

# LGBTI+ Safe & Supportive Schools

## Toolkit

Creating schools that are fully inclusive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI+) Young People

Revised Edition (2019)



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Revised Edition 2019

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# Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Sexual orientation ranges along a continuum, from exclusive sexual attraction to the opposite sex through to exclusive attraction to the same sex. People can identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or pansexual.
<b>Lesbian</b>	A woman who is physically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex.
<b>Gay</b>	A man who is physically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex.
<b>Bisexual</b>	A person who is attracted to both people of the same sex and people of the opposite sex.
<b>Pansexual</b>	An individual who may be attracted to any person, regardless of their sex or gender/ gender identity.
<b>Intersex</b>	Intersex people have various sex characteristics (e.g. chromosomes or genitals) that do not belong strictly to what is regarded as male or female categories, or that belong to both at the same time. The term 'intersex' also stands for acceptance of the physical fact that sex is a spectrum (rather than an 'either/or' category) and people with variations of sex characteristics exist.
<b>Gender/Gender Identity</b>	Gender identity is the person's feeling of being male, female, both, a mixture, or neither, which is shown to other people through gender expression (clothes, hairstyles, mannerisms, etc.) It is separate and independent from sexual orientation. Trans people can be lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, straight or pansexual.
<b>Trans</b>	Trans is an umbrella term used to describe people with a gender identity and / or gender expression different to their sex assigned at birth. It may be used to encompass many identities that are outside of a cisgender identity (where a person's gender identity and/or expression is the same as their birth sex i.e. someone who is identified as male at birth and grows up to identify as a man).
<b>Coming out</b>	Coming out is the process through which an LGBTI+ person accepts their sexual orientation or gender identity as part of their overall identity. It not only refers to the process of self-acceptance, but also to the act of sharing this identity with others.
<b>Homophobic/ Homophobic Bullying</b>	Homophobic is a behaviour or belief that discriminates against a person because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Homophobic bullying is bullying behaviour directed at a person who is perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.
<b>Transphobic/ Transphobic Bullying</b>	Transphobic is a behaviour or belief that discriminates against a person because they are trans. Transphobic bullying is bullying behaviour directed at a person who is perceived to be trans.
<b>BeLonG To</b>	The national organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) young people.
<b>Stand Up!</b>	Stand Up! is BeLonG To's annual LGBTI+ Awareness Week aimed at creating positive understanding of LGBTI+ young people and their issues. An educational pack for Stand Up! is sent to all schools via the Principal in advance of the week.
<b>DES</b>	Department of Education and Skills
<b>HPS</b>	Health Promoting Schools – an evidence-based settings approach, supported by the World Health Organisation, to promote the health and wellbeing of the whole school community through the four action areas: Environment (Social and Physical); Policy and Planning; Curriculum and Learning; and Partnerships.
<b>HSE</b>	Health Service Executive
<b>LGBTI+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex. The '+' symbol denotes, and is inclusive of, other gender identities of which people identify.
<b>RSE</b>	Relationships and Sexuality Education
<b>SPHE</b>	Social, Personal and Health Education

# What is the Toolkit and who is it for?

This 'toolkit' is for Post-Primary School staff who want to create safe and supportive schools that are fully inclusive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI+) young people. This is an updated version of the original toolkit first produced in 2015, to include recent policy changes.

The resource outlines an 'LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Whole-School Community Model' with six key action areas that can effectively be implemented through strong school leadership and senior management support. The action areas are complimentary to the recent DES Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018-2023). To provide a context, this document outlines a rationale that highlights the importance of this work from a youth mental health and an educational outcomes perspective.

This toolkit is intended for all staff, but is of particular relevance to Boards of Management, Senior Management, Student Support Teams (often referred to as Care Teams or Pastoral Care Teams), Coordinators and Teachers of SPHE/RSE, staff involved in supporting Wellbeing, Student Councils and Parents Associations. In a school where implementation of the toolkit is being considered, all staff (teaching and non-teaching) should have an opportunity to review and discuss the toolkit. Parents and students should also be involved. Everyone in the school community has a role to play in creating safe, supportive and inclusive environments for all students, including LGBTI+ students.

The 'LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Whole-School Community Model' was developed by Michael Barron and Lisa O'Hagan for both BeLonG To and Health Promotion and Improvement (Health and Wellbeing Division - Health Service Executive). It is informed by national and international good practice. It has been intensively piloted in Donegal Post-Primary schools with positive outcomes. A context for this work in Donegal, along with the pilot study process and results can be found in the 'LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Schools Interim Evaluation' which is available at [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org). Throughout the document there will be references to the full report to highlight significant points.

# How to use the Toolkit

Many schools are already taking action in one or more of the identified key areas in the LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Whole-School Community model. Each of the six key areas of the model has distinct features, but all six work together to provide a comprehensive whole school-community response. As each area supports the other, taking action in all of the areas will be more effective than working on one area alone.



Schools working within the Health Promoting School (HPS) context will be familiar with this type of whole school approach. This model is also in keeping with the Whole School Approach to Wellbeing<sup>1</sup> outlined in the recent DES Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018), and the NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2017)<sup>2</sup>. Student Councils could also play an important role in encouraging student voice, input and action in relation to implementing this model in the school setting.

