

Stonewall

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

**This resource is produced by Stonewall, a UK-based charity that stands for the freedom, equity and potential of all lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people.**

At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full.

Founded in London in 1989, we now work in each nation of the UK and have established partnerships across the globe. Over the last three decades, we have created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education.

Our campaigns drive positive change for our communities, and our sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives. We make sure that the world hears and learns from our communities, and our work is grounded in evidence and expertise.

To find out more about our work, visit us at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1101255 (England and Wales) and SC039681 (Scotland)

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion; working towards a world where we're all free to be. This does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.

**TEN STEPS  
TO TACKLING  
HOMOPHOBIC,  
BIPHOBIC AND  
TRANSPHOBIC  
LANGUAGE  
IN YOUR  
SCHOOL**

**Stonewall**

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*Updated 2022.*

**Stonewall**

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Charity No 1101255

# INTRODUCTION

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is endemic in Britain's schools. It can happen across any area of school life, including in the corridors, online and in the playground, and affects lots of different groups of pupils, not just those who are lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning or ace (LGBTQ+). While sometimes dismissed as 'harmless banter', homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language has a damaging effect on young people's self-esteem and, left unchecked, gives the impression that being LGBTQ+ is shameful or wrong. The prejudicial attitudes that young people can develop because of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language can also lead to more serious bullying down the line, or in some cases, hate crimes or hate incidents that go beyond the school community.

While many school staff recognise the importance of tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, YouGov polling for Stonewall found that **more than half of secondary school staff and two in five primary school staff admit to not always intervening when they hear homophobic language being used.** Staff often lack the support, skills and confidence to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language effectively.

This guide outlines ten practical steps that will equip primary and secondary school staff to put in place an effective strategy to prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language.

## A note on acronyms

At Stonewall, we use the acronym LGBTQ+, which stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace. You can find definitions of these terms and other key terms [on our website](#) and in the glossary in this resource.

Other organisations may use a different acronym – for example, LGBT or LGBTI or LGBT+. Often, the acronym an organisation uses will depend on their areas of specialism or expertise, or the specific groups of people that they work with.

Our good practice guidance is developed by our team of expert teachers, trainers and education professionals and informed by the work of our School & College Champions. We're constantly developing our work and we regularly update our resources to introduce more information and advice on supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people – you can expect to see more content on supporting young people who are questioning and young people on the ace and aro spectrum coming soon.

# BACKGROUND

**96 per cent** of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils hear homophobic remarks such as 'poof' or 'lezza' while **99 per cent** hear phrases such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay'.

**83 per cent** of trans young people experience name-calling.

**Seven in ten** primary school teachers and **nine in ten** secondary school teachers hear homophobic language in school.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is endemic in Britain's schools. It can affect lots of different groups of pupils including those who are openly or perceived to be LGBTQ+ those with LGBTQ+ family or friends, or those who are perceived to be 'different' in some way.

For example sometimes pupils who don't conform to **gender stereotypes** experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, simply because they like activities or dress in ways that don't fit with others' views about 'what boys are like' or 'what girls are like'.

The most important thing is to **challenge all negative language**, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, in school so that everyone feels comfortable and happy to be who they are without fear of ridicule or experiencing discrimination from others.

## WHAT IS HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE?

School staff are sometimes unclear what constitutes homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. Some examples of each are laid out on the following pages. There can be an overlap between what is homophobic, what is biphobic and what is transphobic language and lots of the same assumptions, prejudices or stereotypes may underpin remarks.

# 'that's so gay'

**Homophobic language** is language that is used either with the intention, or has the effect, of discriminating against someone based on a person's actual or perceived lesbian or gay identity, or because they have lesbian or gay family members or friends. Bi people can also be targeted by homophobic language if somebody thinks that they are lesbian or gay. Homophobic language can also include denying somebody's lesbian, gay or bi identity or refusing to accept it.

## **HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE EXAMPLES:**

**Phrases like 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay'**. The most common form of homophobic language is 'that's so gay' and 'you're so gay'. **99 per cent** of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people report hearing the casual use of these phrases in school. These comments are sometimes directed towards people who are actually, or perceived to be, lesbian or gay. However, they are most often used to mean that something is bad or 'rubbish', with no conscious link to sexual orientation at all, for example 'those trainers are so gay' (to mean uncool) or 'stop being so gay' (to mean stop being so annoying). Sometimes teachers don't feel they have to challenge this use of 'gay', but not doing so can have a damaging effect on pupils, leading them to think being lesbian or gay is something negative

**Terms of abuse including 'dyke', 'lezza' and 'faggot'**. **96 per cent** of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people hear this kind of homophobic language at school

**It's the constant stream of anti-gay remarks that people don't even know they make. I feel awful all the time.**

Sophie, 15

I tried coming out as bisexual but all throughout class I got chants of 'bi-bi' being thrown at me, thinking they were funny. The teacher was right there and never said a word. Olivia, 18

**Biphobic language** is language that is used either with the intention, or has the effect, of discriminating against someone based on a person's actual or perceived bi identity, or because they have bi family members or friends. This can also include denying somebody's bi identity or refusing to accept it.

