

Foreword

This guidance provides **school governors, heads, teachers and other staff** with information about how to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) resources on bullying and behaviour, particularly *Safe to Learn*, and is to be used against the backdrop of a school's existing policies.

Homophobic bullying has a significant impact on schools and individuals within that school. Pupils who experience homophobic bullying are more likely to miss school, are less likely to stay in full time education, and are less likely to feel safe, enjoy and achieve, be healthy and make a positive contribution to their community. It should therefore be central to a school's ethos that all pupils feel they are safe and protected from bullying. Creating a safe and inclusive atmosphere in this way builds a sense of community within the school, which will, in turn, develop and sustain the community which the school serves and supports.

This guidance is aimed at maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools), maintained special schools and Pupil Referral Units, though much of the good practice advice is relevant to all types of school.

Where the law is discussed, the guidance offers the Department's view on relevant legal provisions, but it is not intended as definitive legal advice. Only a court can decide on the interpretation of the law. Where a specific legal duty is referred to "must" is used; other advice can be considered as recommended best practice.

The definition of a "parent" or "carer" for the purpose of this guidance is broadly drawn and includes any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where they have a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) with whom the child lives and/or the child's birth parent(s). Where "LGB" is used in the guidance this is the shortened form of "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual".

The guidance was written for the Department by Stonewall¹ and Educational Action Challenging Homophobia² (EACH). It was created with the help of children and young people, heads and school staff, community and voluntary sector organisations, representatives of the main faith groups, the professional associations, local authority officers and the trade unions.

¹ www.stonewall.org.uk

² www.eachaction.org.uk

10 Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools

Government, the teacher unions and professional associations, children's charities, as well as all faith communities are united in their declaration that all forms of bullying are wrong.

Each of the following 3 sections is structured as:

Introductions

The Legal Framework

Recognition

Prevention

Responding

Monitoring

Further information:

Frequently Asked Questions

Further Resources

Downloadable sheets are provided to be used as summaries and to offer practical tips and information. Sheets are labelled as to whether they are suited to a Primary or Secondary audience, or both.

"Stonewall is proud to have been commissioned by the DCSF to help produce this guidance. The life chances of children bullied at school are often permanently diminished. This tool represents an essential, and much welcome, step forward in the development of joined-up thinking that will help schools and teachers address all forms of bullying effectively."

Ben Summerskill
Chief Executive, Stonewall

"This guidance demonstrates the government's firm commitment to challenging homophobic bullying; an under-reported problem which blights so many lives. This innovative resource provides education professionals with a detailed insight into the issues, offers practical strategies to tackle the problem and help towards improving the emotional and academic potential of everyone."

Jonathan Charlesworth
Director of Projects, EACH