

LGBTQIA+

Overview description

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, or asexual (LGBTQIA+) is a term used to describe the diverse range of sexualities and gender identities which individuals occupy. Whilst LGB refers to a person's sexual orientation, Transgender is used as an umbrella term and relates to those individuals whose gender does not match their sex defined at birth. Transgender encompasses the spectrum of diverse gender identities, both within the male/female binary and all non-binary diverse gender identities. Transgender individuals may have a fixed gender identity or gender expression or they may identify their gender as fluid.

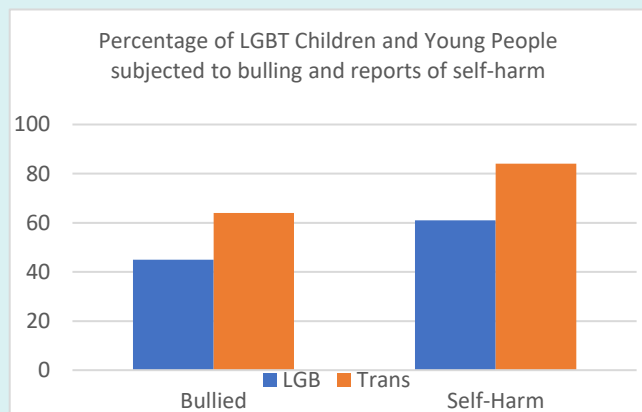
LGBTQIA+ Community

The educational experiences and outcomes of LGBTQIA+ children and young people can often be lower than that of their straight or cisgender (where an individual's gender matches that of their sex defined at birth) counterparts. Lower academic outcomes and lower self-esteem of LGBTQIA+ pupils have been linked to high levels of intolerance, prejudice and hostile school/college environments towards LGBTQIA+ young people (Kosciw, Palmer, Kull & Greytak, 2012)

Increased levels of negative outcomes for LGBTQIA+ children and young people are reported in UK schools including nearly half of all LGB (45 per cent) pupils and 64 per cent of trans pupils report being bullied due to being LGBT at school (Bradlow, Bartram, Guasp & Jadva, 2017). According to Stonewall's most recent school survey, there is a decreasing trend in the numbers of homophobic and transphobic bullying including the use of negative language towards LGBT pupils. However, there remains an alarmingly high rate of mental health concerns related to the negative experiences felt by LGBT pupils in school, including 84 per cent of trans young people and 61 per cent of LGB pupils reporting self-harm due to negative experiences relating to their sexuality or gender (Bradlow et al., 2017).

Research has shown that one major barrier to the positive outcomes for these young people in education

settings is the hetero- and cisnormative practices (practices which favour heterosexual and cisgender individuals) faced by young people (McBride, 2021). Structural inequalities found to be present within schooling systems include, not tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying, not promoting the equal rights and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ identities, a lack of LGBTQIA+ awareness in the curriculum and widespread use of non-inclusive language.



LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Education Curriculum

In 2019, the UK government announced that from September 2020 UK schools are required to teach an **LGBT inclusive education curriculum** with focus on relationship and sex education (RSE). The new government guidance states that:

For secondary schools:

- RSE must be taught in all schools in England
- Sexual orientation and gender identity must be explored at a timely point
- Same-sex relationships should be included within lessons discussing healthy and stable relationships
- Schools should 'be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes' and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated

For primary schools:

- Relationships Education must be taught in all schools in England
- It is recommended that schools teach Sex Education too, although they can choose not to
- All schools should teach about different families (which can include LGBT parents), along with families headed by grandparents, single parents, adoptive parents, and foster parents/carers, among other family structures

Overall the guidance states that:

- Schools need to make sure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met
- All pupils need to understand the importance of equality and respect

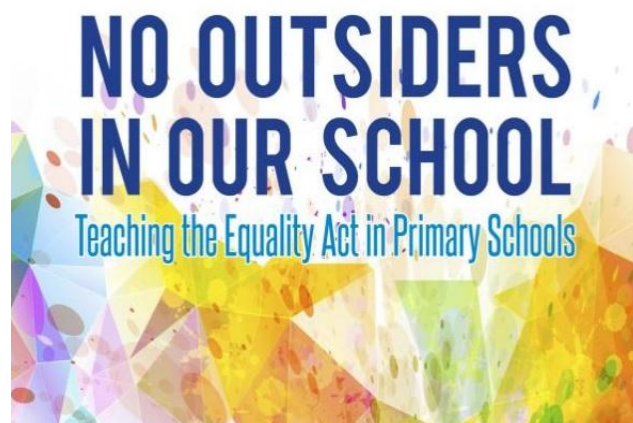
Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, which name sexual orientation and gender reassignment as protected characteristics

The DfE has also published a draft consultation guidance document for schools which is important to read: **Gender Questioning Children Non-statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England (Dec 2023)**. This document is a response to the Cass Review recommendations.

