

INVOLVING PARENTS AND CARERS IN LGBT WORK

INFORMING AND INVOLVING PARENTS AND CARERS

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

LGBT inclusion work is necessary, valuable and something to celebrate. 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.

ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Whilst 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, any misunderstandings are addressed. The school should be able to clearly explain the rationale for the work and we've created some pointers with the help of LGBT Charter schools.

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

- LGBT inclusion is designed to prevent and reduce homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and can reduce bullying for all pupils as a result.
- Parent/carer concerns may be due to misinformation or presumptions about what you hope to discuss with pupils, LGBT inclusion is not only about 'sex education', it's about creating a fair and equal curriculum for all pupils that is age and stage appropriate.
- If a concern is centred around 'LGBT sex education', you can also remind them that RSHP is a key element of the Health and Wellbeing area of Curriculum for Excellence. All pupils will learn about RSHP at age and stage appropriate levels, including all types of relationships for all types of bodies. More information is available on the [RSHP website](#).
- Parents and carers may be unaware of the issues facing LGBT young people and those who experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying – sharing experiences of LGBT young people can help bring parents and carers on board, our [Life in Scotland](#) research is available on our website.



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POLICY AND LEGISLATION SUPPORTING YOUR WORK

It is important to provide a clear and consistent message to parents. Be open about the work you are doing and the rationale behind it. It can be useful to underline that the work you are doing is supported by Scottish Government Legislation and Policy, forms part of your duties under the Equality Act (2010) and is central to the principles of GIRFEC.

Remember that a practitioner you have a professional duty 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 (Article 28, UNCRC).
- Ensure that the school is inclusive, does not tolerate bullying and appreciates diversity.

TOP TIPS

- 1** Emphasise the importance of positive relationships and partnerships with all parents and carers.
- 2** Ensure that the concerns of the parents and carers are heard, fully understood and recognised.
- 3** Explain the reasons behind LGBT inclusion work in the school and the potential consequences of not carrying out this work.
- 4** Clearly explain work happening in the school so that any misconceptions about age-appropriateness or unsuitable content are corrected.
- 5** Engage in anti-bullying work and LGBT awareness across the whole school community, including parents and carers. This will help parents and carers to gain an understanding of prejudice-based bullying and its effects on young people, and to learn how to challenge it.

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