

LGBT+ inclusion:

Guidance for members

1. LGBT+ inclusion: General guidance

What is LGBT+ inclusive education?

LGBT+ inclusive education requires a whole school approach, involving everyone in the school community. Creating an LGBT+ inclusive school/college entails attention and action across every aspect of school/college life:



Figure 1:
Equal and Inclusive Schools and Colleges framework.
Adapted from New Zealand anti-bullying model.

"I recently used Lyra McKee's 'Letter to my 14-Year-Old Self' to get a year 9 English class to focus on their own feelings about growing up/changing and simultaneously exploring the idea of coming out. Students produced some great written work."

Classroom Teacher

Curriculum

LGBT+ inclusion involves reviewing the curriculum to ensure it includes:

- Teaching about LGBT+ rights movements and LGBT+ peoples' involvement in culture, music, science, philosophy, politics and art in the UK and globally
- Teaching about the prevalence and resistance to homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and the oppression of gender and sexually diverse people, including the impact of colonisation on LGBT+ people's rights and experiences globally
- Reviewing lesson plans across all subjects to eliminate heteronormative bias, to challenge gender stereotypes, to ensure diverse families, sexual orientations and gender identities are represented across all subjects.

"We have an amazing pride group, quite a few staff attend to show solidarity to students. We also have a wonderful pastoral team who have been instrumental in supporting an out trans student."

Classroom Teacher

Values and culture

Situating LGBT+ inclusion in the context of wider equality gives a powerful message about the benefits everyone experiences when education is truly inclusive. Ensuring representation and celebration of people across faiths, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, class backgrounds, family types, nationalities and ages ensures every child is included and informed about the true diversity around them. LGBT+ inclusion cannot be considered an add-on or an optional aspect of this comprehensive inclusion. School values should support an LGBT+ inclusive school community and embed an LGBT+ inclusive culture.

Voice

LGBT+ inclusion requires listening to LGBT+ people in your community including pupils, staff, governors and the wider community. LGBT+ people will be a minority in any school so engaging with the LGBT+ community both within and outside the school, and ensuring their voices are heard, is critical to effective LGBT+ inclusion.

Training and development

No one is immune from the negative and harmful messaging about LGBT+ people that permeates our society. LGBT+ inclusion requires un-learning what we have absorbed from a homo/bi/transphobic society. It involves learning more about the diversity of the LGBT+ community and the unique needs and experiences of LGBT+ people. Specialist training and development activities can support your staff team to become more LGBT+ inclusive.

Leadership

Leaders have an important role to play around every aspect of LGBT+ inclusion. Ensuring decision making processes are transparent and accountable, and delegating responsibilities to encourage a transformed school community, are essential to the success of LGBT+ inclusion.

Parents, carers and community

Schools are inherently connected to the communities around them both as a vital resource and as a hub for community activity. Parents and carers form part of the school community and regular and effective engagement with parents and carers is critical to the success of any school activity, particularly LGBT+ inclusive education which may feel unfamiliar to some families. Schools can also utilise local community organisations and leaders in their LGBT+ inclusion work to bring new perspectives, resources and approaches into the school community.

Data

Many schools/colleges do not collect data on LGBT+ pupils and staff. Without this information, it can be difficult for schools/colleges to plan effectively around the needs of LGBT+ pupils and staff. Reviewing equality monitoring processes to ensure relevant information is being collected, stored and used appropriately is a part of LGBT+ inclusive education.

Policies and procedures

Ensuring all school policies are LGBT+ inclusive and developing evidence-based LGBT+ specific policies where appropriate is important for LGBT+ inclusion. See [here](#) for more information about what policies may need to be reviewed to embed LGBT+ inclusion.

What legal basis is there for LGBT+ inclusion?

All early years, primary, secondary and post-16 settings should provide an environment where LGBT+ staff, volunteers, parents, carers, children and young people are safe and free to be themselves and experience acceptance from adults and other young people. The NEU believes LGBT+ inclusion is essential to a broad and balanced education and supports members to deliver good, evidence-based practice, rather than simply meet legal requirements. However, if you are facing challenges in your education setting, knowing the law can help.

There are several pieces of legislation and statutory guidance relevant to LGBT+ inclusion.

- **Advancing equality** (Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality Act 2010)

Schools have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that teaching is accessible and inclusive to all children and young people, including those who are LGBT+, and to teach in a non-discriminatory way. Inclusive RSE will foster good relations between pupils, tackle all types of prejudice – including misogyny, sexism

and homo/bi/trans phobia – and promote understanding and respect, enabling schools to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Schools are entitled to cover a range of issues and ideas, however all content must be delivered in a way that does not subject any pupil to discrimination. For more on equality duties, see [here](#).

