ANTI_BULLYING®

HOMOPHOBIC AND BIPHOBIC BULLYING
STAFF GUIDE

Government
Equalities Office

HOMOPHOBIC AND BIPHOBIC BULLYING:
WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

Attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals have shifted drastically over the past couple of decades and society has made a lot of progress. Unfortunately however young LGBTQ+ people are still at high risk of being targeted by bullying behaviour as well as having poor mental health. Beyond the school gates anti-HBT hate crimes have more than doubled in the UK over the past five years. It's vital that we work in schools to change attitudes and support young LGBTQ+ individuals so we can foster a safer, more tolerant future.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

It's important to define bullying behaviour in order to distinguish it from one off incidents and relating conflict. It's also important to outline the definition in your policies and work towards a specialised policy for anti-HBT bullying.

THE DIANA AWARD DEFINES BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AS_

Repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe.

HOMOPHOBIC/ BIPHOBIC BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS_

The targeted abuse of an individual who identifies as lesbian, gay or bi, or someone who is questioning their sexual orientation.

HOW MIGHT HOMOPHOBIC AND BIPHOBIC BULLYING MANIFEST ITSELF_

VERBAL

- Homophobic/Biphobic slurs
- The intended misuse of language e.g. 'that's so gay', 'greedy'.
- Verbal gestures and intimidation.

PHYSICAL

- Physically attacking someone due to their sexuality
- Unwanted sexual contact

INDIRECT

Homophobic/biphobic bullying can also be INDIRECT. This is where actions or words are carried out which are not spoken or inflicted directly upon someone who is homosexual or bi yet the bullying behaviour is still targeted. For example:

- Homophobic or biphobic rhetoric on social media
- Excluding someone due to their sexuality (a common example being refusing to share a changing room with someone who identifies as gay, lesbian or bi). Exclusion can also manifest itself on social media or in gaming
- Outing someone either on social media or through sharing information verbally without consent.

!DID YOU KNOW?

According to LGBT rights charity Stonewall, nearly half (45%) of LGB students face bullying behaviour at school. However it's important to remember that this figure could be higher as reporting may risk unwanted outing.

Homophobic and biphobic language can be directed to a group or individual, those who are both openly or perceived to be homosexual or bi, as well as those from same sex families or with a close relationship to a homosexual or bi person(s).

BIPHOBIA AND BI-ERASURE_

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY BI?

Bi is an umbrella term for bi identities, including:

Bisexual: Someone who is sexually attracted to more than one gender.

Biromantic: Someone who is romantically attracted to more than one gender (biromantic people may be sexually attracted to people whom identify with one gender, but be romantically attracted to more than one gender).

WHAT IS PANSEXUALITY?

Whereas bisexual people are attracted to more than one gender, for those who identify as pansexual, gender does not factor into their sexual attraction at all.

BI-ERASURE

For bisexual or biromantic people, one of the most common forms of bullying behaviour and discrimination is bierasure. Bi-erasure is the denial of bisexuality as a legitimate identity. It is often grounded in the misguided belief that bi individuals will eventually 'pick a side' or are simply navigating through an experimental phase. This can be incredibly damaging, as such dismissal can make bi people feel invalidated and othered.

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIC AND BIPHOBIC LANGUAGE_

It's important to challenge homophobic and biphobic language inside and beyond the school walls. Fostering a school environment where students and staff are encouraged to be upstanders when witnessing homophobic or biphobic language, helps LGBT+ students to feel happy, safe and comfortable during one of the most important and formative periods of their life.

CONNOR,
ANTIBULLYING AMBASSADOR

"When people say stuff like 'that's so gay' it creates this feeling where nobody wants to be gay, where people are scared of it, where people don't want to be associated with it because it's such a negative thing to be"

COMMON EXAMPLES:

- YOU'RE SO GAY!
- I DON'T WANT TO CATCH GAY
- GREEDY
- PICK A SIDE
- MAKE YOUR MIND UP, YOU CAN'T LIKE BOYS AND GIRLS

DID YOU KNOW?

According to Stonewall's 2017 School Report, 76% of young people have never learnt about bisexuality at school.

DID YOU KNOW?

"Fewer than a third (29%) of LGBT pupils said that teachers intervened when witness to homophobic bullying incidents"
-Stonewall School Report 2017

RESPONDING TO HOMOPHOBIC AND BIPHOBIC LANGUAGE_

When responding to homophobic and biphobic language it works well toquestion the individual's meaning of the word.

"SHE'S JUST BEING GREEDY"

- What do you mean when you say 'greedy' in relation to this person?