#### **BIPHOBIC LANGUAGE EXAMPLES:**

**Making fun** of bisexual people for being **'greedy'** or because they are attracted to people of the same gender and to people of a different gender

**Accusing** someone of going through a **'phase'**, questioning why they **'can't make their mind up'** or saying **'surely you're just straight or gay'**

Saying **'why can't you just be normal'**, either because being bisexual is not perceived to be 'normal' or because it's not 'normal' to have same-sex relationships (link to homophobic language)

**'greedy'**

# It felt safer to not know anyone at all

Woman, 19 (*Capturing Journeys, Gendered Intelligence*)

**Transphobic language** is language that is used either with the intention, or has the effect, of discriminating against someone based on a person's actual or perceived trans or non-binary identity, or because they have trans or non-binary family members or friends. This can also include denying somebody's gender identity or refusing to accept it.

## TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE EXAMPLES:

**Terms of abuse**, including **'tranny'**, **'he-she'**, referring to a trans person as **'it'** or **deliberately misnaming or misgendering them** (using the wrong pronoun when referring to them in conversation)

**Taunting or inappropriate questions or comments** about a trans person's gender or gender identity, for example **'are you a girl, or a boy?'** or **'you're not a 'real' girl'**

**Questions or comments** about a trans person's body, for example asking them what their body looks like

**'tranny'**



# FIVE REASONS TO TACKLE HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE

## Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language...

**1** ... is endemic in primary and secondary schools and affects lots of pupils – not just those who are LGBTQ+

**96 per cent** of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils hear homophobic remarks such as 'poof' or 'lezza'. **99 per cent** hear phrases such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay'. **83 per cent** of trans young people experience name-calling. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language may also affect lots of other pupils, including pupils who don't conform to gender stereotypes, have LGBTQ+ family or friends or who are perceived to be 'different'. Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language will have a positive effect on all pupils and help ensure everyone feels able to be themselves at school.

**2** ... that goes unchallenged has a damaging impact on young people and may lead to bullying further down the line

**SELF-ESTEEM** **84 per cent** of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people say they are distressed to hear the word 'gay' used in a derogatory way. Hearing or experiencing any hurtful language, including about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, can make pupils feel negatively about, or less able to be, themselves.

**BULLYING** The presence of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is **strongly linked to bullying**. In schools where pupils frequently hear homophobic language, such as 'gay' being used negatively or insults such as 'poof' or 'dyke', the rate of homophobic bullying is **nearly double** compared to schools that have sought to eliminate homophobic language. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying can have serious consequences and lead pupils to underachieve in school or to experience mental health problems.

### **3 ... that goes unchallenged sends the message that it's not okay to be LGBTQ+ or to have LGBTQ+ family or friends**

There are 20,000 young people in Britain growing up with same-sex parents and many more young people have LGBTQ+ family or friends. When homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language goes unchallenged it sends the message that there is something wrong or bad about the people they love. University of Cambridge research for Stonewall in *Different Families* (2010) found that while the children of same-sex parents love their families, they sometimes worry about talking about them with their friends for fear of a negative reaction. It's important that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is challenged so that all pupils grow up knowing it's okay to be LGBTQ+.

## **Why else?**

### **4 Schools have a legal responsibility to prevent and respond to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language**

**THE EQUALITY ACT 2010** The Public Sector Equality Duty (s149(1) of the Equality Act 2010) places a duty on bodies carrying out public functions, in the exercise of those functions, to have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimization and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act – including because of the protected characteristic of sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Advance equality of opportunity – which may include the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by those who are LGBTQ+ that are connected to their LGBTQ+ identity
- Taking steps to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people that are different to those who are not LGBTQ+
- Encouraging LGBTQ+ people to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low

**Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it – e.g. between LGBTQ+ pupils and those who are not LGBTQ+.**

In England, the **Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017/353** include specific duties such as publishing equality information at least once a year to show how you have complied with the duty (regulation 4), as well as setting specific and measurable equality objectives which should be prepared and published at least every four years (regulation 5). An example of this might include tackling homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying. For more information, including information on requirements in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, see **[An Introduction to Supporting LGBTQ+ Children and Young People.](#)**

**4** **THE EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006** requires schools to promote the safety and wellbeing of young people in their care. This includes young people who experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying.

**OFSTED INSPECTORS** are directed to look at how prevalent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is and may ask pupils, senior leaders and governors whether they ever hear any homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and how it is dealt with by staff.

**5** **Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language creates a better environment for everyone and isn't difficult**, so long as staff **have the tools and confidence** they need to challenge it consistently and know they have support from the school and senior leadership to do so.

# 10 STEPS TO TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE

- 1** Get your policy right page 9
- 2** Train staff page 10
- 3** Challenge consistently page 11
- 4** Survey staff and pupils page 12
- 5** Create an action plan page 14
- 6** Record and monitor page 15
- 7** Run a campaign page 16
- 8** Use the curriculum page 18
- 9** Take a whole-school approach  
and celebrate diversity page 20
- 10** Link up with others and celebrate success page 22

# 1 GET YOUR POLICY RIGHT Send a clear signal homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is unacceptable by explicitly referring to it in the school's anti-bullying policy.

