimated 2725 young people call ChildLine each year to talk about sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying.

'The most common problem cited by this group of young people was homophobic bullying. Fear of telling parents (or problems after telling them) was also a significant source of concern. Some young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people reported being triply isolated, with schools, friends and families all being unsupportive at best or overtly homophobic at worst.

'Some young people who were homophobically bullied reported being in a catch-22 situation: by reporting the bullying to their school or parents, they would effectively out themselves. Many were not yet prepared to do this, often because of homophobic attitudes they had heard expressed by teachers and parents.

'ChildLine counsellors report that young people calling about their sexual orientation are often extremely lonely and isolated, and feel that they have nowhere else to turn.'

In a lot of cases, says a counsellor, a young person doesn't call to talk about how to come out, they call to talk about the tremendous fear they feel about what will happen when he or she – but especially he – does come out, or gets found out. For some callers, a few people already know the truth, and the young person lives in fear of what will happen if those people tell others.

2.2.2 Coming out as LGBT and receiving support

Growing up and developing one's own sexuality can be a fraught process to negotiate for many young people. This can be made even more difficult when a young person's developing sexual orientation or gender identity is one which is different from expectations.

A recent survey of LGBT Youth Scotland service users found that, on average, the gap between young people first thinking that they might be LGB or T and first feeling able to tell someone about this was 3.5 years.^{xxxii} This constitutes a substantial proportion of a young person's life in which they are experiencing some degree of isolation and pressure.

Everyone needs some degree of social and emotional sustenance to cope with the challenges of daily life. This social support is particularly important during adolescence because it is a time of transition during which a young person must cope with a range of physical, emotional and social changes ... It is well established that social support assists resiliency, has a buffering effect in dealing with stress and aids positive mental health.^{xxxiii}

Coming out as LGB or T to a parent or carer can be a daunting prospect and many LGBT young people prefer to remain silent because of fear of rejection in the home. These fears can be well founded with research and practice pointing to many young people who have been rejected for identifying as LGBT and many who have been made homeless by their parents/carers.^{xxxiv} Although young people may keep silent to protect themselves, their silence and secret keeping can simultaneously leave them isolated, unsupported and ill at ease with themselves and who they are.

Be better at understanding what happens in our families when they know we are LGBT. Help us cope with difficult family situations, all families react or cope differently, sometimes they disown us. (LGBT young person)

2.2.3 Young people's learning, attainment and achievement

There are connections between early school leaving, poor educational attainment and homophobic bullying. Over two thirds of the young people in one Northern Irish study who left school earlier than they would have preferred had experienced homophobic bullying, and 65 per cent of those who had achieved low results had also been bullied.^{xxxv}

I had lower motivation to study – [there was] constant worry about what would be said or done to me next by the bullies. Always 'on guard' and worrying about bullies. My performance was worse when I had to sit near to a bully as bullying also could occur in class, esp[ecially] if teacher left the room. (LGBT young person)

2.3 Homophobia affects all young people

Tackling homophobia is not only for the benefit of LGBT young people in your school. Young people who are not LGBT are also affected by homophobia.

- Any young person can be homophobically bullied, whether he or she is LGBT or not.
- Homophobia can force young people to act in certain ways to appear 'macho' if they are male or 'girly' if they are female. Sometimes young people feel compelled to consciously or unconsciously prove that they are not LGB or T. This limits their individuality and self-expression.
- Homophobia can put pressure on many young people to act aggressively and angrily towards people who are or are perceived to be LGBT.
- Homophobia can make it difficult for young people to be close friends with someone of the same sex in case they are accused of being LGBT.
- Homophobia can make it difficult for heterosexual young people to be friends with LGBT young people in case they are accused of being LGBT.

Obviously I'd feel bad for the person and want to help but then the bullies may turn on me and call me a lesbian when I'm not, just because I was helping someone who is an LGBT. (Female, 14 years)

- Homophobia affects young people's values and attitudes and can make it difficult for them to appreciate the diverse range of people whom they will meet and interact with in their lives.

Young people are already hearing about LGBT issues from a variety of sources but what they hear is often based on myth, misinformation and homophobia. It is important that young people have access to accurate and inclusive information about LGBT issues which is factual and not sensationalist or prejudiced.

It is possible for LGBT young people to be resilient and resist the dominant messages that they hear about LGBT people. However, they require accurate and positive information about their lives in order to do this.^{xxxvi}

- **Research exploring the main messages about sexuality in youth media outlets found a lack of positive images of lesbian and gay teenagers.**^{xxxvii}

'In the entire sample of magazine and teen drama representations there were ... no simple, in-passing positive portrayals of openly gay men or women. Being gay was, however, raised as a source of anxiety or an object of abuse ... Indeed, within the TV sample, while there was not a single representation of a gay character, there were three examples of male characters disowning the imputation that they might be gay. One teen drama scene, for example, showed two male characters jumping apart embarrassed after being 'caught' practising dancing together.

'Our study suggests that in spite of some high profile innovative representations of young gay men and lesbians in some contexts (for example, the controversial but popular Channel 4 series *Queer as Folk* or the lesbian character in *Buffy*), gay teenagers are not generally integrated into mainstream representations.

'Within our sample male homosexuality was most likely to be portrayed as a source of embarrassment or target of teasing and lesbianism was completely invisible.'

Young people's awareness of LGBT terms and issues is high, but the messages they are hearing about LGBT people are mainly negative.

In 2007, LGBT Youth Scotland undertook a consultation of 513 young people in the Scottish Borders to determine general knowledge of LGBT issues and attitudes to people who identify as LGB or T.

- At least 86 per cent of young people had heard the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and homophobia before. Ninety nine per cent had heard the word gay.
- Sixty seven per cent of young people said they knew someone who was L, G, B or T.
- Fifty three per cent of young people said that they had heard mainly negative things about LGBT people.
- When young people were given a selection of places where they might like to find out about LGBT issues, school came at the top of the list, ahead of sources like friends, family and the internet.

Fifty eight per cent of young people said that school would be horrible or bad for LGBT young people. When asked why they thought this, some of their comments included:

- *Some people may choose not to be friends with them.* (Male, 17 years)
- *'Gay' is used as an insult.* (Female, 16 years)
- *Because they get bullied, left out, beaten up.* (Female, 14 years)



Questions and Answers section 3

This section of the toolkit provides brief answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about LGBT issues, homophobia and homophobic bullying. These answers are intended to provide a starting point with the 'also of interest' boxes highlighting where an issue is expanded upon or explored further elsewhere in the toolkit.

3.1 Homophobic bullying

3.1.1 What is homophobic bullying?

Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/gender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate him or her. Homophobic bullying can also be more indirect: homophobic language, and jokes around the school can create a climate of homophobia which indirectly excludes, threatens, hurts, or humiliates young people.

Homophobic bullying is a form of identity based and prejudice based bullying. Broadly speaking, it is motivated by dislike or ignorance about LGBT people. It can also be directed towards people who seem not to conform to traditionally male or female gender roles – for example, a boy who doesn't like football and prefers dancing.

Also of interest: 2. The Key Issues

3.1.2 How are prejudice based bullying and homophobic bullying connected?

Homophobic bullying relates to a defining element of a person's identity, targeting his or her 'inner being'. Young people's sexual orientations or gender identities are not a choice but an innate part of who they are, and homophobic bullying is similar to sexist bullying or racist bullying in that it is a form of identity based bullying.

Homophobic bullying fits under the umbrella of prejudice based bullying, which targets young people because of who they are or who they are perceived to be. This can be on the grounds of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Other grounds for prejudice based bullying might include carer status, social class, looked after or accommodated status or asylum seeker/refugee status. Young people can also be bullied for being perceived to belong to one or more of these groups, or for being associated with a member of one or more of these groups.

Also of interest: 2. The Key Issues

3.1.3 Is homophobic bullying experienced differently from other forms of bullying?

All types of bullying differ both in the motivations behind them and in the way that young people experience them. Homophobic bullying has its own particular roots and expressions and is experienced in particular ways by young people.

Young people often do not disclose bullying for a range of reasons. Identifying as LGB or T is often an 'invisible' difference and some young people who experience homophobic bullying keep quiet because disclosing the bullying is equivalent to telling somebody that they are LGBT or that somebody thinks they are. When there is fear or expectation of rejection it is less likely that a young person will disclose what is happening to them. In addition, homophobic bullying can be experienced by people who are not LGB or T but are perceived to be.

Also of interest: 2. The Key Issues

3.1.4 Why address homophobia and homophobic bullying specifically?

Specifically addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying demonstrates a commitment to making visible and challenging this particular form of discrimination. Different types of bullying involve different considerations and different approaches. Addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying, alongside other types of bullying, can help to highlight that these are specific and significant issues for the whole school community.

Also of interest: 4. Including Anti-Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in School Policy and 5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying

3.1.5 Is 'that's so gay' homophobic?

Yes it is, whether the intention behind it is homophobic or not. The phrase 'that's so gay' and the word 'gay' are common in all youth settings. 'Gay' in this sense means something that is rubbish, inferior, pathetic – exactly what some people think of others who identify as gay.

This phrase can be used without malice or understanding but it can still have a negative impact on LGBT young people who hear it used in this way, and it can still establish a connection between the word 'gay' and 'bad' amongst younger pupils. Acknowledging that this language has homophobic consequences regardless of intention, and challenging and exploring its use with pupils, can limit the damage which it can do.

Also of interest: 2. The Key Issues and 5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying

3.1.6 Do all young people who experience homophobic bullying identify as LGBT?

No, any young person can experience homophobic bullying. Those who do are not necessarily LGBT or T. People who can experience homophobic bullying include:

- LGBT young people
- young people who are perceived to be LGBT
- young people with LGBT family and friends
- young people who are seen as different and do not conform to traditional gender roles
- any young person at all.

Also of interest: 2. The Key Issues

3.1.7 Do young people who have LGBT family members experience homophobic bullying?

Yes. Some young people have brothers or sisters, aunts or uncles, cousins, parents or grandparents who identify as LGBT and these young people can experience homophobic bullying as a result.

On my first day of high school, someone found out my older brother was gay. By lunchtime at least 20 other pupils were abusing and bullying me and I was in tears in the guidance office. The bullying didn't stop for the next five years. (LGBT young person)

This type of homophobic bullying can remain hidden, as young people might be unwilling to disclose it to their family for fear of causing upset. Conversely, young people could blame their family member for being the 'cause' of the bullying.

3.1.8 Can LGBT young people homophobically bully other young people?

Yes. Some young people want to conceal from their peers the fact that they are LGBT, and homophobically bullying others is one way in which to do this. Joining in with an accepted way of talking and behaving can make young people feel more included.

The negative messages which young people hear about being LGBT are easy for them to take on board. Internalising homophobia may make LGBT young people feel angry and different and may lead them to bully others.

Also of interest: 5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying and 5.6 Supporting LGBT young people

3.1.9 Who should challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying?

Challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying is the responsibility of everyone who wants to be part of the school community in which all young people are supported and included. It is the responsibility of teachers and other members of school staff under the leadership of school senior management, the local authority and national government.

It is young people's responsibility as well. Although this can be difficult they can be enabled in this through accurate information, support and encouragement from school staff and a range of anti-homophobia work in the school from which to learn.

Also of interest: 5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying

3.2 Gender, transgender young people and transphobia

3.2.1 I understand a little about sexual orientation and homophobia but what about transgender young people and transphobia?

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe the range of ways in which a person's gender can differ from the assumptions and expectations of the society they live in.

Transgender describes a range of gender identities (how you think of yourself in terms of gender internally) and gender expressions (external ways of expressing gender, for example, clothes, gestures). Some people find that their gender identity, gender expression and physical bodies do not match up.

Under the transgender umbrella are transsexual people (who are labelled male/female at birth but have a different gender identity and eventually transition to live completely and permanently as this other gender); intersex people (whose external genitals, internal reproductive system or chromosomes are in between what is considered clearly male or female); androgynous people (who do not feel comfortable thinking of themselves as simply either male or female and find that their gender identity is more complicated to describe) and cross-dressing people (who dress as the opposite gender but are generally happy with their birth gender).

Although the exact numbers are unknown, there are transgender people in Scottish schools. In 2007, one third of LGBT Youth Scotland's Lothian service advice and referral contacts were with transgender young people and their mean age was 16.75 years.

From a young age I have always known who I really am. At primary school I was bullied because I chose to play with girls and made excuses to not take part in sports ... [later] I began to express myself more openly and began to wear make-up and dress differently. I was then suspended from school for being disruptive. I had never been loud or rude so I couldn't understand it ... I left home because my situation at home had got so bad. I was encouraged not to express myself by the housing association and not to wear women's clothes. I tried to kill myself at 18 years of age. (Transgender young woman)

Wider society's awareness and acceptance of transgender people and transgender issues is far behind that of LGB people and sexual orientation issues. Transgender young people's specific experiences and needs are little known in schools at present.

3.2.2 What are the links between homophobia and gender?

Homophobia in schools is closely related with gender, gender roles and gender discrimination. It is necessary to think about homophobia and gender together when thinking about challenging homophobia. Similarly, *Gender Equality: Toolkit for Education Staff*^{xxxviii} (Scottish Executive, 2007) is based on the understanding that it is necessary to address homophobia alongside sexism to work effectively for gender equality.