- Do you understand what bisexuality means?

- How do you think calling someone 'greedy' in relation to their identity might make someone feel?

- Just because you don't understand something, it doesn't make it wrong.I would advise learning more about bisexuality and what it means. There are books in the library on this topic and lots of resources online. Go and research and come back to me tomorrow so we can talk through what you've learnt.

BRIGHT IDEA

Encourage your ambassadors to run an assembly that discusses why the misuse of language can be so damaging and practice challenging homophobic and biphobic language in pairs using some of the prompts above. They could also design posters to be visible throughout the school that address this issue. This is empowering for the students and gets the message across in a relatable way to a large body of the school population.

"THAT'S SO GAY"

- "When you say 'gay' what do you actually mean?". At this point it's easy to deduce that they generally mean 'rubbish', 'bad' or 'pathetic'.

- "How do you think that would make someone who is gay feel?". It can also help to use an example where 'gay' is replaced by the name of the student using the homophobic language e.g. "How would you feel if someone used 'Harry' in the same way to mean rubbish all the time?"

- If the student continues the behaviour or is seen to outwardly disagree with the target's identity, ask them privately why they believe it is wrong and discuss where those views come from. Challenge these views and explain the impact these words can have on the self-esteem and mental health of LGBT+ individuals.

- End by explaining that in your school you champion respect and everyone's right to be who they are, safely and happily. Such language and behaviour is not tolerated under any circumstances.

REPORTING AND RECORDING_

All schools should have an Anti-Bullying Policy in place but as best practice we recommend having either a separate Anti-HBT policy or specific sub-section that addresses this type of bullying.

Use your existing reporting and recording framework to create a specific process for homophobic and biphobic bullying. It's important that bullying behaviour directed to someone due to their protected characteristics (including sexual orientation and gender identity) has a separate process to comply and display accordance to the Equality Act. It will also assure LGBT+ students that they are supported, discrimination is actively challenged and their identity is valued.

DID YOU KNOW?

Under the Equality Act of 2010 an Education Inspections Act of 2006 schools are required to 'eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and promote the safety and wellbeing of young people in their care'.

BRIGHT IDEA

Create a survey to establish how staff and students feel about the frequency and impact of homophobic bullying? Questions could include:

- How often do you witness homophobic and biphobic bullying

- Do you feel like homophobic and biphobic language is challenged effectively?

- What are the most common examples of homophobic and biphobic language you hear?

- Do you agree that LGBT+ pupils feel safe to be themselves without fear in school?

- Do LGBT+ pupils feel represented in school?

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT _

- See our Inclusive Curriculum Guide for guidance on how LGBT+ visibility, experiences and challenging gender stereotypes can be embedded throughout areas of learning.

- Visibility is key. Displays about LGBT+ role models are great to ensure representation.

- Bring in LGBT+ role models to tell their stories and share their experiences.

- Ensure your library includes books that represent LGBT+ characters and diverse family units as well as publications by LGBT+ authors. See Stonewall's book list.
  Primary: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/primary-school-booklist
  Secondary: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/secondary-schoolbook-list

- Find out about local pride events in your area and get your school involved.

- Fundraising events for LGBT+ charities.

- Consider starting, if you haven't already, a safe space or support group as part of your involvement in the ambassador programme. This allows young LGBT+ individuals to talk through their experiences and ask for advice.

- Actively challenge gender stereotypes particularly in areas such as sport which is often separated by gender.

- Having flags on display in some capacity throughout classrooms and communal areas. This visibility helps LGBT+ students to feel recognised.

- Discussions, assemblies, posters on the importance of being an ally and what this entails.

- Always be there to listen and support. See our 'Coming Out' document for advice on how to respond to a student coming out as LGBT+.

- Strive to use neutral language i.e. 'partner' instead of husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend.

Useful Links
www.net-aware.org.uk
Provided by O2 & NSPCC, this online tool is designed to help anyone understand what online applications do and how to use them

Access further information and advice on antibullyingpro.com/support-centre

Access free anti-bullying training online for all your staff team from the Anti-Bullying Alliance on anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/

Crisis Messenger Service
Test **DA** to **85258** if you are a young person experiencing a crisis, including being bullied for your gender identity or sexual orientation.

Educators Against Bullying
fb.com/groups/educatorsagainstbullying
We want to invite you to join a Facebook group for teachers, youth workers and other educators to share good practice, seek advice and support each other around the issue of bullying.

Get Involved
For more information about the training, including dates, please contact
josh.buckland@diana-award.org.uk

/antibullyingpro

@antibullyingpro

@antibullyingpro

/antibullyingpro