## WHAT

Outline your school's position on, and expectations around, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language as part of your **anti-bullying policy**

*For template staff and pupil anti-bullying policies, please see Stonewall's Getting Started Toolkits for primary and secondary schools*

## HOW

**1** Your policy should define bullying and outline the grounds on which it can take place.

**2** Your policy should state that derogatory language – used by staff or pupils – on these same grounds is unacceptable and that:

- derogatory language will be challenged and recorded by staff  
*[insert how, for example on SIMS]*
- staff are encouraged to record 'casual' derogatory language, for example 'that's so gay', on classroom logs
- incidents are monitored closely by senior leadership and reports are regularly sent to governors
- appropriate follow-up actions and sanctions will be taken, including with staff who use homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language

**TOP TIP:** *Keep your policy concise and include positive statements, for example All members of the school community are asked to use language that is respectful of and kind towards others and that does not perpetuate stereotypes or offend others*

**Communicate**  
your policy widely

Your policy should be communicated and visible in various forms, including

- in ways that are pupil-friendly
- on the website
- in induction packs for new staff
- in home-school agreements
- in staff handbooks

## **2 TRAIN STAFF** Most staff have never been trained to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language.

**All staff – including senior leaders, lunchtime supervisors, governors, sports coaches and staff running after school clubs – should be trained to ensure they have the skills and confidence to respond to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language every time they hear it.**

### **IN YOUR TRAINING**

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*For more on training see the Going further section on p23*

**1 Help staff understand** what homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is and the impact it has using examples and statistics from the first section of this guide. Refer to the school's legal duty to address **all forms of discriminatory behaviour** including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bring copies of the anti-bullying policy so staff are clear on the school's stance and that they have the support of senior leadership.

**2 Build confidence and identify practical strategies to tackle it** using attendees' experiences of hearing or dealing with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. Draw out the expertise in the room and ask less confident staff how they tackle other kinds of hurtful language, for example racist language. Explain how tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language should form part of existing work to tackle intolerance and discrimination in school.

**3 Practice immediate responses.** Help staff to come up with responses they would feel comfortable and confident to use immediately on hearing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. Develop a script from these responses and circulate to all staff (p11).

**4 Explain how to prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language** using the curriculum and initiatives across different areas of school life.

**3 CHALLENGE CONSISTENTLY** Only **ten per cent** of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils report that teachers challenge homophobic language every time they hear it. In order to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language effectively it should be challenged every time and using the same key messages. Make sure staff are equipped and confident to do so through training and check in with anyone who may need extra support.

Every time a person uses homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language it's important that it's brought to their attention. **How** will vary depending on the situation, but should always involve making clear the language is unacceptable and the reason why.

### **IMMEDIATE RESPONSES TO HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE – DEVELOPING A SCRIPT**

Developing a script or set of template responses will equip staff to respond confidently and consistently. Don't forget to:

- *consider the different situations in which homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is used (in a lesson, during a football match, on the school bus) when creating your script*
- *ask staff what works that they already do*
- *feed in the following strategies:*

**Asking a question** e.g. *What do you mean by that? Can trainers really be gay? Do you realise that language is homophobic/biphobic/transphobic? Do you understand why?*

**Comparing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language to other types of prejudicial language** e.g. *Would you use words that were hurtful about someone's race/religion/disability?*

**Talking about the personal impact and making it real** e.g. *When you use that word it can make a person who is gay or has gay family or friends feel bad about themselves.*

**TOP TIP:** Help staff think about how to explain what lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans means in an age-appropriate way (definitions are provided in Stonewall's *Getting Started Toolkit*)

**Talking about the school policy and ethos** e.g. *You know that hurtful language or behaviour isn't accepted in this school. This is a place where everyone is equal and should be treated with respect.*

## What if some staff are resistant?

There are different reasons a member of staff might not tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language consistently, for example because they think pupils don't mean any harm or because they aren't sure why it's offensive. You can support these members of staff by

- reminding them why it's important to tackle and the impact it can have
- explaining their legal and Ofsted duties
- providing training so all staff feel confident
- reassuring staff that recording and reporting incidents can be done anonymously and won't go on pupils' records unless it's a repeat incident

# 4 SURVEY STAFF AND PUPILS

Survey staff and pupils anonymously on their experiences of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language.

*Template survey questions can be found in Stonewall's Getting Started Toolkits.*

**1. Decide who to ask and what you want to know,** for example do you want to hear from a particular section of staff or pupils, are you interested in hearing about levels of understanding/frequency/confidence?

**2. Decide how to collect the information,** for example as part of a wider survey on discriminatory or hurtful language, a general survey on bullying or a quick one-off on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language alone. Don't forget to reassure staff and pupils that the survey is anonymous.

**3. Use the results of your survey to** inform your next steps, for example an assembly with a year group or staff training.

## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS – STAFF

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- *How confident do you feel identifying homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language?*
- *How frequently do you hear phrases like 'that's so gay' in school?*
- *How frequently do you hear other forms of homophobic language and biphobic and transphobic language?*
- *How frequently do you challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language you hear? If you don't always challenge it consistently, why not [for example lack of confidence, lack of time]?*



## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS – SECONDARY PUPILS

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- *Do you know what homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is? (E.g. Hurtful language about someone who is...)*
- *Do you know how to report homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language you hear?*  
*Do you know how to report other discriminatory language you hear?*
- *Would you challenge another pupil saying 'that's so gay'?*
- *How often do staff challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language?*

## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS – PRIMARY PUPILS

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- *Do you ever hear other pupils using unkind language? If so what about?*
- *Has someone ever used unkind language towards you? If so what about?*
- *Do you ever hear the word 'gay' used in school to mean something 'rubbish' or as an insult?*
- *Do you know what to do when you hear unkind language?*

### **HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE ONLINE**

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language also occurs online so it is important to ask about this in your survey too. Implementing the steps outlined in this guide will help reduce the chances of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language occurring online. Stonewall's *Staying Safe Online* guide contains specific guidance on e-safety policies and online reporting mechanisms and best practice from schools around the country that will further support your e-safety work.



# 5 **CREATE AN ACTION PLAN** Draw up an action plan to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language using your survey to help identify key priorities. Tailor your action plan appropriately – for example to focus on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying, or tackling all prejudicial language.

**Getting started** Identify short-term priorities. For example getting a policy in place that mentions homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language, approaching SLT, a member of staff going on Stonewall’s Train the Trainer course (see below).

**Next** Identify priorities that might take longer to organise. For example bite-size staff training sessions, assembly series with pupils.

**Longer-term** Identify what will take your work to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language to the next level. For example working towards a Stonewall School Champions Award, developing curriculum work in different areas related to LGBTQ+ issues.

## TEMPLATE PLAN STRUCTURE

Task	Who	Timescale	Task evaluation
<i>Add a category to SIMS to capture language incidents by type.</i>	[Find ways to include everybody.]	[Come up with a range of tasks, for example short, medium and long-term initiatives and work to tie in with specific events like Anti-Bullying Week, Safer Internet Day etc.]	[Include a range of people in your evaluation process or create a group of staff from across school – including a governor, PE teacher, PSHE lead – who will champion the tasks in the action plan and evaluate their success.]
<i>Bite-size training for SLT.</i>	<i>Curriculum work via teaching staff.</i>		
<i>Request support from governing body.</i>	<i>Assemblies delivered by senior leaders.</i>		
<i>Targeted training for teaching staff, support staff.</i>	<i>‘Respect at lunch’ actions delivered by lunchtime supervisors.</i>		
<i>Display awareness-raising posters.</i>			

### SCHOOL CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME

Stonewall’s School Champions programme is a network of more than 1000 schools working together and with Stonewall to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language. For more information on our membership programmes, visit the Stonewall website ([www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)).

# 6 **RECORD AND MONITOR** Record and monitor incidents of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language so you can identify any particular problem areas and measure progress over time.

## REPORTING – STAFF AND PUPILS

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- Ensure there are **clear** recording procedures for staff, for example through SIMS. These procedures should be communicated through training or in another way
- Reporting mechanisms should allow staff to record incidents of discriminatory language by **type** (for example racist, sexist, homophobic or biphobic, transphobic). Homophobic and transphobic language should be recorded **in the same way as other types**

### DO YOU NEED TO RECORD 'THAT'S SO GAY' AND 'YOU'RE SO GAY'?

While not always used by pupils in ways that are meant to be hurtful, it's important this kind of language is kept track of and challenged too.

**TOP TIP:** Provide quick and easy for ways for staff to make a note of this language, for example via classroom logs. Use staff training to ensure all staff are clear on how to address this type of homophobic language when it arises, which may be different to how they address other forms of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. Help staff to understand why all forms of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language should be challenged in school.

- Pupils must be able to – and know how to – report any discriminatory language they hear in **multiple different ways**. For example:
  - to **designated members of staff** like anti-bullying leads
  - via **anonymous reporting** points in each classroom, the school intranet, or a confidential email service
  - to **classroom staff** or other staff pupils come into contact with regularly

## USING THE DATA

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- **Use your data** to understand how much homophobic, biphobic, transphobic language there is and the nature of the incidents (*e.g. lots of casual homophobic language, fewer more serious instances of transphobic language*), where it is happening in school (*e.g. mainly in the canteen and online*) and who is using it (*e.g. an issue with one or two years in particular*). Track any changes and areas of decline or improvement to inform your next steps

**7 RUN A CAMPAIGN** to raise awareness of the importance of tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. Use Stonewall's NoBystanders campaign for inspiration and provide ways for different groups to get involved.



