



An Introduction to Supporting **LGBTQ+** Children and Young People



Clovelly House School
Stay safe, respect, achieve

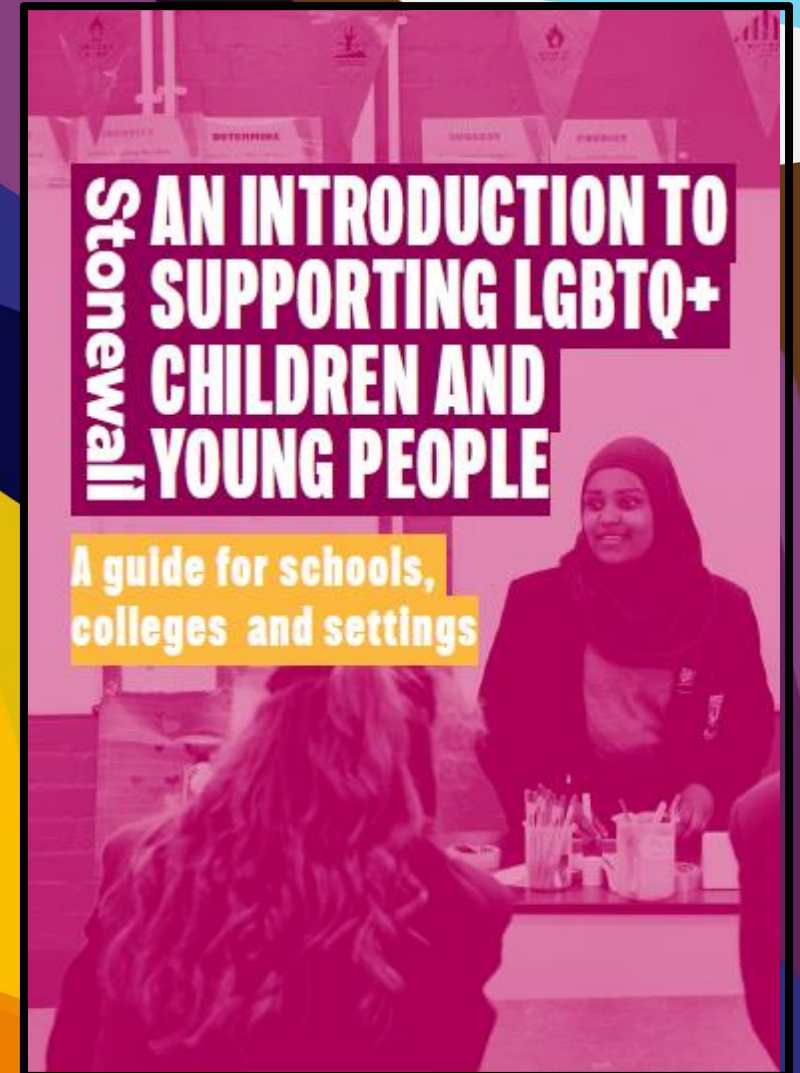
Stonewall

What is Stonewall?

- The largest LGBT rights organization in Europe
- Founded in 1989 to oppose Section 28

An Introduction to Supporting LGBTQ+ Children and Young People: A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Settings (April 2022)

- Guidance developed by teachers, trainers and education professionals



What does LGBTQ+ mean?

L	G	B	T	Q	+
Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	Queer	Other Orientations and Identities



Lesbian

Is used to refer to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards women.

Gay

is used to refer to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards men.

It is also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality, and some women identify as gay rather than lesbian.

Bisexual

is used to refer to someone who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards more than one gender.

Some people may use the words **pansexual** or **queer** to describe their identity. It's important to be led by the language the child or young person uses for themselves.

Transgender

is a word that describes people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender is a word used to describe people whose gender is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Queer

is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc).

Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have embraced it.

Ace

is an umbrella term used to describe a variation in levels of romantic and/or sexual attraction, including a lack of attraction. Ace people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, asexual, aromantic and demisexual.