- **Preventative anti-bullying measures** (Section 89, Education Inspections Act 2006)

Schools have a duty not just to safeguard after an incident of bullying, but also to have preventative anti-bullying measures. LGBT+ inclusive education is a core aspect of preventative anti-bullying measures as it fosters good relationships and looks at the impact of homo/trans/bi-phobic bullying.

- **Broad and balanced curriculum** (Section 78, Education Act 2002).

The Education Act requires schools to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepare them for their adult lives. All children and young people will have LGBT+ friends, family and/or peers so teaching about the existence of LGBT+ people and the rights available to people by law is essential to a broad and balanced education.

- **Safeguarding children** (Keeping children safe in Education 2019; Section 175 of the Education Act 2002)

There is a duty on all maintained schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. LGBT+ pupils are entitled to an education free from bullying, abuse and harassment.

- **Pupil wellbeing** (Section 10 of the Children's Act 2004)

Local authorities are required to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority and schools with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area – this includes protection from harm and neglect alongside other outcomes.

“ My school has participated in London Pride for years and we have a curriculum and whole school assembly/event programme that centres the LGBT+ experience and encourages activism and social consciousness.”

Classroom Teacher

What evidence is there for LGBT+ inclusive education?

Preparing an evidence-based case for LGBT+ inclusive education will be helpful to present to staff, SLT, governors and/or parents and carers as required. Collating the evidence to support the case for LGBT+ inclusive education may also help to keep you motivated and focused during negotiations.

Local data

Start collating evidence on the lived experiences of LGBT+ people in your school community and/or local area. You might:

- Collate information on incidents of homo/bi/transphobic bullying in the school amongst staff, parents/carers and pupils. This might include incidents of sexual harassment and/or harmful sexual behaviours.
- Collate reports of homo/bi/transphobic incidents in the local media and national press that children and young people are likely to see or hear about. You might also compile data about hate crime incidents.
- Utilise reports from local LGBT+ youth and community groups and campaigns.

LGBT+ inclusion as a child health and wellbeing issue

The experiences of LGBT+ children and young people highlight that LGBT+ inclusion is not optional but can be a life-saving intervention for many children and young people. The following data is taken from [Stonewall's 2017 School Report \(S\)](#), [Metro's 2014 Youth Chances report \(M\)](#) and [PACE's 2015 RaRE Research Report \(P\)](#):

- Over half of LGBT+ respondents knew they were LGBT+ by the age of 13 (M). Commencing LGBT+ inclusion in secondary school is simply too late for many young LGBT+ people.
- At least 2% of the UK population are LGB. This means every education setting will have LGBT+ people (staff or pupils) in the school community. (NB. There is no reliable data on the number of trans people in the UK.)
- 45% of LGBT+ pupils - including 64% of trans pupils - are bullied for being LGBT+ in Britain's schools with 50% hearing homophobic slurs 'frequently' or 'often' at school (S).
- LGBT+ young people are twice as likely not to feel accepted in the area where they currently live, compared to heterosexual non-trans young people (M).
- More than four in five trans young people have self-harmed, as have three in five LGB young people who aren't trans (P).
- 34% of young LGB people had made at least one suicide attempt in their lives as compared to 18% of heterosexual young people (P).
- 48% of trans* young people had made at least one suicide attempt in their lives (P).
- More than two in five trans young people have attempted to take their own life, as have one in five LGB students who aren't trans (P).

A [2018 UNESCO report on experiences of LGBT+ children and young people](#) found disturbing global parallels, with LGBT+ young people consistently experiencing high rates of victimisation and low rates of reporting.

" At my school there are a lot of teachers who genuinely listen and respond to our trans kids and change and adapt teaching, eg. not gendering Shakespeare's monologues for drama auditions."

Classroom Teacher

LGBT+ inclusion as a human rights issue

Some anti-LGBT+ lobbyists are trying to present human rights of LGBT+ people as competing with the rights of people in faith communities. In fact, there are LGBT+ people belonging to every faith community. Education must be inclusive and contribute to giving pupils knowledge and skills to uphold human rights. There are significant international human rights protections relating to LGBT+ inclusive education including:

- Right to Education: All children have a right to education. By not explicitly including LGBT+ pupils, schools may be compounding their exclusion from education in contravention of children's rights under [Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(1948\)](#), [Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(1966\)](#), [Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#) and [UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education \(1960\)](#).
- Children's Rights: All decisions should be made with respect to the best interests of the child and every child must have freedom of expression including access to all kinds of appropriate information as protected in [Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#); and [Article 13 of the Convention on the rights of the Child \(1989\)](#).