Gender roles and gender stereotypes are established for young people from a very young age.^{xxxix} For many young people, 'gay' means 'a man who is not a proper man and doesn't do the things which real men do' and 'lesbian' means 'a woman who is not a proper woman and doesn't do the things which real women do'. Gender roles are crucially important while growing up and, for some young people – particularly for young men – acting in a homophobic manner is a way in which they are able to reinforce their own masculinity and their heterosexuality to those around them.^{xl} As such, homophobia can be a useful tool for young people trying to fit in at school.

Consequently, homophobic abuse is not only directed at young people who identify as LGB. Homophobic attitudes and behaviours are often separated from *actual* sexual orientation and are directed towards, for example, young men who are not seen as sufficiently and properly masculine – maybe someone who is quiet, not sporty and enjoys reading. For these situations, homophobic and sexist language can be used interchangeably – 'gay', 'jessie', 'he-she', 'poof', 'girl' and so on. All of these words are designed to insult and control these young men's masculinities rather than directly insult their sexual orientations. Therefore, homophobic displays are often only a mask for the reaction to other young people stepping outside of their set gender roles regarding what it means to be masculine or feminine.

Sexism and gender discrimination is, of course, all the more significant when thinking about gender identity rather than sexual orientation – young people who identify as transgender do not only call into question young people's ideas of gender roles but fundamentally explode them. Transgender young people feel the effects of this directly with violence, abuse and harassment while at school and often far into later life.^{xli}

Also of interest: 5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying

3.3 LGBT young people

3.3.1 How many people are LGBT?

The simple answer is that we don't know. A UK Government estimate put the total number of gay and lesbian people in the UK at between 5 and 7% of the total adult population, or around 3.3 million people,^{xliii} but because many LGBT people feel it necessary to conceal their sexual orientations the actual number is likely to be higher.

In a class of 20 young people then, one or two potentially could be LGBT. In a school of 800 young people, over 50 could identify as LGBT. When all is said and done, every teacher will teach young people who identify as LGBT.

3.3.2 Can you tell that someone is LGBT?

No. There are LGBT young people in every school and, as not everyone conforms to stereotypes, you cannot always tell who they are. Sometimes, based on stereotypes, it may seem easy to identify young people who are LGBT – an effeminate boy maybe, or a young person who dresses or speaks in a way that is 'typically gay'. These young people may or may not be LGBT and it is important not to make assumptions. Every young person, no matter how they present, has a right to safety and no one brings homophobic bullying on themselves.

Many young people deal with feeling different by conforming and assimilating to be as much like other young people as possible. These young people may be facing exactly the same issues as all other LGBT young people and it will be impossible to tell. The only assumption to make is that any young person in the school could be LGBT. You may never know and you may never support them directly: challenging homophobia as widely and generally as possible means that these young people and all young people will still benefit from these messages.

Also of interest: 5.6 Supporting LGBT young people

3.3.3 Do LGBT young people have many LGBT role models?

No, not that many. The visibility of LGBT people in the media and public life has grown in recent years and most people could name some out and proud LGBT people. Although their visibility is hugely positive for young people, these people are mainly from the entertainment industry and there are many other professions in which LGBT people appear to be absent. One of the most obvious examples is in sport:

Football, it seems, is one of the last professional environments where you can't be out and proud. In every other entertainment industry we have gay stars. Why should football be different? Are football fans really so incapable of watching a gay player without abusing him? (David James, Portsmouth goalkeeper, 2007)^{xliiii}

LGBT role models from a range of backgrounds, a range of professions and with a range of achievements remain limited for young people.

Also of interest: 6.6 LGBT History Month

3.3.4 Are there other equalities issues affecting LGBT young people?

Yes, there are. It is important to remember that issues around sexual orientation and gender identity are not the only ones affecting LGBT young people.

Like all young people, LGBT young people can come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and can have a range of religions or beliefs. They can be disabled or able-bodied and be of any gender or sexual orientation. All of these identity issues can have an impact on the way that LGBT young people see themselves, how their family, friends and community perceive and react to them and how young people deal with their sexual orientation or gender identity and any bullying which they might experience.

One example of this is that LGBT young people with disabilities, particularly learning disabilities, may find it more difficult to make their needs known and taken seriously.

3.4 Staff issues

3.4.1 What are the issues facing LGBT staff in Scottish schools?

Just as young people can feel excluded, threatened, hurt, or humiliated by homophobia at school and unable to come out, members of staff can also feel inhibited about disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity. Many staff members feel unable to come out as LGBT because of the potential reactions of colleagues and pupils.

A 2006 survey from *The Times Educational Supplement* revealed that 75 per cent of lesbian and gay teachers have experienced discrimination at work. One in five said that they were scared to go to work as a result of school-based harassment.^{xiv}

Although this toolkit focuses on young people, the benefits of challenging homophobia will be felt by every member of the school community.

Further information and advice for LGBT teachers is available from the Educational Institute for Scotland (www.eis.org.uk)

3.4.2 How do I challenge homophobic behaviour amongst my peers?

It can be very difficult to challenge colleagues who use homophobic language or tell homophobic jokes – potentially even more difficult than challenging young people who do the same. Challenging this behaviour can lead to the one person who speaks out feeling vulnerable, exposed and open to accusations of ‘political correctness’ and overreaction.

There are no easy answers, although there are suggestions elsewhere in the toolkit for ways in which to challenge homophobia more generally. However, if homophobic language and jokes are acceptable in the staffroom or anywhere else in the school then it will be impossible to challenge young people who display the same kind of behaviour. The acceptance of homophobia anywhere in the school will undermine all other equality, diversity and anti-discrimination work carried out.

Also of interest: 5.4 Challenging homophobia from colleagues

I was told by one teacher, after I reported homophobic bullying that 'you've nailed your colours to the mast, you need to face it' – and then walked away. When I reported this comment no action was taken. This makes my faith in the education system dwindle as I was left feeling like I had no support in school at all. (LGBT young person)

3.5 Discussing LGBT issues with young people

3.5.1 How can I effectively approach LGBT issues or anti-homophobia in the classroom?

Discussing anti-homophobia and LGBT issues in the classroom for the first time can be daunting. What if it makes LGBT young people feel uncomfortable in a lesson which draws attention to them? What if it makes homophobia and homophobic bullying worse?

Maybe we shouldn't be raising it, kids might be reactive to it – sometimes you find that children, when you put ideas into their heads, they think 'oh right, didn't know about this' and maybe start to call someone 'gayboy' whereas if you don't raise awareness of it maybe they don't think of saying something like that. (Headteacher)

Lessons do not need to draw attention to anyone in the class or the school. Using case studies and examples of well-known people to illustrate points, not allowing references to individuals and remaining sensitive to the fact that in the class there may be LGBT/questioning young people or young people with LGBT family or friends are all ways to make this happen. Teachers are skilled in delivering lessons on a range of sensitive topics and these topics are no different.

One-off discussions can raise more questions than they answer. However, integrating discussions around LGBT issues and homophobia into existing anti-discrimination and anti-bullying work will demonstrate to pupils that these subjects aren't 'special' or 'controversial' but simply part of what the school does. In addition, talking about LGBT issues in the classroom is likely to have an even greater effect if it is accompanied by other measures in the school around the year.

Young people are already hearing about LGBT issues from a range of sources but what is important are the messages that they are hearing. LGBT issues are not new to young people but positive, anti-discriminatory messages about LGBT issues may well be.

Also of interest: Guidance on lesson delivery and range of lesson plans – available at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/homophobicbullyingtoolkit>

3.5.2 Is there any legislation to stop teachers talking about LGBT issues or anti-homophobia in school?

No, there is no legislation to stop teachers talking about LGBT issues in school. Quite the opposite – the importance of inclusion and support for all pupils, including LGBT pupils, is now included in legislation.^{xlv} Guidance from the Scottish Government has clarified that this requires schools to treat incidents of homophobic bullying as seriously as other forms of bullying, and highlights the need to address homophobic bullying specifically.

Section 2a of the Local Government Act – known as Section 28 and repealed in 2000 in Scotland – is not a barrier to addressing homophobia and LGBT issues in school. Section 28 is mentioned only to highlight that it is an abolished piece of legislation with no relevance to anti-homophobia work in schools.

In the past, never discussing homophobia and LGBT issues in school sent out a clear message to young people that being LGBT was not something to be discussed and neither was homophobic bullying. Talking openly about these issues will result in these myths being dispelled.

If Section 28 and the attitudes behind it had remained then society would still believe that gay people are second class citizens and that it is right that they should be treated as second class citizens. (Sir Ian McKellen)

Also of interest: 1.4 Policy that supports practice

3.5.3 How can we engage parents and carers in this work?

Sometimes there can be concerns around parent/carer reactions to schools talking about LGBT issues or anti-homophobia work.

In these cases, it is of course important to acknowledge and explore parent/carer concerns. However, it is also important to make clear that homophobia is a serious threat to a safe and inclusive school environment and that tackling discrimination, addressing bullying and supporting young people are part of the professional duties of teachers and the responsibility of the school. No parent or carer wants to see any young person bullied or excluded for any reason, and any young person at all can experience homophobic bullying.

Young people have the right to receive clear, relevant and up-to-date information on matters that affect their lives. Children and young people have the right to receive and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.^{xvii} For young people, part of becoming successful learners and confident individuals is having access to up-to-date and accurate information and resources and using this information to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing.^{xviii}

Also of interest: 5.9 Involving parents and carers in anti-homophobia work

3.6 Supporting LGBT young people

3.6.1 What do I do if a young person comes out as LGBT to me?

Every instance of this is likely to be different but there are a few key points to remember:

- openness and non-judgemental responses
- ensuring that you don't panic – in the majority of cases young people will simply want someone to tell
- honesty about what you do and do not know – if there are questions that you can't answer then promise to get back to the young person with the answer later
- remembering that you could be the first person ever to be told about this and having a young person confide in you is a huge privilege

- reinforcing the idea that being LGBT is completely normal and nothing to be ashamed of
- reassuring them of confidentiality and that you do not need to share information with anyone else unless you believe that they are at risk of harm
- readiness to provide relevant and up-to-date information and resources.

Exploring the young person's disclosure with open questions can help them open up and also allow you to find out what they need from you.

Also of interest: 5.6 Supporting LGBT young people and 7. Further Resources





Including Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in School Policy

section 4

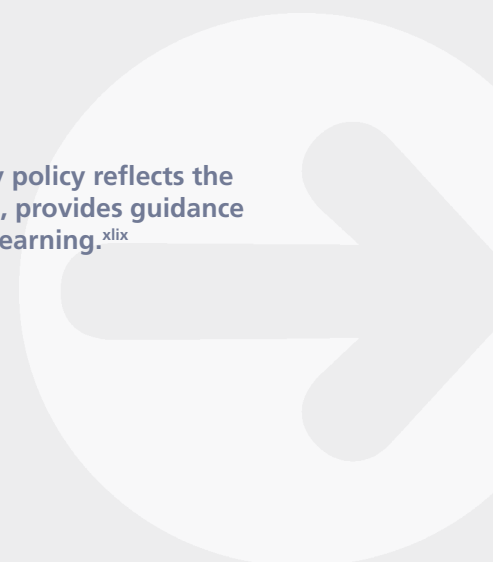
Policies are about action. (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007)^{xlviii}

School policies are critical to a successful effort to challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying. Your school's policies provide the framework for what is being done in school and how it is done; they are a constitution for your school that sets out its vision and the high-level aims that have to be worked towards in order to make that vision a reality.

Policies should empower staff and other stakeholders to change things for the better and give them certainty and authority. The diagram at the beginning of this toolkit illustrates that a robust anti-bullying policy is the link between positive leadership from the top and staff's practice as it impacts on pupils' lives and learning experiences.

4.1 Inclusive anti-bullying policies

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) states that a high quality policy reflects the school's aims and values, puts children and young people first, provides guidance to improve classroom practice and helps to reduce barriers to learning.^{xlix}



4.1.1 Empowerment, certainty and authority

Your anti-bullying policy should:

- empower staff to use their knowledge and skills to challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying and promote a positive environment in which all pupils can thrive
- give staff certainty and authority that the action they take to challenge discrimination and bullying is in line with their school's vision
- provide certainty to pupils and parents/carers about what they can expect from their school and from each other within the school community, what behaviours are acceptable and what the procedures and consequences are if incidents of bullying are reported.

4.1.2 School ethos and values

The ethos and values of your school are central in establishing a clear policy framework for challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying.

- Involving school management, teachers, pupils and parents/carers gives everyone in the school community a stake in the policy and its implementation. A positive anti-bullying policy which empowers and supports staff, pupils and others to challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying reflects a commitment to ensuring that all pupils are safe and valued and that discrimination and bullying will not be tolerated.
- The school's positive ethos should be reflected in the adults in the school community. School staff must lead the way and be role models for pupils in an environment where all are aware of the school's stance on homophobia and homophobic bullying, and where all are equipped with the tools to challenge homophobia. A policy which reflects this clearly will set the ground rules to challenging homophobic bullying amongst your school's pupils.