Asexual is used to refer to someone that does not experience sexual attraction.

Aromantic is used to refer to someone that does not experience romantic attraction.

Demi

Demisexual is used to describe someone who only experiences sexual attraction after an emotional bond has been established.

Demiromantic is used to describe someone who only experiences romantic attraction after an emotional bond has been established.

Non-Binary

is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with '**man**' or '**woman**'.

Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

What do LGBTQ+ young people want you to know?

1. Train your staff

2. Be Supportive

**3. Challenge
homophobia, biphobia
and transphobia**

**4. Make your
curriculum LGBTQ+
inclusive**

What do LGBTQ+ young people want you to know?

5. Respect student confidentiality

6. Start an LGBTQ+ club (or find local groups)

7. Support trans children and young people to be themselves

8. Offer gender-neutral facilities



What do LGBTQ+ young people want you to know?

9. Talk about LGBTQ+ people and topics

10. Include LGBTQ+ people in the conversation and talk about a range of sexualities

11. Make sure your RSHE lessons are inclusive

12. Put LGBTQ+ children and young people at the centre of your LGBTQ+ inclusive work



Experiences of LGBTQ+ Children and Young People

What young people say

• Over half of LGBTQ+ young people (53 per cent) don't feel there is an adult at school or college they can talk to about being LGBTQ+.

• Three in five LGBTQ+ young people (60 per cent) don't have an adult to talk to at home.

• Two in five LGBTQ+ young people (40 per cent) have never been taught anything about LGBTQ+ issues at school.

• Two thirds of LGBTQ+ young people (66 per cent) say their school doesn't offer help to access resources that can support them.

• One in three trans young people (33 per cent) are not able to be known by their preferred name at school, while three in five (58 per cent) are not allowed to use the toilets they feel comfortable in.

• Nearly half of LGBTQ+ young people (45 per cent) – including 64 per cent of trans young people – are bullied for being LGBTQ+ at school or college.

Mental health and wellbeing

LGBTQ+ children and young people experience particularly high rates of poor mental health.

Three in five LGB young people have deliberately harmed themselves at some point. For trans young people, this figure is 84 per cent.

More than one in five LGB young people and more than two in five trans young people have attempted to take their own life.

One in three non-binary young people and nearly half of disabled LGBTQ+ young people have tried to take their own life.





Creating an Inclusive Environment

1. Tackling Bullying
2. Challenging Gender Stereotypes
3. Making LGBTQ+ People Visible

Tackling Bullying

Children and young people are likely to feel worried about being open about their orientation or gender identity if they are in an environment where **homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT)** bullying and language are not challenged. They are also more likely to experience bullying if they come out.

It is essential that children and young people see HBT language and bullying being consistently challenged by all staff. However, schools, colleges and settings should take a 'whole-school approach' and should also support young people to recognise and challenge HBT language and bullying themselves.



What is HBT bullying?

- Based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about, or behaviours towards, gay / bi / trans / queer people.
- Can include denying someone's identity or refusing to accept it.
- Targeted at young people who are, or who are perceived to be, LGBTQ+.
- This includes those who don't conform to gender stereotypes or are seen to be 'different' in some way.
- Can also be targeted at young people with LGBTQ+ family members.

Intentional

Repeated over time

Causes physical and/or emotional harm

Can happen online as well as in person

Can take lots of different forms including physical, verbal, emotional actions

Challenging gender stereotypes

HBT bullying is often based on gender stereotypes. A child or young person who does not conform to a stereotypical idea of what a 'boy is' (for example strong, sporty) or 'girl is' (for example kind, responsible) may be bullied for being LGBT, whether they are or not.

Challenging gender stereotypes in your school, college or setting will help prevent bullying and ensure all children and young people feel comfortable expressing themselves.



Making LGBTQ+ people visible

Inclusive curriculum

Books with LGBTQ+ characters

Images of LGBTQ+ people and families on display

Encourage open discussions

Celebrate events (history month, pride)

Invite LGBTQ+ role models

Openly LGBTQ+ staff can be important role models for LGBTQ+ learners and are a good indicator of an inclusive environment.