LGBT+ inclusion as a workplace equality issue

LGBT+ workers are more likely to face harassment and discrimination based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity than their non-LGBT+ counterparts. The nature of education settings presents LGBT+ staff with a specific set of barriers to being safe and equal at work. Support from the whole school community, starting with Governance and Senior Leaders, is essential to the safety, health and well-being of LGBT+ staff in education settings.

Here are some facts about LGBT+ people at work (all taken from the [TUC's 2017 Cost of being out at work](#) report unless otherwise stated):

- More than a third of LGBT+ workers have been harassed or bullied at work.
- Nearly two in five (39%) LGBT+ workers have been harassed or discriminated against by a colleague, more than one in four (29%) by a manager and around one in seven (14%) by a client or patient. This harassment and discrimination could include anything from 'jokes' at the expense of LGBT+ people to bullying or blocking someone's career development.
- Only half (51%) of LGBT+ people – and just one in three (36%) young people – are out or open about their sexuality to all their colleagues at work. More than one in four (27%) of bisexual respondents hide their sexuality at work.
- Almost one in three (30%) trans respondents have had their trans status disclosed against their will.
- Nearly a third of primary school teachers (29 per cent) have heard homophobic language or negative remarks about lesbian, gay or bisexual people from other school staff. (Stonewall 2017 Schools Report)

The NEU believes that employment practices in every school will improve if the NEU school group plans to develop LGBT+ inclusion across a range of policies and practices. See [here](#) for NEU advice on gender identity and sexual orientation-based discrimination and harassment.

What child experts say

Many children and young people experts have been vocal in their support for LGBT+ inclusive education.

The Royal College of Paediatricians released [this statement](#) about LGBT+ inclusive Relationships Education in primary schools:

There needs to be a clear statement that LGBT people and relationships are part of teaching about healthy relationships in primary school. This can be demonstrated in relation to families - but also it is helpful to children to learn the meaning of terms such as lesbian, gay and bisexual.

A group of faith leaders, including Fiyaz Mughal, Faith Matters, Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Reform Judaism, Rev Stephen Terry, Accord Coalition for Inclusive Education, Very Rev Bertrand Olivier Church of England, and Rabia Mirza, British Muslims for Secular Democracy published an [open letter](#) in the Guardian:

Challenging LGBT discrimination in school lessons and in everyday school life is fundamental to fostering equality at school and in wider society. This teaching should take place at both primary and secondary level, to stem the development of anti-LGBT prejudice and to support LGBT people in the school community.

The NSPCC said the new inclusive RSE guidance would help children 'navigate the modern world':

The NSPCC firmly believes that every child should be taught from an early age about consent, different relationships, and what abuse and harassment is, so that they learn they have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

The Catholic Education Service also welcomed the government's announcement:

Catholic education is centred on the formation of the whole child and age-appropriate RSE is an essential part of this...It is essential for creating well-rounded young people, for equipping students to make good life choices and for keeping our children safe.

The National Children's Bureau said:

[the guidance is] a welcome step forward in preparing children for adulthood, improving their well-being and keeping them safe and healthy.

[UNESCO](#) makes strong recommendations about LGBT+ inclusive education from a human rights and mental health perspective, including a recommendation that all schools adopt comprehensive policies to prevent and address violence faced by LGBT+ pupils, review and adapt curricula and educational materials, support and train members and provide information to the whole school community on equality and inclusion.

There are dozens of national media platforms with articles about the importance of LGBT+ inclusive education in primary schools. Some examples are [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

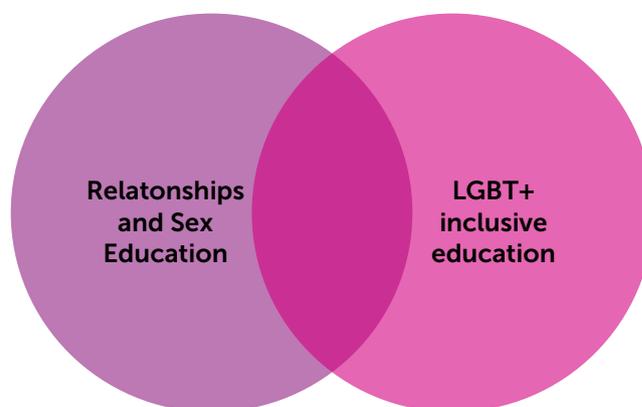
Why is everyone talking about RSE and LGBT+ inclusion now?