4.1.3 Making LGBT-inclusive school policy

It is critical that your policy:

- explicitly mentions challenging homophobic bullying – naming and addressing specific forms of bullying and their different roots and expressions will ensure that staff are confident in effectively dealing with a range of situations
- clearly speaks to its audience, including teachers, other staff, pupils and parents/carers. In plain English, your policy should state that homophobia and homophobic bullying will not be accepted, set out the process for reporting and dealing with homophobic incidents, formulate realistic expectations for young people and their parents/carers and set out the consequences for pupils who display bullying behaviour
- takes account of specific issues related to homophobic bullying, such as the fact that many LGBT young people may not be out to their friends and families, and that many may not identify as LGB or T. Confidentiality and sensitivity are absolutely critical in keeping safe and winning the trust of LGBT young people who are bullied at school.

Your policy should be young person-centred and ensure that pupils who report bullying retain as much control over the action taken under your anti-bullying policy as possible; rules and procedures on information sharing must therefore be absolutely clear.

Also of interest: 5.8 Confidentiality and information sharing

4.2 Anti-bullying policy 'health check'

Schools will have their own processes for school policy making in place and will know best what works for them. If you are considering reviewing your approach to your anti-bullying policy, we would recommend the Better Policy-Making Approach developed by *respectme*, Scotland's national anti-bullying service (www.respectme.org.uk).

If you want to look at the degree to which your current policy includes homophobia and homophobic bullying, try using the quick policy health check tool below.

Including Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in School Policy

Is or does your policy ...

- **Informed by all groups who have a stake** in your pupils' wellbeing – young people, teachers, parents/carers, etc? Does it set a timescale for a review involving all those groups? Have young people been involved in writing the content of the policy?
- Begin with a **strong and clear mission statement** that states that bullying is not a normal part of growing up, can be highly damaging to young people and the wider school community, and is therefore unacceptable and will be challenged?
- **Put pupils who are being bullied firmly into the centre** of the policy and ensure that they retain as much control as possible in any action that will be taken under the policy and that their confidentiality is respected (where appropriate, see the section on confidentiality)?
- **Explicitly mention homophobic bullying** among other types of prejudice-based bullying and does it recognise that different types of bullying have different root causes and require being challenged in different ways? Homophobic bullying is based on prejudice, discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes (often, if not always, gender stereotypes). If homophobic bullying or other prejudice-based bullying is addressed purely as a discipline issue, the root causes will remain unchallenged and other young people will be at risk.
- **Acknowledge that bullying can be experienced differently by different young people?** It is therefore important that no assumptions are made about how a pupil who is being bullied should react. The way in which the pupil experiences the bullying should inform the school's response.
- Reflect, incorporate and exceed the school's **legal obligations in relation to bullying**, and equality and human rights? For more details on those obligations and policy drivers behind anti-homophobia work in schools, see *Why use this toolkit?* and **Appendix 1**.
- Give teachers **clear guidance as to how incidents of homophobic bullying will be dealt with** on all grounds and does it give teachers explicit authority to challenge and deal with bullying consistently and in line with the school's behaviour policy? Also, does it make absolutely plain what approach will be taken with pupils and others who display bullying behaviour?
- Give **clear instructions as to how incidents are recorded and monitored** and how this information is kept and used? See Section 5.5.
- **Clearly set out young people's rights** under the policy and what they and their parents/carers can expect to be done under the policy if they report an incident of bullying, and how they/their children will be protected from harm and listened to?
- Written in **plain English** and accessible to everyone in the school community?

Figure 3: Policy health check tool

4.3 Raising awareness of your anti-bullying policy

Your policy's success as an effective framework that empowers staff and others to challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying depends on its key tenets being known and accepted across the school community. Here are some suggestions as to how this can be achieved.

- Launch your new anti-bullying policy with pupils at a school assembly, or at a diversity or anti-bullying event.
- Hold a special Parents and Carers Information Evening to inform parents/carers about what you and your colleagues are doing to ensure that their children can thrive in a safe and inclusive school community.
- Organise an INSET day on what the policy means to each individual teacher in your school. This can also be an opportunity to support teachers in increasing their knowledge of equality issues and raise their confidence in challenging homophobic bullying and discrimination and promoting a safe learning environment for all pupils.
- Post your policy on your school's intranet, its website, and in central places across the school.

Your policy is most effective if it is a living instrument that is kept in line with wider policy developments and with identified trends within your school; your policy therefore needs to be open to review and amendment on a regular basis. Here are some suggestions which will help to keep your policy well informed.

- Record homophobic incidents as a way of documenting how the incidents were dealt with, and by whom.

Also of interest: 5.5 Recording and monitoring homophobic incidents

- Conduct regular, anonymous pupil surveys, so that you know how your pupils are feeling and you can identify and monitor any bullying situations.



Practical Guidance section 5

Challenging bullying and supporting young people are not new subjects for schools. Quite often, difficulties or uncertainties in challenging homophobic bullying and supporting LGBT young people are solely related to the issues in question. This section of the toolkit is designed to provide practical guidance on tackling homophobia and supporting LGBT young people.

5.1 Removing barriers to anti-homophobia work in schools

5.1.1 Aren't these issues private?

Everyone's sexual orientation and gender identity is private and personal to them and anti-homophobia work in school is not designed to breach this privacy. Staff are never advised to ask a young person about their sexual orientation or gender identity but instead should provide support if a young person comes out as LGBT to them and should, whenever appropriate, provide generally positive messages about equality, anti-discrimination and LGBT issues.

Often, young people are not afforded the luxury of privacy around their sexual orientations and gender identities due to homophobia and homophobic bullying. It is therefore homophobia and homophobic bullying, not the privacy of young people which is targeted by anti-homophobia work.

5.1.2 Where can I get more support?

It is wise to be aware of your own values and attitudes when discussing LGBT issues with young people or when challenging homophobia. If you find that your own values and your professional duties and responsibilities conflict, it is important that guidance and support is sought from colleagues or the school management team.

5.2 The use of language

Language can help to challenge homophobia. However, it can also place barriers between you and young people if you feel unconfident about using LGBT related language.

There are no right or wrong answers when it comes to the use of LGBT related language. However, there are a few standard terms in common usage by LGBT people included in **7.1 Glossary of terms** which are useful to understand.

Problems encountered when there is a lack of confidence around using LGBT related language include:

- saying nothing at all because you don't know what to say
- shutting down potential avenues of conversation about LGBT issues because you're unsure about how to word things
- masking a lack of confidence by over-confidently giving inaccurate information and using inappropriate words.

Most of these approaches will halt discussion or ensure that it never takes place properly. This means that LGBT young people and young people being homophobically bullied will not receive appropriate information and support.

5.2.1 The effects of language

Hearing about bullying and seeing its effects on young people can be upsetting and it is easy to want to make them feel better. However, when dealing with LGBT issues, care should be taken not to use language intended to be supportive to a young person, which is, in fact, dismissive of their feelings and their emerging identities.

'It might just be a phase you're going through'

Well, maybe – but maybe not; how would you know?

Identifying as LGB or T will not be something that the young person has just dreamed up on the day they tell you – they are likely to have spent some time thinking and worrying about it. Casually suggesting that it might be a passing fancy will diminish its importance to them at a time when it probably feels very important indeed.

However, exploring how long they have thought they might be LGBT is perfectly valid, as is exploring how they are feeling about it at the moment.

'So when did you decide that you were gay?'

When do heterosexual people decide that they are heterosexual?

Our sexual orientations and gender identities are innate parts of who we are. LGBT young people are unlikely to see these as rational decisions that they have made, especially if they are experiencing bullying as a result. Deciding on something implies taking responsibility for it, and no young person is responsible for the bullying which they experience.

Again, however, exploring with a young person how long they have thought they might be LGBT is perfectly valid.

'Don't worry about what they say – we know you're not gay'

Any young person can be homophobic bullied but what if the young person you are speaking to is LGB or T?

Young people can stay silent for years about their sexual orientation or gender identity – this type of comment will ensure that this lasts even longer.

Dealing with homophobic bullying provides the opportunity to be open and non-judgemental about LGBT issues while offering positive messages to young people. This doesn't involve asking a young person whether they are or are not LGB or T but, instead, is about making clear the unacceptability of homophobia and, without question, the acceptability of identifying as LGBT.

'Do you think maybe if you were less obvious about it, it might make things better?'

Is it acceptable to have to hide who you are?

Some young people are out as LGBT at school. Some young people challenge gender roles and gender norms in school – for example, young men wearing 'feminine' clothing. Being openly LGBT or challenging gender norms may well put young people at more risk of bullying and being less 'obvious' may minimise that risk. However, a suggestion like this implies that the bullying is the young person's fault because of acting or dressing or being a particular way.

For any young person, repressing who he or she is in order to stay safe is not sustainable in the long term, is not healthy and is unlikely to encourage a young person to thrive at school. It is the homophobia which needs to change, not the way in which a young person chooses to express him or herself.

If I went to any teachers in school I would always get the same spiel of 'well if you don't want to get bullied change the way you dress, change the way you are' as if it's your fault. Why should I have to change who I am just because people won't accept it? (Female, 16years)

All of the examples provided here are likely to be said with the intention of protecting the young person, making the situation more manageable or making the young person feel better. Sometimes they are said to make ourselves feel better and more in control. However, what is more likely is that the LGBT young person or the young person being bullied will feel different, blamed, at fault, unsupported and misunderstood.

5.2.2 Key messages

- Being comfortable with common terms such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, coming out, gender, homophobia and transphobia is generally enough to get by.
- Although it is good to be prepared with appropriate language, the sky will not fall in if you use a 'wrong' word – it is the meaning, values and messages behind the word which are most important.
- Above all, the fear of using the wrong words shouldn't stop you from speaking to young people about LGBT issues and homophobia.

Supporting young people and challenging homophobia does not require a profound knowledge of sexualities and gender theory. Most important is an understanding of the issues faced by LGBT young people and a basic understanding of respectful and appropriate language with which to address these issues. Language should enable you to tackle homophobia rather than standing in your way.

Also of interest: 7.1 Glossary

5.3 Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying

Young people need to see that there is nothing wrong with it and that it is not right to make fun of people who might be gay. It's horrible to have to go into school every day and worry about whether you are going to be called a 'poof' in the corridor or have people staring at you, it should not be allowed. (Male, 16 years)

There are multiple ways in which homophobia and homophobic bullying can manifest themselves in school, and a range of approaches to challenging them. This section of the toolkit will provide guidance on effectively responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying.

I think teachers would be confident in tackling bullying issues in general – however I'm not sure what a homophobic dimension to that bullying would do to that confidence. (Education authority staff member)

This section of the toolkit is not designed to advise schools on how to respond to bullying incidents – tackling bullying is a core function of schools and a range of guidance already exists on general anti-bullying strategies. However, what it does seek to do is provide guidance on dealing with homophobia and the homophobic dimension of homophobic bullying.

In all of the situations described in this section of the toolkit it is important that it is not only the bullying behaviour that is challenged but that the homophobic motivation is also effectively challenged.

Responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying will be made easier if underpinned by school policies that make clear the procedures for dealing with these issues. This will ensure consistency across the school and will help to build staff confidence.

It is important to note that the greatest effect will be had when homophobia is challenged at a whole school community level in a variety of ways by every member of staff and with the leadership and support of senior management. This section should be used in conjunction with the rest of the toolkit.

Also of interest: 4. Including Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in School Policy

Remembering definitions:

Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/ gender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate him or her.

Homophobia can also be more indirect: homophobic language and jokes around the school can create a climate of homophobia which indirectly excludes, threatens, hurts, or humiliates young people.

5.3.1 General pointers and suggestions

Although every situation will be slightly different there are some overarching points to remember when responding to and challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying. The phrases included here are not intended to be prescriptive but are used instead to illustrate the general point.

Do describe language and behaviour specifically and check if young people understand what they are saying.

'I'm wondering why you are calling something rubbish 'gay'? Do you know what it means to be homophobic?'

Do explain clearly why you are challenging young people if they do not know what they are saying or did not mean anything offensive by their use of homophobic language.

'I understand that you didn't mean anything by it but it's really important that I let you know that it sounds homophobic and could really hurt some of the people who hear it.'

Do make sure that your language is clear and unambiguous. Don't be afraid to name homophobia.

'What you just said there was really homophobic.'

Do always make clear that you are taking the situation seriously.

'That's totally unacceptable and I'm going to take what you've said very seriously.'

Do make the school's position very clear so that you do not look as if you are overreacting in isolation.

'I find what you've said totally unacceptable and so would any other member of staff in this school.'

Do focus on the effects of homophobia.

'When you say cruel homophobic things like that you can really hurt people.'

5.3.2 Dealing with young people experiencing homophobic bullying

Although every situation is different, included here are some general suggestions for dealing with young people experiencing homophobic bullying.