However, no member of staff should feel under pressure to share personal information, and children and young people should be aware of what is appropriate to ask staff, regardless of their orientation or gender identity.



Individual Support for LGBTQ+ Young People

Coming Out

Children and young people coming out may worry about different things. A bi young person may have different worries to a young gay or lesbian person. A trans young person may worry about whether people will use their correct name and pronouns, or whether they'll be allowed to change their uniform.

You should always maintain a child or young person's confidentiality relating to their LGBTQ+ identity, unless there is a safeguarding concern.

Some young people may not be ready to 'come out' to their parents or carers and it is important to respect this wish. Offer them support in talking to their parents or carers, if they would like it.



How to respond

“I think I might be gay / a lesbian / bi / trans.”

“I feel like I’m actually a girl / boy / something else.”

Every person’s experience of coming out is different – some children and young people will have lots more worries than others. This chart is designed to help you feel confident having some of the more challenging conversations you might come across. Adapt your language and the resources you recommend to suit the age and needs of the child or young person.



Staff: Have you discussed how you feel with your parents/carers?

No I don't want to talk to them because I'm worried how they'll react.

- Okay. We can talk about that and think about some ways to approach it if you want to.

No, but I'm going to talk to them soon.

- Good. Most parents/carers will want to know something this important about how you're feeling.
- It could be really helpful to have them involved.
- It is a good idea to take time to think about what you want to say. Have you thought about how they might react?

Yes, but they're not supportive - my mum / dad / carer won't speak to me about it.

- Well we can try and help you with that. Is there anyone else in your family who you can talk to?
- There are organisations that can help - I can give you their details.

Staff: Do you know anyone LGBTQ+? Or have you joined a youth group or read any information about being LGBTQ+ either on the internet or anywhere else?

No I haven't, I don't really know where to start. It would be good to talk to some LGBT people.

- Well there may be a local youth group for other LGBTQ+ young people, or young people who feel unsure.
- There are some good youth sites and forums. I'll give you the details and some tips to stay safe online.

Yes, I have googled a few things and looked on the internet. I follow some LGBTQ+ people on social media. I've thought about it but I don't want to go to a youth group.

- Youth sites and forums, discuss online safety
- If you find that you are being contacted by adults be very cautious and tell a parent/carer immediately.
 - Not everyone feels comfortable going to a youth group, but let me know if you change your mind.

Yes, I've been using a dating/social app and I've been to a LGBTQ+ bar/club when I've been able to get in.

- Using dating apps puts you at risk of harm from people who might not be who they say they are. You also have to be 18 to use dating apps.
 - Youth sites and forums
- You're under age and shouldn't be going to bars and clubs.
- Not only is it against the law, it's also really important your parents/carers know where you are so they can make sure you are safe.
- Going to an LGBTQ+ youth group would be a safer way of meeting people.

Staff: Does anyone at school know that you are **lesbian, gay, bi, trans** / questioning how you feel about your sexual orientation or gender identity? Has anyone treated you differently?

No, they don't know. I don't want them to either. **Everyone says something is gay when they mean something is rubbish. I'm afraid people wouldn't understand. I just don't want to get bullied.**

- Bullying and hurtful language is not acceptable here.
- I hope that you won't have any issues with bullying, if you do please tell a member of staff straight away so that we can deal with it.
- Coming out is a personal experience and you don't need to do it until you're ready. If or when you do, we'll be here to support you.
- You could perhaps choose a friend you trust to talk to first.
 - Would it be helpful if we did some more work as a school to help other students understand LGBTQ+ issues?

Some know and they are okay with it, but I don't want others to find out. I've talked to a couple of my friends, and I think other students know as I've begun to change my clothes.