**DID YOU KNOW?** In YouGov polling for Stonewall, 1 in 5 people admitted to making offensive remarks about LGBT people in the last year. 30 per cent **had heard offensive remarks about LGBT people** in the last month, but 63 per cent **didn't do anything about it**. NoBystanders is Stonewall's campaign to address this, and to bring together people from all over the world to challenge abusive language. Hundreds of schools have used the campaign to address discriminatory language of all types in lessons, assemblies and across the whole school. You can download **No Bystanders** resources from the Stonewall website at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## USING THE NOBYSTANDERS CAMPAIGN

- Target a **specific issue**. *E.g. Our survey has shown that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is particularly prevalent in year x, and this is filtering down to lower years*
- Decide on your **aim**. *E.g. To reduce instances of all discriminatory language in our school*
- Decide on the **objectives** that will help you achieve your aim. *E.g. Objective 1: Run a series of short lessons with year x that focus on discriminatory language, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, the impact it can have and why it is wrong. Objective 2: Support year x to share what they've learnt with the rest of the school in a series of short assemblies*
- Use Stonewall's **materials**, for example the NoBystanders video and pledge posters, tackling homophobic language materials, *Some People Are Lesbians/Gay/Bi/Trans Get Over It!* posters
- **Launch** your campaign across the school and get everyone involved, for example by putting something in the newsletter or inviting parents and carers to an assembly

## NOBYSTANDERS CAMPAIGN IDEAS – SECONDARY SCHOOL

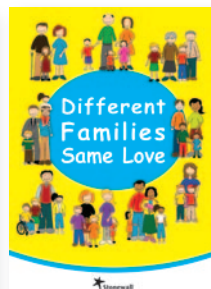
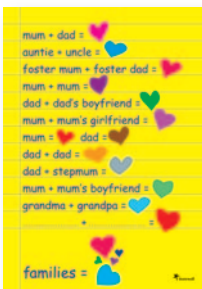
- Use the campaign video and allow pupils to discuss possible responses to the incidents depicted. You could also create short case studies or anonymise incidents that have happened in the school. Ask pupils to come up with an action plan outlining ways to tackle discriminatory language. Reiterate ways for pupils to report this language to staff
- Create your own campaign video as part of a drama or PSHE lesson. Ask pupils to share their views on why it's important to call out hurtful language. Create 'pledge photos' using photos of pupils with a sentence on why they support the campaign and actions they will take
- Use social media to help. Share your photos or videos with parents and carers via newsletters or online and tweet at Stonewall to let us know what you've been up to!

# #NOBYSTANDERS



## NOBYSTANDERS CAMPAIGN IDEAS – PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Create a NoBystanders inspired kindness pledge board in your school and encourage the whole school community to sign it, for example with a picture or drawing of them and their friends, or their hand print. Encourage school visitors to sign the display and see if you can get someone famous to sign it too!
- Encourage pupils to carry out random acts of kindness, like giving out free hugs, sitting next to someone new in class or spending time with someone who is on their own
- Use circle time to discuss ways to challenge hurtful language safely and who to report it to



Other Stonewall campaigns – Rainbow Laces and Different Families, Same Love



# 8 USE THE CURRICULUM A better understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people and issues will prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language from happening in the first place and help pupils understand why it is hurtful.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Just six per cent of primary school teachers say their school engages with parents on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues, for example around tackling bullying or hurtful language.



## PRIMARY SCHOOL EXAMPLES

**Different Families** Ask pupils to draw their family tree or a family portrait, explore representations of families on TV and talk about families that have more than one mum or dad or that are 'different' in another way. Use storybooks and Stonewall's Different Families materials to help.

**FREE** Use Stonewall's feature film for KS2 pupils to explore difference, diversity and respect as part of your PSHE curriculum. Download supporting materials and run workshop sessions and classroom activities on different families, bullying and homophobic language.

**Storybooks** Use books which feature different families, including same-sex families, and challenge stereotypes as part of learning exercises or circle time or leave them in the school library for pupils to pick up. Ask pupils to write a story about their family or explore different aspects of the story in more detail in drama or literature lessons. Use Stonewall's recommended book list online.

## SECONDARY SCHOOL EXAMPLES

*30 second examples:*

**ART** Talk about representations of masculinity and femininity and different families and relationships in art you are studying.

**MUSIC** Discuss the role music has played in shaping public perception of different groups of people, including LGBTQ+ people.

**HISTORY** Talk about the experiences of LGBTQ+ people, amongst other groups, in your teaching of different events in history.

**SPORT** Use a major sporting event, such as the Olympics, as an opportunity to discuss discrimination LGBTQ+ people experience internationally and the importance of challenging discrimination in sport.

**BOOKS AND FILMS** Ensure the library contains fiction and films featuring LGBTQ+ characters and families. Use Stonewall's recommended book and film lists online.

*For more on the curriculum see the Going further section on p24*

**TOP TIP:** Don't forget to mention when someone you're discussing in lessons is LGBTQ+ in a same-sex relationship or part of a same-sex family to help make it normal for pupils. Find age-appropriate language you feel comfortable to use (Stonewall's *Getting Started Toolkit* for primary schools provides child-friendly definitions for key words including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans).

### GETTING STARTED: KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK ABOUT LGBTQ+ ISSUES IN THE CURRICULUM

**SCHOOLS**  **OUT**

**February** *LGBT History Month* – a celebration of the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people from our past and present. Use this month as a way to start discussion around LGBTQ+ issues or to build on work you've already been doing to celebrate LGBTQ+ people.



*Safer Internet Day* – designed to help promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people. Explore the way we can use the internet to help prevent homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, celebrate diversity and be kind to each other.