- Do reassure the young person that you will take it seriously and seek their views on what happens next.
- Do not take any action at all without the permission of the young person.
- Do reinforce that bullying is always wrong, that homophobia is always wrong and that it is not their fault.
- Do praise the young person for talking to you.
- Do assure the young person of your support and of their confidentiality, unless you believe that they are at risk of harm.
- Do not suggest that the bullying would not happen if the young person altered some aspect of their dress or behaviour.
- Do be open to discussing the young person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Don't ask the young person if they are LGBT, and do avoid making assumptions about their sexual orientation or gender identity – it is the homophobia and homophobic bullying which needs to be challenged, not the young person.
- Do consider any additional support or information which the young person might require and how you can arrange access to it.

5.3.3 Dealing with young people displaying homophobia and homophobic behaviour

Young people grow up surrounded by negative messages about LGBT young people. If they have never learned that homophobia is wrong and are not aware of its consequences then it can be easy to behave in a homophobic way.

In these situations, it can be useful to take time to discuss the following areas.

- Explore exactly what the young person thinks about LGBT people.
- Explore why the young person feels this way – where do they think this came from? How long have they thought that? What is the justification for that?
- Explore and make clear the consequences of their behaviour. Take an example of a homophobic remark – what effect does that have on the person who hears it? Why should they have to hear this? What gives them the right to make others feel bad?

A minority of young people may steadfastly believe that homophobic behaviour is acceptable and deserved. It is important to make very clear to them that homophobia is unacceptable because it hurts people and creates an unpleasant and unsafe school. Reinforce that every instance of homophobia in the school will continue to be challenged and that homophobic bullying will be dealt with in line with the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

- Parents and carers should be made aware of the school policies and procedures which apply to homophobic bullying. It is important that they understand the potential outcomes if the behaviour continues.

Homophobic attitudes can be firmly embedded and changing these attitudes can take a long time. The most effective way of doing this is not only through reactive individual discussion, but through proactive activities around the school which make clear that homophobia is unacceptable and that LGBT pupils can expect to be welcomed and supported. Examples include inclusion of these issues in policy, opportunities during lessons and anti-homophobia posters for youth groups.

5.3.4 Responding to and challenging different kinds of homophobia and homophobic bullying

5.3.4.1 Casual, generalised and 'humorous' homophobia

Sometimes generalised, casual and humorous homophobic comments are the most pervasive and the most difficult to challenge. If young people do not appear to be directly coming to harm then it is tempting to challenge it inconsistently or without exploring it too deeply.

However, not confronting this type of homophobia implicitly suggests that 'gay' is an acceptable synonym for 'rubbish' and that there is nothing wrong with mocking LGBT people or suggesting that there is something funny, wrong, weird or undesirable about being LGBT. If these assumptions are left unchallenged then the stage is set for other, more potentially serious, expressions of homophobia – and even if these are the only messages which LGBT young people ever hear from their peers, they are negative enough.

1. **During a lesson, you mention a television programme that was on the night before and ask if any of the pupils saw it. One girl says, 'I never watch that, it's well gay'. Others in the class nod their heads and a few of them giggle.**

Implications of responding to and challenging homophobia		Implications of not responding to and challenging homophobia	
Young people	School	Young people	School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people understand that not everyone thinks 'gay' is a synonym for 'rubbish' and that it can be seen as homophobic. • Young people are prompted to think about and discuss their use of language and how it can affect others. • Young people are less likely to say it again. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect reinforced. • Homophobic language is not acceptable in school. • It is made clear that the school values and supports all young people regardless of sexual orientation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people may not realise the potential impact of using this word. • Young people continue using 'gay' as a synonym for 'rubbish'. • Young people think that homophobic language is acceptable and goes without challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect is unclear. • Homophobic language is acceptable in school.

Responses

If young people have never been challenged on their use of homophobic language then it is not enough to simply tell them never to say it again and pointless to come down heavily on them with sanctions before exploring the situation.

Areas to explore with this pupil include these examples.

- Why did she call the programme gay? What did she mean by that?
- Is she aware that people are gay and so calling something 'gay' to mean that it is bad is homophobic?
- Is she aware of the school's position on homophobia?
- Is she aware that what she has said could hurt someone who identifies as gay?

Make clear that you understand that this is a commonly used term which isn't always meant to be offensive but that it is still homophobic and the school therefore finds it unacceptable. Make clear that you will continue to challenge the use of this word.

In these situations it could be useful to open the situation up to the class to allow them to explore the issues and view their opinions.

- What do they think of the language used? Why?
- Does the class need to create ground rules on the types of words that are okay to use? What should these be?

Exploring this may take a few minutes but if it is done consistently and confidently by all members of staff then pupils will begin to understand the school's position on it. Doing this consistently means that pupils will be empowered to speak out about homophobia and homophobic bullying.

2. You are passing a group of boys in the corridor at breaktime. Sunit, who is in your S3 physics class calls out your name and comes over to ask a question about homework. You can see that the others are laughing at him for talking to a teacher about homework during break and you overhear one of them saying in a high pitched voice 'Mrs Elliot, Mrs Elliot! I'm a total gay!' Sunit overhears it as well and starts to laugh.

Implications of responding to and challenging homophobia		Implications of not responding to and challenging homophobia	
Young people	School	Young people	School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people understand that not everyone thinks 'gay' is a synonym for 'rubbish' and that it can be seen as homophobic. • Young people are prompted to think about and discuss their use of language. • Young people are less likely to use homophobic language again. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect reinforced. • Homophobic language is not acceptable in school. • The school values and supports all young people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people may not realise the potential impact of using this word. • Young people continue using 'gay' as a synonym for 'rubbish'. • Young people think that homophobic language is acceptable and goes without challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect is unclear. • Homophobic language is acceptable in school. • It is unclear that the school values and supports all young people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Responses

If young people have never been challenged on their use of homophobic language then it is not enough to simply tell them never to say it again and it is pointless to come down heavily on them before exploring the situation.

This appears to be a joke between a group of friends. Interestingly, it is an example of a homophobic comment which appears to be unrelated to sexual orientation – instead it is related to Sunit caring too much about his work and, at this moment, not being cool enough to fit in with the other boys.

Also of interest: 3.2 Gender, transgender young people and transphobia

After challenging the behaviour in general, you will be able to explore the homophobic element. It is important that they are enabled to explore the issues and give their opinions on it.

- What do they think of that language? Why is the word gay being used as an insult?
- Are they aware that people are gay and so calling something 'gay' to mean that it is bad is homophobic?
- Are they aware of the school's position on homophobia?
- Are they aware that, even though they meant this as a joke amongst friends, it could hurt someone who identifies as gay?

Make clear that you understand that this is a commonly used term and that they were using it as a joke but that it is still homophobic to mockingly accuse someone of being gay and that the school therefore finds it unacceptable. Make clear that you will continue to challenge the use of this word.

Challenges like these, made consistently and confidently by all members of staff, will ensure that pupils begin to understand the school's position on casual and 'humorous' homophobia. Doing this consistently means that pupils will be empowered to speak out about homophobia and homophobic bullying.

5.3.4.2 Homophobic bullying directed at pupils

1. You are leaving work a little later than usual and are walking across the empty playground to the car park when you hear some raised voices and a banging noise from around the corner. When you investigate you see four S2 boys surrounding Fraser, an S1 boy. Fraser is a small, quiet boy with shoulder length hair who goes to chess club and spends most lunchtimes in the music room or the library. They are taking turns to push him against the bins and are shouting 'poof', 'faggot' and 'jessie' at him.

Later, when you speak to Fraser, he is unwilling to say much about it. The S2 boys say that they are genuinely sorry about what they have done and it won't happen again.

Implications of responding to and challenging homophobia		Implications of not responding to and challenging homophobia	
Young people	School	Young people	School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils prompted to think about their use of language. • Pupils using bullying are prompted to fully consider their own attitudes. • Pupils receive positive messages about the unacceptability of homophobia. • Pupils experiencing bullying are more confident of support from the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect is clear. • It is made clear that homophobic language and bullying with homophobic motivation is unacceptable in school. • It is made clear that the school values and supports all young people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By focusing on the bullying alone, all of the pupils involved learn that the homophobic language/intent goes without challenge. • Pupils are not made aware that homophobic language/intent is extremely serious. • Pupils using bullying are not prompted to fully consider their attitudes and behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect is unclear. • Homophobic language and bullying with homophobic motivation is acceptable in school. • It is unclear whether the school values and supports all young people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Responses

This is clearly a serious bullying incident which will have had a significant impact on Fraser. Within the standard framework of handling this incident it is important that homophobic motivation and homophobic language is not glossed over.

With the S2 pupils using bullying it is important to:

- prompt their views on what has happened and enable them to engage in discussion about it
- make clear that part of the reason this incident is being taken so seriously is because homophobic language has been used – this, along with physical assault, is condemned in the school
- explore the use of homophobic insults – why were these terms used? What effect were they meant to have?
- make clear that homophobia is always wrong and always hurtful and that nobody should have to put up with it, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity
- ask whether they are aware of the consequences applicable in cases like these, as stated in the school anti-bullying policy.

Also of interest: 4. Including Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in School Policy

With Fraser it is important to:

- explore his views on what has happened and enable him to discuss it with you
- make very clear that part of the reason this incident is being taken so seriously is because homophobic language has been used – this, along with physical assault, is not acceptable in the school
- make clear to all pupils involved that homophobia is always wrong and always hurtful and nobody should have to put up with it, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Homophobic bullying can happen to anyone and it is nothing to be ashamed of
- not make assumptions about Fraser's sexual orientation/gender identity. Do not explore this when dealing with the incident but make clear that you and other members of staff are available to talk about anything. In this scenario, it is the homophobia and homophobic bullying which needs to be addressed
- in terms of who to tell (for example, parents/carers) consider Fraser's feelings about the incident and what he wants to do about it.

Also of interest: 5.8 Confidentiality and information sharing

Getting to the root of this incident and addressing the homophobia will make it less likely to happen again, will allow pupils to understand how seriously the school treats homophobia and will allow you to deliver some positive messages about anti-homophobia and LGBT people. Doing this consistently means that pupils will be empowered to speak out about homophobia and homophobic bullying.

2. After supported study one day, Lucia, an S4 pupil, hangs behind and asks to speak with you. As soon as everyone else is gone she bursts into tears. She is being picked on by a group of girls in her year who are spreading rumours that she is going out with a girl she is friends with outside of school. They have spread it around the school and for the last week she has been getting messages on her Bebo saying that she is disgusting, calling her 'lezzie' and 'dirty dyke' and threatening to phone and tell her mum about it. Lucia says that she's embarrassed and just wants the girls to talk to her again and stop it.

Implications of responding to and challenging homophobia		Implications of not responding to and challenging homophobia	
Young people	School	Young people	School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil less likely to feel ashamed of what is happening to her. • Pupil experiencing bullying is more confident of support from the school. • Pupil receives positive messages about the unacceptability of homophobia. • Pupil made aware that homophobic language/intent is treated extremely seriously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect is clear. • It is made clear that homophobic language and bullying with homophobic motivation is unacceptable in school. • It is made clear that the school values and supports all young people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil will still feel ashamed of what is happening to her. • Young person is uncertain of whether she can ask for support on LGBT related issues if she wants to. • By focusing on the bullying alone, the pupil learns that the homophobic language/intent is irrelevant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's position on anti-discrimination and respect is unclear. • Homophobic language and bullying with homophobic motivation is acceptable in school. • It is unclear whether the school values and supports all young people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Responses

Lucia is being excluded and victimised both face to face and online. The girls are also threatening to 'out' her to her mum, something which could have severe consequences for Lucia. She is understandably very upset by this and wants it all to go away.

Within the standard framework of beginning to handle this incident it is important that homophobic motivation and homophobic language is not glossed over or made irrelevant.

- Prompt Lucia's view on what has happened and enable her to engage in discussion about it.
- Make very clear to Lucia that part of the reason this incident is being taken so seriously is because it is homophobic bullying – this is unacceptable in the school.
- Make clear that homophobia is always wrong and nobody should have to put up with it, regardless of whether they are LGBT or not. Homophobic bullying can happen to anyone and it is nothing to be ashamed of.
- Do not assume Lucia's sexual orientation. Do not explore this when dealing with the bullying but make clear that you and other members of staff are available to talk about anything. In this scenario though, it is the homophobia and homophobic bullying which needs to be addressed.
- In terms of who to tell (for example, parents/carers) it is important to consider Lucia's feelings about the incident and what she wants to do about it.

Also of interest: 5.8 Confidentiality and information sharing

Getting to the root of this incident and addressing the homophobia will allow pupils to understand how seriously the school treats homophobia and will allow you to deliver some positive messages about anti-homophobia and LGBT people. Doing this consistently means that pupils will be empowered to speak out about homophobia and homophobic bullying.