Evidence-base

Research into the positive impact of education-based support for the inclusion and improved outcomes for LGBTQIA+ young people highlights the key role played by factors including safe and inclusive school policies and supportive school/college personnel (Kosciw et al., 2012). In addition, the effectiveness of school/college policies with specific protections for LGBTQIA+ rights, compared with generic school/college policies, in reducing negative climates and victimisation has been identified (Kull, Greytak, Kosciw & Villenas, 2016).

A recent review of the 'No Outsiders' initiative – a project set out within UK primary schools to challenge the heteronormativity present within schooling systems and practices found that, whilst homophobia still existed within schools following the project, children's perceptions of the acceptability of homophobia was reduced (Atkinson, 2020). In fact, within this study, school inaction on tackling homophobia was viewed as being equivalent to school-sanctioned homophobia (Atkinson, 2020). Findings from this study suggest the benefits of LGBT inclusive education as a means of tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools.



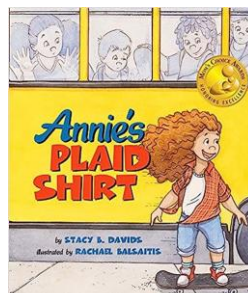
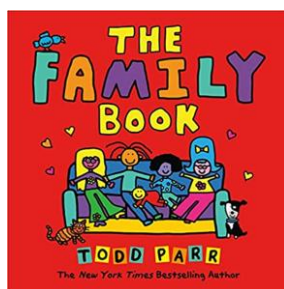
Book by Andrew Moffat (2017)

A narrow focus on the negative impact of bullying towards LGBTQIA+ pupils has also been raised as problematic and overlooking the role played by school systems, policies and school staff in the negative experiences of LGBTQIA+ young people in schools (Formby, 2015). Whilst tackling LGBTQIA+ bullying will help to reduce instances, it may also place LGBTQIA+ young people as victims. Instead, an approach to LGBTQIA+ inclusive education which recognises the role played by the school systems and the staff as well as the curriculum will lead to a more positive and inclusive experience for LGBTQIA+ young people (Formby, 2015)

Top Tips!

For Early Years

- Reflect on your everyday language when talking to children and families to ensure it does not include assumptions about children's interests or family make-up
- Make regular references to and incidental examples of different family structures during activities, for example in phonics – "Sophie and her daddies went to the *sh-o-p*".
- Celebrate difference and challenge stereotypes through play and the stories you share with children, for example:



https://birthto5matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/getting_started_early_years-1.pdf

Post-16

Top Tips!

LGBTQIA+ students can be vulnerable to mental health difficulties and discrimination. Stonewall (2012) found that one in three LGBTQIA+ pupils who experienced homophobic bullying changed their plans for future education in a fear of further discrimination from other students in further or higher education

and they were more vulnerable to not succeeding to their potential in post-16 settings. Additionally, students who lived at home and were financially dependent on their families were worried about sharing and talking with their families. Therefore, it is essential to develop practices to support LGBTQIA+ students within any post-16 setting or provision. Consider the following:

- Reflect on the curriculum and consider how to ensure to promote a positive sense of identity and positive role models from the LGBTQIA+ community
- Continue to reflect on everyday language used by staff when talking to young people and their families to ensure it does not include assumptions about their interests or family make-up.
- Ensure staff feel confident to challenge discriminatory language when it occurs.
- Ensure that pastoral staff and student advisors are equipped to support LGBTQIA+ young people, and are able to proactively signpost these services to LGBTQIA+ students

Strong LGBTQIA+ student societies can be invaluable in creating an inclusive atmosphere, but this depends on them running consistently from year to year. Post-16 settings should actively support student societies, and liaise with them to develop stronger institutional support for LGBTQIA+ students.

Useful Resources

<https://www.genderbread.org/>

<https://lgbt.foundation/actionplan>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/glossary-terms>

[www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/final - an intro to supporting lgbt young people - april2022.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/final_-_an_intro_to_supporting_lgbt_young_people_-_april2022.pdf) (a guide for settings on supporting LGBTQ+ young people)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lgbt-action-plan-2018-improving-the-lives-of-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-people>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk

Useful links

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

<http://www.lgbt.foundation/>

<https://www.theproudtrust.org/>

Manchester Safeguarding Partnership –

Sexuality:

<https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/resource/sexuality-resources-for-all/>

References

Atkinson, C. (2020). 'They don't really talk about it 'cos they don't think it's right': heteronormativity and institutional silence in UK primary education. *Gender and Education*, 1-17.

Bradlow, J., Bartram, F, Guasp, & Jadva, V. (2017). School report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools in 2017. Stonewall. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

DfE (2023) Gender Questioning Children Non-statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England.

Formby, E. (2015). Limitations of focussing on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic 'bullying' to understand and address LGBT young people's experiences within and beyond school. *Sex Education*, 15(6), 626-640.

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., & Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). 121 West 27th Street Suite 804, New York, NY 10001.

Kull, R. M., Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Villenas, C. (2016). Effectiveness of school district antibullying policies in improving LGBT youths' school climate. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 3(4), 407.

McBride, R. S. (2021). A literature review of the secondary school experiences of trans youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 18(2), 103-134.