**May** *IDAHOBIT* – a day on which efforts to promote equality for LGBTQ+ people around the world are celebrated. Explore the experiences of LGBTQ+ people at home and internationally, using Stonewall's research and website to help.



**November** *Anti-Bullying Week* – an opportunity to focus on and raise the profile of your anti-bullying work, including around homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

# 9 TAKE A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO TACKLING HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA AND CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Provide ways through which everyone in the school community can get involved and celebrate your pupils, staff and families, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans, to make it clear your school accepts everyone without exception.

## Governors

Include governors and demonstrate that tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying is a priority at every level.

### How to do it

Make homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying a meeting agenda item for governors

Invite governors to staff training or run a short session specifically for them

Share best practice from other schools so governors can see what they've done

Regularly update on the frequency of incidents using survey results and monitoring data

Invite governors to diversity days so they can celebrate achievements alongside the rest of the school community

## Young people

Encourage pupils to play an active role in tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language.

### How to do it

Help them with safe ways to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language amongst their peers

Explain that tackling this language is a school priority and ask pupils how they would like to be involved. For example:

- *anti-bullying ambassadors to champion and communicate key messages*
- *pupil groups, such as equality and diversity or LGBTQ+ groups, and councils to come up with campaigns and ideas for ways to talk to other pupils*
- *pupils to create pupil-friendly versions of the anti-bullying policy for classrooms, toilets, the canteen and the rest of the school*

Don't forget to showcase and celebrate pupils' work!

## Parents and carers

Be open and transparent with parents and carers about the school's approach to tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and celebrating diversity.

### How to do it

Make sure your anti-bullying policies are visible on the website, in induction packs and around the school

Emphasise the school's approach to discriminatory behaviour in home-school agreements and let parents and carers know how they can report any incidents they are aware of

Create classroom or corridor displays about your work to tackle bullying and celebrate diversity

Write to parents and carers to tell them about your anti-bullying work

Invite parents and carers to school for assemblies and celebrations so they can see that everyone is welcome at your school whatever the shape of their families or the form their friendship, love and identity takes



# TAKING A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH – KEY WAYS TO CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

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## HOW

## WHAT

### Posters

Use Stonewall’s posters around the school to trigger discussion and send a visible signal that your school is a diverse and accepting place. Get pupils involved in putting together displays

### Assemblies

Use assemblies to emphasise why it’s important to celebrate diversity, outline what the school will be doing and how to get involved

### Peer-led groups and workshops

Involve pupil-led equality and diversity, e-safety and anti-bullying groups

### Discussions

Use registration time or other opportunities to focus on different areas of diversity. Set out short equality and diversity discussion points for different subjects – for example on racial and religious diversity, LGBTQ+ people, customs and traditions from around the world – that any member of staff can integrate into their lessons

### Speakers and events

Invite different groups – LGBTQ+ groups, businesses, university students – from the local community to be part of your diversity initiatives. Arrange for a speaker to come in and talk about LGBTQ+ equality

# 10 LINK UP WITH OTHERS AND CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Share experiences, tips and ideas with other schools on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying.

You could invite them to see what you've been up to or develop a joint-school campaign. Work with other organisations in your local community – such as the local authority, NHS services, sports clubs, local businesses, youth charities or religious centres – to promote LGBTQ+ equality. Please contact Stonewall if you would like help finding organisations in your area.

## IN PRACTICE

**Rokeby School**, Newham, adapted Stonewall's 'Some People Are Gay. Get Over It!' T-shirts for LGBTQ+ History Month to a variety of characteristics including 'Some People Are Black', 'Some People Are Asian' and 'Some People Are Short' to show how discrimination can affect everyone and the importance of celebrating difference and not using prejudicial language.



(left) At **Chew Valley School**, Bristol, the Youth Involvement Group (YIG) coordinated the work to combat homophobic language. Pupils suggest their peers 'buy a dictionary' upon hearing inappropriate language, as part of a similar poster campaign in the school.

Wiltshire's **ZeeTee** campaign used a 'myth busters' film to explain why homophobic language is wrong. This was made by a youth group, featuring young people talking honestly about how homophobic language affected them.



(left) Students at **Blackrod Church of England Primary School** created a **NoBystanders** display during a whole-school Diversity Week.

# GOING FURTHER

## ALL-STAFF TRAINING TIPS

### BEFORE

**Plan** What is the aim of your session, what knowledge or skills do attendees need to develop and who should attend? For example *to ensure all attendees [all staff/lunchtime supervisors/senior leaders] know and feel confident on how to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, to develop a school-wide action plan on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying.*

**Know your stuff** Use Stonewall's education reports and best practice guides to help you brush up on key statistics, case studies and anything you're unsure of. Don't worry about knowing it all – your session will have an impact so long as you are clear and confident in how to meet the aim you have set.

**Bring everyone onsite** Refer to your school's policies on bullying and legal and Ofsted requirements to bring senior leaders on board from the start and to emphasise why your training is a priority. Use the results of your survey as evidence of what's going well in your school and where your training can address any gaps.