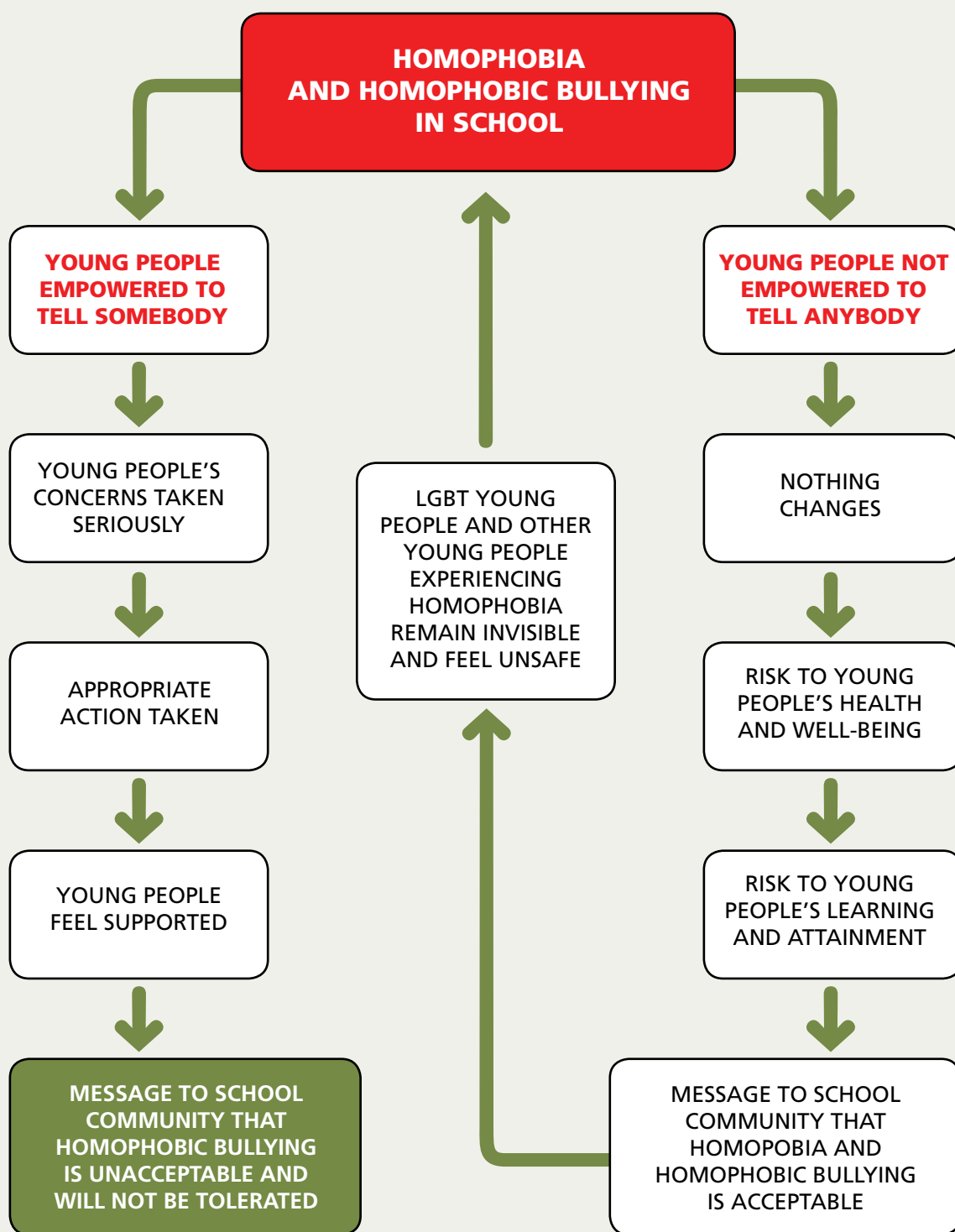


Figure 4: Empowering young people to speak out about homophobia and homophobic bullying

5.4 Challenging homophobia from colleagues

Women and subordinate males such as gay men are often the target for jokes which straddle a fine line between humour and harassment. Light hearted banter of this nature is found to be common in some school staff rooms.¹

Challenging your colleagues is uncomfortable, but so is hearing homophobic comments in the staffroom or around the school.

The following are suggestions of approaches which are unlikely to cause offence but will still make your views known.

- State simply that your colleague's comment has made you feel uncomfortable.
- State that you think that your colleague's comment is homophobic, explaining why. If you don't want to use the word 'homophobic' then substitute 'offensive to LGBT people' or simply words like 'horrible' or 'not nice'.
- Point out to your colleague that anyone in the staffroom could be LGBT or have LGBT family or friends and that they might find what he or she has said to be offensive.
- If your colleague has used an offensive or out-of-date word it could be useful to suggest a more acceptable word.
- Point out that it is futile to challenge pupil's homophobic comments if they are being used in the staffroom.
- Point out that homophobic comments in the staffroom undermine all other anti-homophobia work in the school.

The ideal outcome for any scenario like this is that you do not feel isolated and exposed, that the homophobic comments stop and that your relationship with your colleague is not damaged. As such, honest and simple challenges said in a non-confrontational and friendly way are likely to have the most impact. Focus your challenge on what your colleague has said or done in this instance rather than on your colleague and what he or she is like in general.

If you don't feel able to challenge your colleague but feel that it remains a problem then take the same route which you would use to address any concern either with your line manager or school management team, stating that you would like your complaint to remain anonymous.

• **Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003**

The **Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003** provide protection against discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of sexual orientation in the workplace. This means that school staff do not have to put up with homophobic bullying from colleagues or from pupils. These protections apply to people of all sexual orientations.

5.5 Recording and monitoring homophobic incidents

It is good practice to record all incidents of bullying and the motivation behind the incident. The decision to begin to record and monitor homophobic bullying incidents is a strategic one which involves the whole school and, as such, must be led and implemented by the school management team.

Recording and monitoring incidents of homophobia and homophobic bullying can help schools to:

- identify the extent of homophobic bullying in school
- identify patterns and types of homophobic behaviour
- effectively design anti-homophobia policy, procedures and interventions across the school
- identify whether anti-homophobia interventions are having an effect.

Recording and monitoring should allow schools to understand where they are currently placed in relation to homophobia and homophobic bullying; it should inform the planning and implementation of anti-homophobia work and it should allow the measurement of progress in this area.

It should be remembered that many young people feel unable to disclose homophobic bullying and, as such, the figures recorded will not tell the whole story. However, what is recorded can still provide valuable evidence for work in this area.

Recording and monitoring will not be effective in isolation. Unless it is implemented alongside other anti-homophobia measures – curricular inclusion, whole school discussion and activities – a school will only be able to measure where it is currently placed in relation to homophobia and homophobic bullying without moving on.

5.5.1 What will you record?

This toolkit makes clear that more casual forms of homophobic language – ‘that’s so gay’, ‘you’re so gay’ – can have a serious impact on young people. If the aim is to reduce homophobia in the school then challenging, for example, physical assaults while allowing more casual homophobia to go unnoticed is futile.

As such, all comments and actions which are motivated by homophobia and negative attitudes about LGBT people should be recorded.

- general homophobic comments
- homophobic comments or threats directed towards an individual or a group
- exclusion of pupils on the grounds of homophobia
- homophobic physical or sexual assaults
- stealing or damaging property with homophobic graffiti.

All of these examples can be brought to the school’s attention either through disclosure from pupils or through a member of staff witnessing the incidents.

It is very important that all staff members have a shared understanding of what constitutes a homophobic incident as this will aid consistency in recording.

Although it is not essential, it could also be useful to record the interventions made in these incidents so that staff can reflect together on the effectiveness of different approaches.

5.5.2 How will you record it?

Most schools will already have some means of recording other types of bullying incidents. It shouldn’t be necessary to record homophobic incidents in a different way from the other types of incidents which schools record, for example, racist incidents. Homophobic incidents can be included alongside these others, as incidents of equal importance but with different roots and motivations.

As a standard minimum the following information should be gathered in whichever way is most convenient to each school's current system:

- date
- name of staff member
- names of pupil(s) experiencing bullying and pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour
- brief description of incident including what happened and what was said
- action taken if appropriate.

5.5.3 What will you do with the information gathered?

Recording and monitoring can send the message to pupils that homophobia is taken seriously. It can also provide valuable evidence for work in this area. However, it is not a magic solution and if information is gathered and never used it will become nothing more than a tiresome administrative task.

Information gathered can be used in some of the following ways:

- to inform all forms of anti-homophobia work in the school
- to inform reviews of policy
- to inform staff training on LGBT awareness and homophobic bullying.

In the long term, recording and monitoring can allow the school to see progress made in dealing with homophobia and homophobic bullying and celebrate this progress.

5.6 Supporting LGBT young people

5.6.1 LGBT young people coming out to school staff

You need to focus on LGBT young people not hating themselves. Don't brush things under the carpet as if it doesn't matter. (LGBT young person)ⁱⁱ

The thought of a young person coming out as LGBT to you might seem daunting but there are some key pointers which can make this easier for you and more beneficial for the pupil.

Why are they telling you and what do they need?

It is important to first establish why the pupil has chosen to come out to you and not make assumptions about this. Some common and panicked assumptions to be made might be that they are getting bullied, that they're in danger or that they want to talk to you about sex.

None of these are necessarily the case and it is important not to jump to conclusions – some young people will just want someone to tell and others will want advice on a range of issues or help with bullying. In all cases, the fact that it is about sexual orientation or gender identity does not mean that the issues are alien to you or that you do not know the answers.

It's not like we speak a foreign language. (LGBT young person)

Exploring the young person's disclosure with open questions can help them open up and also allow you to find out what they need from you.

- Make sure you are calm and don't panic – in the majority of cases young people will simply want someone to tell.
- *Thanks for telling me that – I'm wondering what made you decide to tell me?*

When you know why a young person has told you what they have told you and what they hope to get, you will be able to deal with the situation more effectively.

Your attitude and approach

A pupil won't have just decided ten minutes previously to tell you about this – they are likely to have worried about it and imagined a disapproving response from you. It is therefore important to put them at their ease.

- It is important to be open and non-judgemental.
- *Okay, thanks for telling me that. Do you want to tell me a little bit more about what's going on for you?*
- *So how are you feeling about all of this?*
- *So with all of this happening for you, how's school going?*

- It is important to be honest about what you do and do not know in response to questions – if there are questions that you can't answer then promise to get back to him or her with the answer later.
- *Do you know, to be honest I'm not too sure about that – would you like me to find out for you?*

- Remember that you could be the first person he or she has ever told about this and having them confide in you is a huge privilege – praise their courage in talking with you.
- *I'm really glad that you felt able to tell me that. Talking about personal things is sometimes difficult so it's a really brave thing that you've done.*

- If appropriate, reassure them of their confidentiality with reference to the school's child protection guidelines.

Positive messages

It is important that you do not add to any negative feelings that the young person might have by being anything other than positive about him or her being LGBT.

- Reinforce that being LGBT is completely normal and nothing to be ashamed of.
- *You do know that what you're feeling is totally normal? Lots of young people are LGBT.*

High quality information and signposting

Sometimes you might not be the best person to provide support and information so it is important that you have access to this.

- Be equipped to provide relevant and up-to-date information about organisations, websites and resources which provide information and support to LGBT young people.

Also of interest: 7. Further Resources

5.7 Signposting and information

Happy, safe and achieving their potential: a standard of support for children and young people in Scottish schools^{lii}

Standard 2: Provides access to information to help children and young people make informed decisions and choices

Children and young people should make personal choices based on relevant and up-to-date information that communicates effectively and is appropriate to the age of the child. Schools should offer access to information in ways that allow discreet access.

In a recent survey of over 500 young people in the Scottish Borders, 21 per cent of them did not know where they would get help and support if they were LGBT.^{liii}

Be informed about what you can do for a young LGBT person, have information, refer on. (LGBT young person)

Although a young person must be able to seek support from their school, support for a young person can – and often does – come from somewhere entirely different. In these cases, the most useful role for the school is in signposting young people to appropriate information and agencies:

- useful websites or resources highlighted
- LGBT youth groups in the local area
- leaflets and resources in the school library.

Information provision around the school can fulfil the dual role of both signposting young people to other sources of support and increasing the visibility of anti-homophobia and LGBT issues around the school.

5.8 Confidentiality and information sharing

Happy, safe and achieving their potential: a standard of support for children and young people in Scottish schools^{liv}

Standard 9: Respects confidentiality

School staff, children, young people and parents are clear that the majority of concerns can be discussed in confidence with any member of staff, and the school will involve children and young people in giving informed consent to share information with other services where this will help them. The school is also clear what staff will do where there are concerns about risk of harm, while communicating a commitment to support and involve the child or young person when information must be shared.

Staff can often panic initially. They often call a meeting and discuss it openly as a team, informing those who perhaps did not need to know. They call an outside agency in to speak to them without consulting with the young person first. Call parents to let them know based on the assumption that they have the right to know. (Professional)

Confidentiality and information sharing are key concerns for LGBT young people. LGBT young people worry about school staff disclosing information about their sexual orientation or gender identity to other teachers, their peers or parents/carers and taking action which they have not agreed to in response to reported incidents of homophobic bullying, coming out or requests for advice.

First, although it is important to understand these specific confidentiality concerns for LGBT young people, the school's standard policies and procedures around child protection will, of course, still apply whenever a young person appears to be at risk, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In these cases it should be made clear that it is the child protection issue that is leading you to breach confidentiality rather than the young person's sexual orientation or gender identity: identifying as LGBT and coming out as LGBT are not in themselves child protection concerns.

