

## DL2: The role of governors in preventing homophobic bullying

Governors must ensure that policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline are pursued at school. Governors must make and review a statement of principles to which the head teacher is to have regard in determining measures to regulate behaviour. These measures include those to be taken with a view to preventing and responding to all forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying. This is a requirement of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Governors must support and advise head teachers about how best to go about this. They should consider:

- **Their leadership role in a school.** Governors have a responsibility to set the ethos of a school, and play a key role in setting the agenda for an effective good behaviour policy. Governors can provide crucial leadership in preventing homophobic bullying. Strong messages from the top about the importance of tackling all forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying, are vital.
- **Development of policies, practices and procedures.** Governors should consider how an inclusive anti-bullying policy will include homophobic bullying. They should also think about how this inclusion can be applied to all other related policies, practices and procedures.
- **Consultation.** Governors should consult all staff, pupils and parents and families about this work. This will enable them to raise concerns and will help all members of the school community work together.

- **The support and development of staff.** Staff will need support if they are to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying. They will need professional development and training in this area to ensure they can intervene effectively and with confidence. They will also need to know that they have the backing of the governors in this work. Governors should also be aware that staff are protected in law from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. This means that recruitment processes should be fair and staff should be protected from homophobic bullying. This law applies to all schools, including faith schools.
- **Celebrating achievements.** Governors are advised to take the lead in celebrating achievements. Preventing homophobic bullying takes time and everyone should be kept informed about progress. The DCSF recommends as best practice that parents and families be told about successes in this work. Local authorities and other agencies (including Ofsted) also need to be kept informed about successes.
- **Multi-agency work.** Governors will monitor the other agencies schools work with in order to keep pupils safe. This includes youth justice, children's social care, education and health. Governors might want to recommend other agencies to help schools prevent homophobic bullying.

**Governors have a unique and invaluable role to play in protecting children and young people by providing the necessary leadership and impetus to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying.**