### DURING

**Use resources to help** Download Stonewall materials to share with staff in your session. *You'll find a wide range of resources on the Stonewall website ([www.stonewall.org.uk/best-practice-toolkits-and-resources-0](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/best-practice-toolkits-and-resources-0))*

### AFTER

**Pre- and post-evaluation** Survey colleagues anonymously about their levels of confidence so as to measure the impact your session has had. Offer top-up sessions to keep staff feeling confident over time.

### HOW TO DO IT IN...

**15 mins:** Introduce the issue of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. Ensure staff are clear what constitutes H B & T language, what the school's policy is, and outline ways staff can report. Gauge confidence levels so that can you identify further support or training that's needed.

**30 mins:** In addition to the above, get staff thinking in groups about possible responses to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language which could feed into a script. Come up with ways to support pupils to lead initiatives.

**60 mins or more:** Help staff plan and practise ways to respond to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. Ask them to think about ways to prevent and tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, for example by talking about LGBTQ+ issues in the curriculum or running a campaign in school.

## THE CURRICULUM

The following are quick and easy ways to approach LGBT-specific work in the curriculum, assemblies or tutor time, and should complement what you are already doing to include and reference LGBT people and different families across all subject areas and aspects of school life. These ideas should be adapted to suit pupils' ages, abilities and levels of knowledge.

### HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING

**1 Group task** What is homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying? (What does LGBTQ+ mean?). Provide pupils with statistics from this guide and other Stonewall materials and ask them to discuss how prevalent it is across the country. Is it the same in your school?

**2 Discussion** Who might experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying?

**3** Discuss and provide examples of different forms of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying (e.g. cyber, mental, physical). **4**

**Group task** What is homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language? Why is it important to prevent and tackle it?

**5 Action grid** One thing pupils have learnt, one thing they would like to know more about, one thing they will do or change as a result of this lesson.

## GENDER STEREOTYPES

**1 Group task** Ask pupils to describe themselves using three words (e.g. confident, sporty, chatty). Are these characteristics normally thought of as masculine or feminine? Can you think of any other gender stereotypes?

**2 Discussion** What do you know about the term 'gender expression' (how we express our gender, for example through our choice of clothes, hairstyle, in other ways)? Do you ever feel under pressure to express your gender in a particular way, for example in particular situations? How might people challenge stereotypes of their gender? Can you think of any famous people? Discuss and share some of the ways people may not conform to different gender stereotypes.

**3 Group task** Research shows that some groups of people, including those who don't conform to gender stereotypes, are more likely to experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. What can we do to challenge stereotypes in our school?

**GENDER AND TRANS – INTRODUCTION** *Start by addressing gender stereotypes using the ideas above. Then link to the ideas in this box.*

**1 Discussion** Display a range of contemporary and historical figures who do not conform to 'traditional' notions of gender and ask pupils to share their thoughts. How do different cultures view gender? (While Western cultures typically see gender as 'binary' – man and woman – many cultures are different).

**2** Define a few key terms (e.g. gender identity, trans and non-binary) using glossaries in Stonewall guides.

**3 Group task** Provide pupils with handouts featuring quotes and stories by trans role models who have spoken about their experience of being trans (taken from Stonewall Cymru's *LGBT Role Models* guide, Stonewall's LGBTQ+ History Month posters, Stonewall's *Christian Role Models* guide, websites listed in the 'Further resources' section of Stonewall's *An Introduction to Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People*). What kind of experiences has this person had? What has their story made you think about? Has it changed your ideas about gender? Describe one thing it's made you think about in relation to trans people or what being trans means.

**4 Discussion** Allow five minutes at the end of the lesson for questions and to summarise the ideas that have been discussed. Ask pupils to individually write down any questions or thoughts the lesson has provoked and put them in a box at the front of the class, which can help to shape your next lesson.

## **LGBTQ+ EQUALITY**

**1 Discussion** Explain key terminology relating to LGBTQ+ people (what L G B T Q + mean, words that are acceptable to use and that aren't). Don't forget to explain the difference between LGB (sexual orientation) and T (gender identity) but explain that, in lots of situations LGBTQ+ people are referred to as one group.

**2** Display LGBTQ+ figures from history from a range of cultures and backgrounds. Ask pupils if they know who they are, what they are famous for and what links them to each other.

**3 Group task** Ask pupils to match dates to events from a short timeline on equality for LGBTQ+ people in Britain.

**4 Discussion** Use Stonewall research to run a 'Which stats are right?' exercise on LGBTQ+ equality. Talk about legislation that protects LGBTQ+ people, including the Equality Act 2010.

**5 Group task** Ask pupils to focus on one aspect of LGBTQ+ equality, for example protection for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers or unequal health and social care for LGBTQ+ people. Ask pupils to design a mini campaign – with a name, objective and materials like promotional posters/flyers/tweets/website content – to raise awareness of this issue. Display pupils' campaigns publicly in school.

# IN PRACTICE

**Dalmain Primary School** has implemented an Equality Book where prejudice related bullying is recorded. The nature of the bullying is recorded and the learning mentor follows up all incidents.