Professionals should see the concerns a young person has, not just their sexuality, as paramount. (LGBT young person)

One thing they had a problem with was confidentiality – if you went to a teacher and said 'look someone is bothering me' they would then go to this person and say 'look so and so said that you've done this to them' and then you'd just cop it 10 times worse. (Male, 18 years)

In cases unrelated to child protection it is important to understand LGBT young people's concerns about confidentiality and to respect this wherever possible. School confidentiality policies which young people are aware of and which take into account these kinds of scenarios can help to guide and support practice in this area and encourage young people to have the confidence to disclose information.

Also of interest: 4. Including Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in School Policy

5.9 Involving parents and carers in anti-homophobia work

This section of the toolkit will address parent and carer involvement in anti-homophobia work in schools.

5.9.1 Informing and involving parents and carers

It is important to consider how the school informs and involves parents and carers when planning anti-homophobia work. Having parents and carers on board and supportive of anti-homophobia initiatives can help to strengthen the messages which young people receive about equality and inclusion.

Engaging in anti-homophobia and LGBT awareness is an opportunity for the whole school community, including parents and carers, to gain an understanding of homophobia and its effects on young people, and to learn how to challenge it – a journey which will ultimately help to make the school community more inclusive and safe for all young people.

Every school will have different methods of informing and engaging with parents and carers. However, some suggestions of ways to do this might be to:

- include information about anti-homophobia initiatives in school newsletters
- explain anti-homophobia initiatives in a letter to parents or carers along with information about how they can become involved
- present anti-homophobia initiatives at parent information evenings
- involve parents and carers in reviewing school policy which includes mention of anti-homophobia and LGBT young people
- encourage pupils to discuss anti-homophobia initiatives with their parents and carers.

Parents and carers cannot support work that they do not know about or which they only hear about at second hand. Anti-homophobia work is necessary, valuable and something to celebrate rather than keep quiet. As such, it is crucial that the school provides clear information about the rationale for this work, forthcoming activities in the school and opportunities to find out more.

5.9.2 Addressing the concerns of parents and carers

While most parents and carers will be welcoming of any programme of work designed to tackle bullying and exclusion it is important to acknowledge the potential for concern from a minority of parents or carers.

Concerns surrounding the discussion of LGBT issues in school may be for a variety of reasons. Inviting parents or carers to discuss these issues can ensure that their concerns are recognised and that the school is able to clearly explain the rationale for the work.

In discussions with parents and carers, some of the following points could be raised:

- Anti-homophobia work is designed to prevent and reduce homophobia and homophobic bullying. Any young person, even the child of the parent/carer concerned, could experience homophobic bullying, and tackling homophobia is therefore beneficial for the whole school.
- Parent/carer concerns may be due to misinformation or presumptions about what you hope to discuss with pupils. It is important to explain clearly that the focus of anti-homophobia work in the school is on anti-bullying, anti-discrimination and respect for all.
- Parents and carers may be unaware of the issues facing LGBT young people and those who experience homophobic bullying – explaining the evidence behind the decision to undertake this work may make a real difference to the way in which parents and carers view it.

In some cases – and probably very rarely – a small minority of parents/carers may not agree with the school's position on these issues and the necessity for this work.^{iv} However, this does not mean that it should not go ahead. Confidence and leadership is crucial in these situations. Schools address these issues because there is evidence that it is necessary and because they have a responsibility to support and safeguard all pupils.

5.9.3 Disclosing information to parents and carers about homophobic incidents

*Homophobic bullying is treated as bullying, so school calls your parents and discloses to them that it is homophobic bullying, so outs you to your parents.
(Male, 15 years)*

When it comes to parents and carers, the importance of handling homophobic incidents sensitively cannot be stressed enough. Many young people may not have discussed their sexual orientation or gender identity with their families, and should not be forced to do so due to the insensitive handling of a bullying incident.

It is important to avoid assumptions about who the young person is out to and who must be informed as the disclosure of LGBT sexual orientation or gender identity during the reporting of a bullying incident is not a green light to share this information. If you are satisfied that there are no child protection concerns then young people can expect the school to respect their confidentiality. Information about a homophobic incident should only be shared with those with whom the young person feels comfortable, and only with their permission. This includes sharing information with a parent or carer, as such a disclosure may cause increased risk to the young person at home.

Also of interest: 5.8 Confidentiality and information sharing

ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS OF PARENTS OR CARERS

It is important to:

- emphasise the importance of positive relationships and partnerships with all parents and carers
- ensure that the concerns of the parents and carers are heard, fully understood and recognised
- explain the reasons behind anti-homophobia work in the school and the potential consequences of not carrying out this work
- clearly explain work happening in the school so that any misconceptions about age-appropriateness or unsuitable content are corrected.

Make clear that the professional duties of the teacher are to:

- promote, support and safeguard the individual development, wellbeing and social competence of pupils
- deal with equality, social justice and inclusion issues
- encourage mutual respect and positive attitudes within the school
- ensure that all young people have access to accurate and up-to-date information and support
- ensure that the school is safe and supportive for all young people
- act in accordance with legislation and education policy that highlights the importance of equality and inclusion work.

Make clear that the school has the responsibility to:

- ensure that all young people are able to participate in education
- ensure that the school is inclusive, does not tolerate bullying and appreciates diversity.

Figure 5: Addressing the concerns of parents and carers

5.10 Young people with LGBT parents or carers

Some pupils come from families in which their parent(s) or carer(s) is/are LGBT. Families with same sex parents can face particular barriers related to visibility and assumptions that children will have been raised with a mother and/or father.

School based support for children of LGBT parents or carers

A recent UK school-based study^{vi} compared pupils raised in families led by female same-sex couples with pupils raised by opposite sex couples. Researchers found that pupils raised by LGBT parents did not differ significantly in terms of victimisation, social support and psychological functioning. However, they were less likely to use school based support. This study recommends that schools be aware of same sex families and provide equally inclusive support and resources for these young people.

- There are a diverse range of families in our society – when discussing different families with pupils, be sure to acknowledge positively the existence of this range, including families with LGBT parents or carers.
- Being part of a same sex family does not automatically mean that young people will be at risk of homophobia and homophobic bullying but it is important for schools to be aware of the potential for this.
- Holistic anti-homophobia work acknowledges the potential for families with LGBT parent(s) in the school and ensures that resources and materials designed for parents are inclusive.



Suggestions of Good Practice

section 6

6.1 Raising awareness of LGBT issues in the school and wider community

Events which celebrate the diversity of the whole school community are effective ways of introducing and raising awareness of LGBT issues alongside other equalities strands. This can demonstrate the school's commitment to equality and inclusion for all young people, while giving the very strong message that homophobia is taken as seriously as, for example, racism or sexism should be in the school.

Some suggestions for hosting such an event.

- Invite representatives from equality and diversity organisations to be present at parents' information evenings. They may be able to give short presentations, or just be available to answer questions and pass on information and resources.
- Invite representatives from equality and diversity organisations to a dedicated diversity event, where tables can be set up giving information about each area and where parents and carers can access support or information according to their interests.
- Invite parents and carers to attend school assemblies at which information and discussion about diversity will take place, perhaps with a different equality strand represented at each one, over a period of days or weeks.

- Host a diversity day in which the whole school community can become involved in a variety of activities to promote learning about LGBT issues alongside other equality and diversity issues.

Grangemouth Academy recently hosted an S1 and S2 Market Place event to which a range of youth and equality focused organisations were invited. Staff from these organisations ran information stalls and spoke with young people.

Grangemouth Academy also ran a prejudice based bullying workshop for S3 pupils where LGBT issues and homophobic bullying were discussed. Staff reported back that they found young people appeared to be encouraged to discuss LGBT matters, both in and out of the classroom.

To celebrate LGBT History Month in February, Wester Hailes Education Centre hosted a week long series of school assemblies focusing on issues of stereotyping, labelling and LGBT people in history.

To take action for International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia 2008, a range of schools across Scotland displayed posters to raise awareness of LGBT human rights across the world.

LOVE IS FOR EVERYONE EVERYWHERE



HUMAN RIGHTS:

LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people are criminalised and their relationships outlawed in over 70 countries around the world, with the death penalty in force in more than 7.

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" - Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

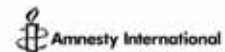
Get active for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights worldwide -

WWW.IDAHOSOTLAND.ORG.UK



17 MAY 2008
INTERNATIONAL DAY
AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA
AND TRANSPHOBIA

The International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) is an international movement of LGBT people and their allies that urges all nations around the world to respect LGBT people's rights and dignity and to act to combat prejudice, discrimination and persecution.



6.2 Equality action groups

Young people from Springhill Primary School in East Renfrewshire took part in an Equality Action Group which looked at anti-bullying in the school and how to include different groups of pupils.

Equality Action Groups can bring different groups of young people together to gather information on all types of bullying, equality and inclusion issues around the school and to share ideas to promote inclusion and combat bullying.

Equality Action Groups can enable young people to take ownership of bullying, equality and inclusion issues. Action led by young people can make these issues current and dynamic for the whole school. Young people can:

- survey and interview their peers about bullying, equality and inclusion issues in the school
- make presentations at school assembly about bullying, equality and inclusion to raise awareness of the issues around the school
- design their own school equalities campaigns
- discuss and suggest anti-bullying and equalities ideas to the school management team.

Ultimately, it is young people who experience bullying and who display bullying behaviour. Although top down challenges to homophobia, homophobic bullying and all types of discrimination will always remain necessary, groups such as these can enable young people to take leadership in challenging bullying and discrimination in the school.

6.3 Restorative practices

Restorative practices (RP) in an educational context are defined as restoring good relationships when there has been conflict or harm and developing school ethos, policies and procedures to reduce the possibility of such conflict or harm arising.^{lvii}

The Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team promotes the use of RP in local authorities and schools through information, training and support.

The underpinning principles of RP emphasise the importance of:

- fostering positive social relationships in a school community of mutual engagement
- taking responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and their impact on others
- respecting other people, their views and feelings
- empathy with the feelings of others affected by one's own actions
- fairness
- commitment to an equitable process
- active involvement of everyone in school with decisions about their own lives
- issues of conflict and difficulty being retained by the participants, rather than the behaviour pathologised
- a willingness to create opportunities for reflective change in pupils and staff.^{lviii}

Restorative practices cover a range of strategies including the following.^{lix}

- Develop a restorative climate in schools with activities such as peer support and circle time.
- Develop restorative conversations when teachers or peer mediators intervene in a situation.
- Develop more formal restorative meetings and conferences involving all those affected by an incident, including families where appropriate.

In relation to homophobic bullying, it may be useful to reflect on the homophobic attitudes when questioning pupils.

1. What happened before the incident?

- Does the person using bullying behaviour hold homophobic views which are supported by someone of influence in their life?
- Does the person using bullying behaviour feel under pressure from their peers to act in a homophobic way in order to 'prove' that they are not LGBT themselves?
- Is there a previous, unresolved and unconnected conflict?
- Has the person experiencing homophobic bullying been aware of a growing homophobic attitude, or is this a 'one-off' incident?

2. What were you thinking?

- What does the person using bullying behaviour really think about LGBT people?
- Does he or she believe that it's acceptable to bully anyone?

3. How were you feeling before the incident?

- Is the person using bullying behaviour because they have homophobic beliefs which make them feel angry or confused or threatened?

4. Who else has been affected by this?

- Have other people in school witnessed incidents of homophobic bullying?
- Could there be a negative impact on other LGBT people in the school community?
- Is the person experiencing homophobic bullying being targeted because of a family member who is LGBT, and is there a negative impact on their family because of this?

5. What needs to happen now so that the damage can be repaired?

- Can both the person who is using bullying behaviour and the person who is being bullied access support to discuss their respective points of view and feelings?
- Can appropriate strategies be put in place to restore and maintain the school as a safe place for all young people?

The Positive Behaviour Team promotes other whole school approaches to improving relationships and behaviour which can usefully be used in mediation or other ways to resolve situations such as solution oriented approaches.

6.4 LGBT Charter of Rights

The LGBT Charter of Rights will provide anyone offering a service in their community – such as health providers, youth agencies, schools and other educational establishments or the police – with a mechanism by which they can meaningfully engage with LGBT young people.

Professor Kathleen A Marshall, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People

The LGBT Charter of Rights is a tool which can help organisations, including schools, to improve their practice and make equality a reality for all young people. The LGBT Charter Mark demonstrates to LGBT young people that they can expect to be included, supported and accepted.

Organisations currently working towards their LGBT Charter Mark include Amnesty International, Children 1st, UNISON, Careers Scotland and a range of colleges, universities and young people's health services across Scotland. Organisations which have been recently awarded their LGBT Charter Mark include Healthy Respect, Stevenson College and Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary Training and Personnel Department.

For more information about the LGBT Charter of Rights in your school, please see www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/charter.

6.5 LGBT History Month

LGBT History Month is held annually in February and is an opportunity to promote equality and inclusion by raising awareness of the histories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Last February saw around 200 events across Scotland including exhibitions, story-telling events, school assemblies and film screenings.