Statutory Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education was issued by the Department of Education in June 2019, updating previous guidance issued over 20 years ago. This guidance (hereafter 'the 2020 guidance') states that from September 2020, all primary schools in England will be required to teach Relationships Education, all secondary schools in England will be required to teach Relationships and Sex Education, and all schools, except independent schools, in England will be required to teach Health Education.

The NEU believes it is helpful the Government has revised this Guidance. The 2020 guidance covers a range of issues experienced by children and young people including sexual violence, bullying, mental health, domestic abuse and self-harm.

What is the difference between RSE and LGBT+ inclusion?

Relationships and Sex Education includes a wide range of content areas including families, carers, friendships, relationships, online relationships, intimate relationships, sexual health, safety, consent, abuse, sex, love, and many other areas. LGBT+ inclusive RSE is important, but LGBT+ inclusion is about much more than RSE:



What does the 2020 RSE guidance say about LGBT+ inclusion?

There are several documents relevant to new Statutory RSE guidance. These are:

- The [updated statutory guidance](#) in full, June 2019 (all content in this section is taken from this Guidance document unless otherwise stated)
- [FAQs, published online](#) 29th April 2019 (FAQs)
- [Guides for parents](#) and carers: June 2019
- [Guide on parental engagement](#): October 2019

There are many references to LGBT+ inclusion throughout the document. We have collated key references within the guidance below.

The foreword to the 2020 guidance states:

Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and belief of pupils and parents and carers while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.²

² Secretary of State Foreword, p4

On LGBT+ inclusion:

At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.³

³ Paragraph 37

The 2020 guidance states that by the end of Primary School:

- All students should be aware of the existence of different families, which can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents and carers, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures. Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and needs, to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them; e.g. looked after children or young carers'.⁴
- Students should understand the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.
- All students should be aware of different types of bullying and the responsibilities of bystanders.

⁴ Paragraph 59

The 2020 guidance states that by the end of Secondary School pupils should:

- Be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality.
- Have an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and health same sex relationships. This should be integrated appropriately into the RSE programme, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.⁵
- Learn how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage.⁶

⁵ Paragraph 75

⁶ Table, column 2, bullet point 2, p28

The 2020 guidance further states:

Schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled.⁷

Schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.⁸

⁷ Paragraph 31

⁸ Paragraph 36

The guidance states that schools are entitled to determine how to deliver the content set out in this guidance, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum⁹. It also refers specifically to Citizenship, Science, Computing and Physical Education as national curriculum subjects where this content could be integrated where appropriate.

⁹ Paragraph 5

What is the NEU's position on RSE and LGBT+ inclusion?

The NEU has successfully campaigned to achieve statutory status for Relationship and Sex Education. We believe RSE is critical for supporting children and young people to have meaningful, safe and fulfilling relationships.

The NEU believes all Relationships Education and RSE must be LGBT+ inclusive, promote gender equality and actively challenge all forms of abuse, discrimination and oppression. It needs to reflect and celebrate a diversity of cultures, faiths and family types and support children and young people to be their unique and authentic selves.

The Sex Education Forum has collated evidence on effective quality sex and relationships education and in doing so developed [12 key principles](#), which the NEU endorses.

The use of the phrase 'LGBT+ content' is misleading, implying that LGBT+ people are somehow separate from mainstream society and that it is optional for children to be taught about the existence of LGBT+ people. LGBT+ people are a significant minority across all communities, and it is incorrect to suggest that teaching about the existence of LGBT+ people is additional or separate 'content' to mainstream curriculum. For this reason, we use the terminology of LGBT+ inclusion as an explicit affirmation of the existence and contribution of LGBT+ people to all societies. To not include LGBT+ people in education is to exclude a group of people with protected characteristics from their rights to safety, self-expression and education.

ⁱ The statutory requirement to provide Health Education does not apply to Independent schools. PSHE is already compulsory as independent schools must meet the Independent school standards as set out in the Education (Independent schools standards) Regulations 2014. Independent schools however may find the principles in the guidance on Health Education helpful in planning an appropriate curriculum.

Negotiating for LGBT+ inclusion



If you are facing challenges and/or barriers

