

LGBT inclusion: what Primary School Governors should know

Celebrating difference at your school

Why does it matter?

All school governors have a responsibility to [protect the health and wellbeing of children at their school](#). For children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT), feeling included is a crucial part of wellbeing.

45% of LGBT young people have experienced bullying because they are LGBT, and 33% of trans pupils don't feel safe at school ([Stonewall School Report 2017](#)). Pupils who are bullied in this way are more likely to experience poor mental health outcomes, more likely to skip school and less likely to attend the next educational phase. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying can affect pupils who aren't LGBT – research shows that pupils who don't conform to gender stereotypes (for example, boys who don't like sports or girls with short hair) are also at risk of experiencing this type of bullying ([Stonewall Teachers' Report 2014](#)).

In schools where equality is a whole-school value, LGBT pupils and those with LGBT family members can flourish: LGBT pupils experience lower rates of bullying and feel more confident to ask for help from teachers and school leaders. When difference is celebrated, all young people are able to thrive as their unique selves. LGBT inclusion is an essential part of meeting your legal and statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010 – but it's also a core strand of a child-centred approach that helps every child grow up happy, healthy and safe.

Legal and statutory responsibilities

Governors are responsible for ensuring schools meet their public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010. The public sector Equality Duty requires all state-funded schools, colleges and settings in England, Scotland and Wales to:

- **Eliminate discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic, including discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment**
- **Advance equality of opportunity**
- **Foster good relations between different groups of pupils who share protected characteristics**

While there is no legal requirement for private schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, Ofsted will inspect a school's efforts to meet the expectations of the duty (including in their inspections of private schools).

Key questions to ask your school's leadership team

- What training or support have staff received to develop their knowledge and confidence in supporting lesbian, gay, bi and trans children and young people?
- How do we prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying?

- How prevalent is HBT bullying at our school and is this reflected clearly in our Headteacher's leadership report?
- How do we ensure that LGBT children and young people have opportunities to learn about LGBT role models and hear positive stories about LGBT people?
- What steps are we taking to ensure LGBT families are represented during Relationships Education? (Although it is not a statutory requirement for primary RSHE to include LGBT content, the Department for Education say in [their FAQs for schools](#) that 'primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled' to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families in Relationships Education. Stonewall's Different Families resources are recommended in Annex B to the statutory guidance).

Why now?

In the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, school life looks very different to how it did just a few months ago. While this is tough for all pupils, the most vulnerable children (including LGBT children) may struggle harder to cope with increased stress and frequent change. LGBT children and their families need your help more than ever: schools can protect pupil wellbeing by creating a sense of safety and belonging for all children. This can look like taking steps to reduce rates of HBT bullying at your school (including online bullying), supporting the development of a Relationships and Health Education curriculum that celebrates LGBT families, or even giving children a chance to celebrate difference through a whole-school art project that can be done from home. When your whole school works together to develop a consistent approach to celebrating difference, pupils and staff can support one another, sharing responsibility and building community.

Why Stonewall?

Over the last 30 years, [Stonewall](#) has worked to ensure acceptance without exception for all LGBT people. Our expert Education & Youth team bring their years of experience as teachers, trainers and education professionals to supporting schools and colleges. We help thousands of teachers, school leaders and support staff develop approaches to LGBT inclusion that fit your context and meet your pupils' needs. We've produced [sector-leading research on LGBT children and young people](#), developed dozens of [lesson resources](#) and [widely-used best practice guides](#), and some of our work with primary schools and faith schools has been funded by the Department for Education and the Government Equalities Office. Supporting LGBT children and young people to thrive as their unique selves is at the heart of everything we do.

How we can help

We offer quality affordable [e-learning at just £35 + VAT](#) – complete a course in just 3 hours, or dip in and out and fit your training around your busy schedule. Need something tailored? [MATs can book bespoke webinars](#) and all schools, colleges, and children and young people's services can book [1-1 consultancy](#).

Our [School & College Champion members](#) lead the way in LGBT inclusion. Members benefit from poster and sticker packs, exclusive resources and free entry into our [School & College Champion Awards](#) – there's no better way to benchmark your school's work and access detailed individual feedback on your strengths and challenges as an

inclusive school. [Browse our free resources](#), [book an e-learning](#) course or chat to our friendly team of experts today – you'll find us at education@stonewall.org.uk