For more information about LGBT History Month, please see www.lgbthistory.org.

6.6 Experiences of schools piloting this resource

The development of this toolkit involved a pilot phase, in which LGBT Youth Scotland staff worked with nine pilot secondary schools to hear their views on the draft toolkit and try out lesson plans and other resources that support the toolkit. The constructive feedback that was received from pilot schools helped to inform the development of this resource.

- Some schools found that the toolkit provided the opportunity and the framework to address issues which had already been identified as important to the school.

The toolkit provides a really good framework for school. It actually names the word homophobia, it puts it there in black and white, and it gives staff and parents the opportunity to see and understand the importance of this particular issue and how it affects young people. (Guidance Teacher, Pilot School)

- The majority of schools found the toolkit easy to use and adaptable; this enabled staff to adapt and use the lesson plans in the most suitable ways.
- Schools reported that the practical guidance on challenging homophobia and homophobic incidents was clear, while the sections on the effects of homophobia provided evidence and clarity on the need for incidents to be challenged.
- Many non-guidance staff benefited particularly from the case studies and quotations from young people, as it was these that brought the issues to life for them. However some, reporting back on draft lesson plan suggestions, highlighted the need for more concrete guidance. This was taken on board and lesson plans were amended accordingly.
- It was pointed out by a number of schools that the cross-curricular lesson plans sent the positive message that addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools is appropriate in a range of places and is the responsibility of every teacher, not just guidance staff. It was also pointed out that the toolkit is clear in how it supports schools' work towards the new *Curriculum for Excellence* framework.

We were working through some of the issues in the toolkit and looking at how we would make our lessons accessible for all of our young people – the third year group that we worked with, it was a very good, very positive experience for us ... what they said to us, and this is something that we now need to look at as a school, was that they were aware young people [in the school] would be coming out into what they considered as pupils to be quite a homophobic environment. (Guidance Teacher, Pilot School)

- Overall, schools felt that the materials were pitched at the right level and should, in the long term, help increase confidence to challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying in their schools.

Using the toolkit has made young people aware that staff take homophobic bullying seriously and that they are available and willing to talk to young people about it. It gives the message that homophobic attitudes and behaviour have no place in the school. (Guidance Teacher, Pilot School)





Further Resources

section 7

Also available as part of *Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools* is a range of lesson plan suggestions and guidance on addressing anti-homophobia and LGBT issues with young people.

These are available here:

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/homophobicbullyingtoolkit>

7.1 Glossary of Terms

biphobia

Biphobia is the dislike, fear or hatred of bisexual people.

bisexual

A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to women and men.

coming out

Acknowledging to yourself or to others that you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

This phrase describes lesbian, gay and bisexual people's experience of disclosing their sexual orientation and also describes transgender people's experiences of disclosing their gender identity or transgender status.

The coming out process is ongoing rather than a one-off event.

gay

A male who is emotionally and physically attracted to other males. Some girls and women prefer to refer to themselves as gay women rather than lesbian.

gender

The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (World Health Organisation).

gender identity

A person's internal self-perception of their own gender.

gender stereotyping

This refers to the limited gender roles and expectations which are demanded of people because of their sex. Gender stereotyping creates and reinforces ideas about what men and women are like and what they should do.

heterosexism

The assumption that people are heterosexual. It is these assumptions that put LGB people in the unique position of having to come out and challenge assumptions.

heterosexual

A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to people of the opposite sex. Also commonly referred to as straight.

homophobia

The dislike, fear or hatred of lesbian, gay and/or bisexual people.

homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/gender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate him or her.

It can also be more indirect: homophobic language and jokes around the school can create a climate of homophobia which indirectly excludes, threatens, hurts, or humiliates young people.

homosexual

A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to people of the same sex. Nowadays this term is rarely used by lesbians, gay men or bisexuals to define themselves as, historically, it has been used to medicalise or criminalise LGB people. The terms lesbian, gay and bisexual are generally preferable.

internalised homophobia

Negative feelings about being gay, lesbian or bisexual. This can negatively affect the way people see themselves.

lesbian

A female who is emotionally and physically attracted to other females.

LGBT

Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. An umbrella term commonly in use in Scotland.

out

Being open about one's sexual orientation or transgender identity.

outing

Having someone else tell other people about your sexual orientation or transgender identity, usually against your will.

Pride

Annual festival to celebrate being lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

sex

A person's biological sex includes not only their genitals but also their internal reproductive system, their chromosomes and their secondary sexual characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, voice, and body shape.

sexual orientation

A term used to describe a person based on who they are emotionally and physically attracted to. For example, a person who is attracted to the opposite sex might describe their sexual orientation as straight.

sexuality

Everybody has a sexuality – this is a term which describes the ways in which people experience themselves as sexual beings and the ways in which they express this. It includes a person's sexual orientation, sexual practice and behaviour. It also involves cultural and social expectations and behaviours.

straight

A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to people of the opposite gender.
See heterosexual.

transgender

This is an umbrella term used to describe a range of people whose gender identity or gender expression differs in some way from the assumptions made about them when they were born.

Under the transgender umbrella are transsexual men and women, intersex people, androgyne/polygender people and cross dressers. For more information, a good resource to access is 'Gender Identity: Introductory Guide for Supporting Transgender People' (Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2007).

transphobia

Transphobia is the dislike, fear or hatred of transgender people.

7.2 Further resources

7.2.1 Resource packs

Gender Identity: Introductory Guide for Supporting Transgender People (2007)

Introductory guide to transgender issues. Produced by the Scottish Transgender Alliance.

http://www.scottishtrans.org/Uploads/Resources/sta_gender_identity_introduutory_guide.pdf

Channel 4 Learning – Programmes accompanied by learning activities

Gay to Z explores a range of LGB young people's lives and is designed to challenge assumptions and provoke discussion amongst pupils. The series supports learning activities that aim to help young people think about LGB people and the issues they might face.

<http://www.channel4learning.com/support/programmenotes/micro/gaytoz/index.html>

Batty Man Comedian and actor Stephen K Amos uses his own experiences as a black gay man to explore why homophobia still exists in his own community.

<http://www.channel4learning.com/support/programmenotes/micro/battyman/index.html>

Sexual Bullying: Name It and Shame It

This pack contains a DVD and supporting materials which address sexual bullying. It was produced by young people in West Dunbartonshire.

Contact wddap@west-dunbarton.gov.uk for information and a copy of the pack.

Gender Equality: A Toolkit for Education Staff (2007)

Under the Equality Act and the Gender Equality Duty which arises from it, schools are required to show that they are eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment and promoting equality between women and men. This toolkit is designed to help education staff to reflect on and develop that process throughout all aspects of their work in schools.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/08/30161011/0>

Addressing LGBT Issues with Young People (2006)

Resources developed by Healthy Respect and LGBT Youth Scotland to support teachers, youth workers and others in addressing LGBT with young people and providing curricular ideas for educational sessions on LGBT issues.

<http://www.healthyrespect.co.uk/downloads-and-campaigns/resources-for-professionals.htm>

Amnesty International Education Activities (2006)

These materials were developed for LGBT History Month in 2006 and are aimed at pupils aged 14+ (KS4 in England). They focus on human rights, diversity, intolerance, and in particular the human rights of sexual minorities. Through role-play, research and case studies, students are invited to examine the use of language, the nature of prejudice and how it can be challenged in the UK and around the world.

<http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/documents/LGBTHistoryMonth2.pdf>

7.2.2 Newspaper articles

These articles can be used both for your own information and as discussion points in LGBT issues and anti-homophobia work with young people.

Homophobia and homophobic crimes

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/aug/11/ukcrime.gayrights>
Liverpool's gay community pays tribute to killed teenager

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/7443323.stm
New criticism over MP's gay views

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/jul/22/northernireland.gayrights>
MP backtracks on gay comment

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/aug/03/gayrights.northernireland>
Pride marchers mock anti-gay MP

Transgender young people

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/aug/14/children.youngpeople>
Should children and teenagers who believe they are transgender be forced to change sex?

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2003/aug/20/health.genderissues>
Boys will be girls – the rise of gender identity disorder

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2008/may/29/healthandwellbeing.familyandrelationships>
Problem page: 'My teenage son wants a sex change' with reader opinions that differ widely

Religion

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7470297.stm>
Anglican rift: conservative versus liberal

Music, literature and world wide web

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/aug/08/popandrock.gayrights>
Chart-topping lesbian love song divides gay community

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/celebritynews/2521251/Katy-Perrys-song-about-lesbian-kiss-sparks-homophobia-claims.html>
Katy Perry's song about lesbian kiss sparks homophobia claims

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/oct/23/dumbledoretumblesout>
News from JK Rowling that Dumbledore is gay

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-490261/JK-Rowling-US-Bible-belt-outing-Dumbledore-gay.html>
JK Rowling under fire from US Bible belt after outing Dumbledore as gay

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-488718/JK-Rowling-outs-leading-Harry-Potter-character-gay.html>
News from JK Rowling that Dumbledore is gay

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/07/gayrights.internet>
Facebook's problems with civil partnerships

Football

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/matthew_parris/article683565.ece
'For a footballer to wear a sarong and pink nail varnish took courage'

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2007/apr/15/sport.comment2>
Will a gay footballer ever come out of the comfort zone?

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/football/premier_league/article2419068.ece
Graeme Le Saux – how gay slurs almost wrecked my career

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/football/article871135.ece>
'Is it time to open the closet?'

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1016353/A-gay-job-footballer-says-disgraced-Italian-football-executive-bizarre-TV-rant.html>
'A gay cannot do the job of a footballer'

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/columnists/simon_barnes/article662923.ece
'Football is destined to remain the last bastion of homophobia'

Language

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article836556.ece>
Use of LGBT rather than homosexual

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/article2028708.ece
Language as bullying not banter in schools

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7289390.stm>
How 'gay' became children's insult of choice

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/mar/12/gaywatch2>
Does common use of the word 'gay' to mean 'crap' make it OK?

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/01/gayrights.youngpeople>
Young people discuss their use of the word gay

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jun/07/bbc.gayrights>
Chris Moyles using the word 'gay' live on air

Primary schools

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/dec/07/schools.uk>
Homophobia in primary schools

Miscellaneous

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/gayrights>
Collated stories from the *Guardian* on a range of LGBT issues

<http://www.headliners.org/storylibrary/stories/2000/whywearegladtolearnallaboutbeinggay.htm?id=442172409071843275>
Young people's opinions about Section 28 (before it was abolished)

7.3 Contact us

LGBT Youth Scotland works across Scotland with bases or activities in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Fife and Dundee.

LGBT Youth Scotland

Centrum Offices
38 Queen Street
Glasgow
G1 3DX

Web: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk
Email: info@lgbtyouth.org.uk

7.4 Other useful contacts

Respectme, Scotland's Anti Bullying Service

<http://www.respectme.org.uk>

ChildLine – 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Stonewall Scotland
Equality Network
Scottish Transgender Alliance
Parents Enquiry
Queer Youth Network

www.stonewallscotland.org.uk
www.equality-network.org.uk
www.scottishtrans.org
www.parentsenquiryscotland.org
www.queeryouth.org





Notes

section 8

i **Homophobia and Homophobic Incidents Research**

LGBT Youth Scotland, *Promoting Equal Opportunities in Education Project 2: Guidance on Dealing with Homophobic Incidents*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2006.

Full research report <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/05/25091604/0>
Executive Summary <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/05/25091643/0>

Survey and interview research with teachers, education authority staff and LGBT young people. The areas explored included policy, practice, inclusion in the curriculum and confidence in dealing with homophobia and homophobic incidents. Research recommendations led to the development of this toolkit.

ii **LGBT Youth Scotland**

LGBT Youth Scotland is the national youth organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people. We offer a range of services across Scotland for young people aged between 13 and 25, their families and the professionals who work with young people. Our vision is that LGBT young people will enjoy a safe and supportive upbringing, will grow up happy and healthy and will reach their full potential.

Our youth work staff provide a range of services and opportunities for LGBT young people, including youth groups, internet outreach, advice and referrals, volunteering and participation opportunities. LGBT Youth Scotland supports the network of LGBT young people and groups around Scotland and their representatives, the National LGBT Youth Council and our elected Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament who represent LGBT young people across Scotland in the parliament.

LGBT Youth Scotland's engagement with LGBT young people informs our policy, research and practice development work. LGBT Youth Scotland works to challenge homophobia and transphobia in Scotland and improve the practice of those working with LGBT young people. Our research, policy and training functions ensure that the voices, priorities and needs of LGBT young people are heard by policymakers and practitioners working with young people. A great deal of LGBT Youth Scotland's work is focused on LGBT inclusion in schools and in education and we are a managing partner in *Respectme*, Scotland's Anti Bullying Service.