**Wiltshire Council's ZeeTee (zero-tolerance to homophobic language) campaign** is designed to tackle homophobic language. The campaign included a short video of young people explaining why gay shouldn't be used to mean bad. The video uses examples such as 'gay trousers' (i.e. gay people don't look good) and a 'gay bottom maths set' (i.e. gay people are stupid) to show why the negative use of the word is wrong.

**Holbrook Primary School** in Wiltshire introduced a zero-tolerance approach to homophobic language. Whilst the use of such language decreased, the word 'gay' remained loaded. This became clear when a year six boy was talking about his uncle and mentioned that he was gay. 'You can't say that!' was the immediate response of several of his peers. It became apparent that an unintended consequence of the work was to suggest the word gay should never be used. The school realised that wider work to explain what gay means in its correct context was needed.

**Rokeby School**, Newham, adapted Stonewall's 'Some People Are Gay. Get Over It!' T-shirts for LGBTQ+ History Month to a variety of characteristics including 'Some People Are Black', 'Some People Are Asian' and 'Some People Are Short' to show how discrimination can affect everyone and the importance of celebrating difference and not using prejudicial language.

**Fred Nicholson Special School**, Norfolk, working in partnership with the Healthy Schools Programme in Norfolk, devised a questionnaire on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language for pupils. Pupils selected a feeling face in response to statements including '*It is OK to like different things to other people*' and '*I use the word 'gay' to mean that something is rubbish*'. Following survey responses the school developed a targeted whole-school approach including reviewing

policies, promoting pupil voice, ensuring inclusive resources are in the library and classrooms and training for all staff. The school also made tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia the focus of Anti-Bullying Week, with all pupils and staff sending positive messages around a human chain of support.

**Kendall Church of England Primary School**, Essex, puts their core Christian values, like friendship, at the heart of tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. All staff, from office staff to teachers and midday assistants to the caretaker, have received training and the senior leadership team keeps a record of all bullying incidents relating to discrimination, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. After a member of staff attended a Stonewall Train the Trainer course delivered by Chelmsford Diocese the school offered governors a one hour separate training to share the school's approach. Now, governors are regularly updated with data on incidents of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying.

In **Pensby High School**, the Wirral, heads of Key Stage regularly visit form rooms to reiterate expectations on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. The curriculum plays a key role and teachers have developed a set of PSHE lessons on LGBTQ+ identities, hurtful language, and *FTT*, beginning with an understanding of key terms followed by pupil presentations highlighting examples of bullying in the film and ways to tackle similar situations in school. Teachers have also focused on transgender issues in form time and delivered presentations on relationships and gender difference.

As part of LGBTQ+ History Month, staff at **Bexleyheath Academy**, Kent, delivered assemblies on NoBystanders. Inspired by the assemblies, two year seven pupils wrote a poem for their English coursework about standing up to bullies, which was then shared with the other pupils and published on the SMSC section of the school website.

At **Samuel Ward Academy**, Suffolk, NoBystanders posters and pledge cards are displayed around the school for visitors, staff and pupils to sign and there is a 'bystander' category on the behaviour log which has appropriate sanctions associated with it. Staff have delivered several assemblies on prejudice and courage that link in with the campaign, and pupils and staff are encouraged to wear NoBystanders pin badges to show their support.



# FURTHER SUPPORT ON TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE

## TRAINING AND ONGOING SUPPORT FROM STONEWALL

Access training from Stonewall to give you the knowledge, tools and confidence to train colleagues on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying and creating an inclusive learning environment for all young people. Visit our website or email us to find out more about our membership programmes.

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk) [education@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:education@stonewall.org.uk)

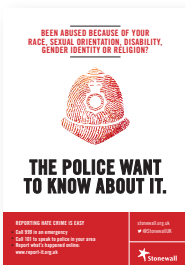


## STONEWALL'S INFORMATION SERVICE

Stonewall's Information Service provides details on lesbian, gay, bi and trans rights and issues affecting LGBTQ+ people, including everything from offering advice on tackling homophobia, biphobia or transphobia in schools to signposting to LGBTQ+ youth services in your local area. Get in touch on **08000 502020**, by emailing [info@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:info@stonewall.org.uk), or tweet [@stonewallukinfo](https://twitter.com/stonewallukinfo) with your question.

## WAYS TO REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

Stonewall has produced a range of resources, available at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk), outlining how to report a hate crime experienced or witnessed in the community. In addition, it's important to ensure staff know how to signpost young people to community support organisations that can help.



## STONEWALL RESOURCES

[www.stonewall.org.uk/educationresources](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/educationresources)



**Getting Started Toolkits** These toolkit set out 5 key steps to help staff tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in school.



**NoBystanders** is Stonewall's campaign to end bullying and discrimination by empowering others to challenge all forms of bullying when they can.



**Different Families** posters, stickers, postcards and Mother's and Father's day cards



Tackling homophobic language posters



Stonewall's ground-breaking campaign to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. Gay, Bi, Trans and Lesbian stickers are also available to order online.

## GET IN TOUCH WITH STONEWALL

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Everything we do is based on meeting the needs of schools, staff and young people. Please do get in touch with us to share your experiences and tell us what you think about our materials.

If you have any questions or would like to speak to Stonewall's education staff please email [education@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:education@stonewall.org.uk).

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**TEN STEPS TO  
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