- That's good that you've been able to talk to others, and I hope they've been supportive.
- **If other learners find it difficult, come and talk to me. Bullying isn't tolerated here. This is a place where everyone should be able to be themselves.**
- **It might be a good idea for us to have a chat about anything else you would like to happen so we can make sure you have the support you need. What do you think?**

Yes, they all know. Lots of people know - I think it's probably quite obvious.
Some have given me a hard time about it.

- I'm glad you've told me. I'll be able to help you sort this out.
- Do you feel able to give me any names/times when incidents have occurred?
- Bullying isn't tolerated here.
- We can talk together about how to approach others in the school so it won't be difficult going forwards.

Staff: Is there anything we can support you with in school? Are there any things you would like more information on? Are there any changes we can support you with?

I don't know what to do and I think I need some more information about what it means to be LGBTQ+. I just know that I'm not happy with the way things are at the moment.

- That's okay and it's good to take some time to think things over. I can point you in the direction of some information that might be useful.
- Youth sites & forums, online safety guidance
- Local LGBTQ+ youth groups

I think I want to take steps to live as the gender I know I am but I'm worried about how it will work at school.

- The school is here to make sure things feel right for you. We can arrange a time to sit down and talk through all the options and different ways that we can support you. What do you think?
- There are lots of people who have come out as trans at school - it is possible!

I want to take steps to transition and be known by my new name and pronouns at school.

- Okay, let's arrange a time to talk through what you'd like to do next and when.
- Would you be comfortable with your parents or carers being there?
- Would you be comfortable with another member of staff being there?

“I’m glad you’ve come to talk to me. Most people feel much better when they feel they can be open about their sexual orientation/gender identity. How you feel about your sexual orientation/gender identity is a really important part of who you are. We will support you to be you.”





Supporting Trans Children and Young People

Transitioning

Social Transition:

- **Changing name & pronouns**
- **Telling friends and family**
- **Dressing differently**
- **Changing official documents**

There is no 'best time' for a trans child or young person to transition – they should be supported to do so if and when they are ready. They may take steps to transition gradually over a period of time, or choose a specific time to make several changes at once.



Transition Journey

Coming out to a member of staff.

Staff talking through with the young person what their needs and wishes are.

- Who might be involved?
- What practical adjustments need to be made to prepare?
- How will changes be communicated?



Young person and school planning a social transition.

Could involve a timeline detailing changes, when they will happen and how they will be communicated.

- Refresher training
- Discussing with other learners what is/isn't appropriate to say/ask



Social transition at school

- Changes implemented and communicated
- Correct name & pronouns used consistently
- Ongoing support

Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS)

- **GIDS is a specialised NHS service that offers social and medical support to trans children and young people.**
- **They accept referrals from education professionals, as well as health and social care professionals or support groups.**
- **Parental consent for any treatment is required for under 16s.**

- **Young people may need support while waiting for the initial appointment as there is a long waiting list.**
- **Young people will attend a number of assessment appointments with a multi-agency team.**
- **Puberty blockers may be offered to some young people.**
- **Hormone treatment is not offered to under 16s and surgery is not available to under 18s.**



Important to remember:

- **Trans identities are diverse**
- **Each person's transition is different and unique**
- **Not everyone identifies as 'male' or 'female'**
- **Not every trans young person will want to make visible or practical changes (but may still benefit from ongoing support)**
- **Not every young person that is questioning their identity will be trans**





Supporting LGBTQ+ Children and Young People with SEND

Listen to the child or young person

- It is important to listen to what children and young people are saying – with their actions as well as their words.
- Make sure that each child or young person has opportunities to express their gender identity and orientation and feel 'heard'.
- Schools, colleges and settings should ensure that they equip young people with the means, reasons and opportunities to express their voice, and the ability to celebrate their identity in all aspects of their lives.
- Some children and young people with SEND, especially those who are autistic, may not see the need to communicate about their feelings, or may not understand that others don't already see them in the same way they see or know themselves to be. If the people around them don't understand their LGBTQ+ identity, this could lead to increased frustration, and impact negatively on their mental health and wellbeing.