Web: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk

Email: info@lgbtyouth.org.uk

- iii Scottish Government, *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 – A Framework for Learning and Teaching*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2008.
- iv All quotations throughout the toolkit are from young people, both LGBT and non-LGBT. These are taken from three pieces of research cited in these references: 1. the research on which this toolkit is based; 2. research by LGBT Youth Scotland into general attitudes towards LGBT young people from their peers in the Scottish Borders; and 3. a report written on behalf of LGBT Youth Scotland by the TASC Agency, which looked at child protection and LGBT young people.
- v Scottish Government, *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 – A Framework for Learning and Teaching*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2008.
- vi 'The purpose of the curriculum is to help children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors ('the four capacities').' Scottish Government, *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 – A Framework for Learning and Teaching*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2008, p11.
- vii This piece of legislation is also known as 'Section 28' because it was introduced to the 1986 Act by Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988. Section 2A was repealed by Section 34 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000. Section 2A prohibited the 'promotion of homosexuality' by local authorities, leading to a lack of clarity as to how far teachers were legally able to raise issues affecting LGBT people, including homophobia and homophobic bullying. In fact, Section 2A never applied to teachers and the legal establishment and others struggled to make sense of the notion that it is possible to 'promote homosexuality', or any other sexual orientation.
- viii Scottish Executive, *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential - a standard of support for children and young people in Scottish schools*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2005.
- ix Scottish Government, *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 – A Framework for Learning and Teaching*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2008.
- x The six strands established in UK discrimination law are age, disability (including mental health and HIV status), gender (including transgender identity), race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. It is worth noting that the Scotland Act 1998, which places an obligation on all Scottish public authorities to perform their functions in a manner that encourages equal opportunities also includes reference to language and social origin, and political opinion (Schedule 5, Part 2, L2 Scotland Act 1998).

- xi HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), *How Good Is Our School?: The Journey to Excellence, Part 3*, 2007, p32.
- xii General Teaching Council for Scotland, *The Standard for Full Registration*, 2006, p15, Standard 3.1.
- xiii General Teaching Council for Scotland, *Code of Professionalism and Conduct*, 2008, p14, 2.1.
- xiv Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 (SI2007/1263); Regulation 7 explicitly applies to Scottish schools and education authorities. All UK and Scottish legislation is available online: www.hmso.gov.uk.
- xv Scottish Executive, *Guidance to Education Authorities and Schools on the Equality Act 2006*, 14 August 2007, p16. Available online: www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/194783/00523_19.pdf.
- xvi Scottish Executive, *Guidance to Education Authorities and Schools on the Equality Act 2006*, 14 August 2007. Available online: www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/194783/00523_19.pdf
- xvii UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by State Parties under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, 2008, Forty-ninth session.
- xviii Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.
- xix The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.
- xx Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999.
- xxi Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations 2008.
- xxii The information below illustrates the attitudes described at section 21.2.
- Around 30% of people in Scotland believe that same sex relationships are always or mostly always wrong.
 - Fifty one per cent of people believe that bed and breakfast owners should probably or definitely be allowed to refuse a booking from a gay or lesbian couple.
 - Thirty per cent of people in Scotland feel that someone who has had a 'sex change operation' would be fairly or very unsuitable to be a primary school teacher.
(Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006)
- xxiii Bromley, C and Curtice, J, *Attitudes to Discrimination in Scotland 2006*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007.
- xxiv Buston, K and Hart, G, 'Heterosexism and Homophobia in Scottish School Sex Education: Exploring the Nature of the Problem', *Journal of Adolescence*, 2001, 24, pp95–109.
- xxv Lusher, T, 'Straight talk?', *The Guardian*, Wednesday 7 June 2006.
- xxvi Hunt, R and Jensen, J, *The School Report*, London: Stonewall, 2008.
- xxvii LGBT Stakeholdervoice 2007. Available online: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk.
- xxviii Valentine, G, Skelton, T and Butler, R, 'Coming out and Outcomes: Negotiating Lesbian and Gay Identities with, and in, the Family', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2003, 21, pp479–99.

- xxix LGBT Youth Scotland and Gay Men's Health, *Live to Tell: Findings from a Study of Suicidal Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours amongst Young Gay and Bisexual Men in Edinburgh*, Edinburgh: LGBT Youth Scotland and Gay Men's Health, 2003.
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- xxxiii Pinkerton, J and Dolan, P, 'Family Support, Social Capital, Resilience and Adolescent Coping', *Child and Family Social Work*, 2007, 12, pp219–28.
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- xxxv Carolan, F and Redmond, S, *Shout: The Needs of Young People who Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender*, Youthnet Northern Ireland, 2003.
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- xxxvii Batchelor, SA, Kitzinger, J and Burtney, E, 'Representing young people's sexuality in the "youth" media', *Health and Education Research*, 2004, 19(6), pp669–76.
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- xiii James, D, 'Will a Gay Footballer ever Come out of the Comfort Zone?', *The Observer*, Sunday 15 April 2007.
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- xlv The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.
- xlvi Article 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Available online: <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>.
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- xlviii HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), *How Good Is Our School: The Journey to Excellence Part 3*, 2007, p36.
- xliv HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), *How Good Is Our School: The Journey to Excellence*, 2007. Quality Indicator 6.1 – Policy Review and Development, Level 5 illustration.
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- li TASC Agency on behalf of LGBT Youth Scotland, *Our Journey: A Report on a Project Exploring the Interface between Service Responses to the Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Young People and Child Protection Policy and Practice*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2008.
- lii Scottish Executive, *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential – a standard of support for children and young people in Scottish schools*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2005
- liii LGBT Youth Scotland, *Attitudes towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Young People: Results of Research with Young People in the Scottish Borders*, Edinburgh: LGBT Youth Scotland, 2007.
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- lv Protocol 1, article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950 (Right to Education) recognises both the child or young person's right to participate in education and the parents' right to have their child educated in accordance with their religious or philosophical convictions. Convention case law would suggest that where these two rights are in conflict, the young person's right may outweigh the parent's right where the child or young person is judged to be capable of understanding and appreciating the meaning and the consequences of their decision.
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Appendix

Education Policy

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence has been described as ‘the biggest change in Scottish education for a generation’. It is unequivocal in its focus on the inherent value of and personal support for each individual pupil by every member of the schools community; indeed it states that this is the condition for every child and young person to benefit from all the other major changes that *Curriculum for Excellence* will bring about, with the four capacities at the centre.

A good education that actively supports all children and young people to achieve the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence* is the foundation for:

- a skilled and economically successful society
- healthy and confident and achieving citizens
- a fairer and more humane society, where people respect themselves and each other
- a vibrant population that continually innovates and develops.

The Curriculum Review Group says: ‘One of the prime purposes of education is to make our young people aware of the values on which Scottish society is based and so help them to establish their own stances on matters of social justice and personal and collective responsibility. Young people therefore need to learn about and develop these values. The curriculum is an important means through which this personal development should be encouraged.’ The term ‘curriculum’ is used in this broadest sense, encompassing ‘the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated’.

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/>

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act, etc. 2000

The Act recognises that children and young people have the right to receive an education and should be seen as partners in the school. It places a duty on education authorities to provide a school education which develops the personality, talent and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to his or her fullest potential.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2000/pdf/asp_20000006_en.pdf

Health Promoting Schools – Being Well, Doing Well 2004

This document, which underpins the Health Promoting Schools Initiative, makes clear the links between health and learning for pupils. It makes clear that health is not only about physical wellbeing but is about health in its widest sense, including social, spiritual, emotional and mental health.

‘To achieve their potential, schoolchildren must participate fully in educational activities. To do this they must be healthy, attentive and emotionally secure’. (World Health Organisation, 2000).

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/healthpromotingschools/>
http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/Beingwelldoingwell_tcm4-121991.pdf

Professional Standards and Practice

HM Inspectorate of Education: How Good Is Our School: The Journey to Excellence Part 3 (2007)

Dimension 9: Promotes wellbeing and respect

Promoting positive relationships within a learning, caring and inclusive school community

A school is excellent to the extent that: 'Staff and parents have a very good understanding of policies on equality and equal access to the curriculum. The curriculum and culture promote a positive appreciation of equality, social justice and diversity in society. Incidents of inequality, racism, sectarianism, bullying and discrimination are dealt with openly, promptly and consistently. Young people have frequent opportunities to reflect on and to discuss their rights and responsibilities and to demonstrate concern for and acceptance of others. Young people and staff respect differences and value diversity. Older pupils willingly act as role models.'

Providing the whole school community with positive experiences that promote and protect their health

A school is excellent to the extent that: 'Children and young people have access to up-to-date, accurate and relevant resources for personal and social development and health education'.

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgiosjte.html>

Quality Indicator 5.6 Equality and Fairness – Level 5 Illustration: 'All of our learners and their parents are *welcomed* in our school... We stress the importance of putting values into action. Staff and pupils are expected to demonstrate *personal responsibility, compassion and support* for others, and actively *promote fairness and justice* in their interactions with each other. We actively promote equality of opportunity and access in our work. *We recognise, value and promote diversity* in our school and its community whilst stressing what is shared in our values and experience. *We discuss equality issues openly and constructively. Our learners feel confident in recognising and addressing discrimination...* *We welcome and celebrate diversity.* Learners, parents, and staff are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. In our school, *culture and language, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and additional support needs do not become barriers to participation and achievement.*'

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgiosjte3.pdf>

Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential: a standard of support for children and young people in Scottish schools (2005)

Standard 2: Schools provide access to information to help children and young people make informed decisions and choices

Children and young people should make personal choices based on relevant and up to date information that communicates effectively and is appropriate to the age of the child. Schools should offer access to information in ways that allow discreet access to it.

Standard 9: Staff respect confidentiality

School staff, children, young people and parents are clear that the majority of concerns can be discussed in confidence with any member of staff, and the school will involve children and young people in giving informed consent to share information with other services where this will help them. The school is also clear what staff will do where there are concerns about risk of harm, while communicating a commitment to support and involve the child or young person when information must be shared.

Standard 10: Schools ensure time and space to seek help

The school involves children and young people in deciding the most appropriate opportunities and locations to access information and staff who will support them. Schools provide space in the school week to allow children and young people to build relationships with staff, reflect on their personal, social and emotional wellbeing and develop their knowledge of information and support available to them.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/36496/0023588.pdf>

General Teaching Council for Scotland: The Standard for Full Registration (December 2006)

Standard 3.1: Registered teachers show in their day-to-day practice a commitment to social justice, inclusion and caring for and protecting children. 'Registered teachers value and soundly promote fairness and justice and adopt anti-discriminatory practices in all regards, including gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, age, religion, culture and socio-economic background.'

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=1765&SID=2231>

General Teaching Council for Scotland: Code of Professionalism and Conduct (2008)

'As a registered teacher:

2.1 you must treat pupils equally, fairly and with respect, in line with the law and without discrimination

2.2 you must treat sensitive, personal information about pupils with respect and confidentiality and not disclose it unless required to do so by your employer or by law.'

'As a teacher, your dealings with learners must not be prejudiced by views about their lifestyle, culture, disability, beliefs, colour, gender, language, sexuality or age. You should identify and respond appropriately to indicators of pupils' wellbeing and welfare including bullying and discrimination, ensuring that pupils' initiative and independent learning are encouraged and nurtured.'

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=3386&SID=4912>

Human Rights and Equality

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

These regulations (made under and therefore part of the Equality Act 2006), in force from 30 April 2007, make discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation unlawful in a number of areas, including education in schools, and provide individuals with the right to seek damages and redress through the courts if they believe they have been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation (bisexual, gay, heterosexual or lesbian).

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/pdf/uksi_20071263_en.pdf

Guidance for schools from the Scottish Government states that: '*...schools will need to make sure that gay or lesbian pupils, or the children of gay or lesbian parents, do not receive different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. They should check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such pupils. They will need to ensure that homophobic bullying is taken as seriously and dealt with as firmly as bullying on any other ground.*'

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/194783/0052319.pdf>

European Convention on Human Rights (1950) and the Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 makes crucial rights and freedoms enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) directly enforceable through the UK courts. The Act also requires public authorities to exercise all their functions in a manner that is compliant with Convention rights, which include amongst other, the following rights:

- *Protocol 1, article 2: Right to education* – this includes the child or young person's right to education as well as parents/carers' right to have their child educated in line with their religious or philosophical convictions.
- *Article 3: Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment* – article 3 case law has created a positive obligation on the state to protect people from third parties inflicting severe maltreatment on others (*A v UK* [1998]).
- *Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life* – article 8 case law has firmly put matters of sexual orientation and gender identity and discrimination on those grounds within the scope of the ECHR.
- *Article 9: Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion* – this affirms the absolute right to freedom of thought and conscience, and a qualified right to manifest one's religion or belief as long as this does not limit the rights of others.
- *Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination* – requires the state to guarantee equal enjoyment of the rights granted by the Convention to all people, without discrimination.

<http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Basic+Texts/Basic+Texts/The+European+Convention+on+Human+Rights+and+its+Protocols/>

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people, aged 17 and under, a comprehensive set of rights that are to be upheld and promoted by state parties (which include the UK). Relevant articles in this context might be:

- Article 13 - Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.
- Articles 28 and 29 - All children and young people have a right to an education, and they should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of. Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full.

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

Also available as part of **Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools** is a range of lesson plan suggestions and guidance on addressing anti-homophobia and LGBT issues with young people.

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/homophobicbullyingtoolkit>





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