The DES Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice outlines School Self-Evaluation as the process by which schools should initiate their review of wellbeing as a starting point. In keeping with the School Self-Evaluation process, schools may choose to review their current practices using the LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Schools - Rapid Assessment Tool (Appendix 1) before prioritising further actions.

# Why is this work important?

It is estimated that between 5% and 10% of the population is LGBT+. Irish research indicates that the majority of LGBT+ young people are aware of their LGBT+ identity by the age of 12, and are coming out at younger ages than previous generations<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, stigma, isolation and anti-LGBT+ bullying, means that LGBT+ young people can experience challenges to their well-being and mental health during this formative period of their lives.

Both in Ireland and internationally, homophobic and transphobic bullying have been highlighted as a serious problem. Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon described homophobic bullying as *“a moral outrage, a grave violation of human rights and a public health crisis...”* and speaking of the devastating impact of homophobia highlighted that *“it is also a loss for the entire human family when promising lives are cut short.”*

In Ireland, homophobic and transphobic bullying has been found to be one of the most widespread forms of bullying<sup>4</sup>. Trinity College Dublin’s School of Education found that while 16% of all Irish second-level students experienced bullying<sup>5</sup>, significantly higher rates of bullying are experienced by LGBT+ young people. The *LGBTIreland Report* (2016), a major study funded by the Health Service Executive’s (HSE) National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP), found that in relation to LGBT+ young people’s school experiences:

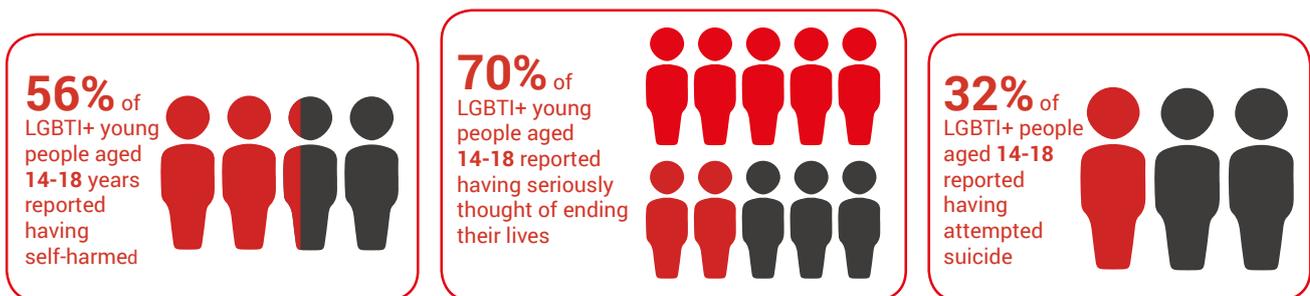


Irish teachers have also reported witnessing very high levels of homophobic bullying. Research funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and carried out by Dublin City University (DCU) found that 79% of teachers were aware of homophobic bullying in their schools<sup>6</sup>. The same study found that 41% of teachers found it more difficult to deal with homophobic bullying than other forms of bullying. The *LGBTIreland Report* also shows that only 1 in 5 LGBTI+ young people who are experiencing homophobic bullying seek any support from their school or teachers.

Unfortunately, bullying can persist beyond the school gates, both online and in local communities. In 2017, BeLonG To noted an increase in the numbers of LGBTI+ young people who experienced bullying online, despite the internet also acting as a safe space for LGBTI+ young people looking to connect with other LGBTI+ youth.

The *LGBTIreland Report* notes that accessing LGBTI+ support services and groups can tackle the sense of loneliness and isolation some feel, and increase the ease with their identities. The report also notes many LGBTI+ young people find allies in the wider community and amongst local youth workers. This provision, however, can either be sparse, or awareness of these inclusive services and groups can be quite low amongst LGBTI+ young people.

The urgency for tackling these problems lies in the devastating impact that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying can have on young people's lives. The *LGBTIreland Report* found that, compared to their non-LGBTI+ friends:



The report also found a direct correlation between homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and mental health difficulties amongst LGBTI+ young people, i.e. young people who experience such bullying are more likely to experience depression, anxiety and stress, use alcohol, self-harm, and attempt suicide. The report cites the partnership work needed between statutory and voluntary services, including youth work, to promote inclusivity of LGBTI+ young people to promote their wellbeing and emotional health.

# Legislative and Policy Context

## International

### *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*

While sexual orientation and gender identity were not originally named grounds in international human rights law, protections for LGBTI+ people, including young people, emerged in more recent years.

In international law, LGBTI+ people are protected through rights ascribed to “all people”, and additionally as members of a minority group. LGBTI+ young people are specifically protected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (again as part of “all children”, but also as a named group in interpretations of the convention), and specifically protected in schools, the site of much homophobic and transphobic bullying, through the right to education.

The UNCRC consists of 41 articles detailing the rights to which children are entitled. It is underpinned by the values of equality and non-discrimination, empowering children, participation, and accountability of decision-makers and service providers to supporting children and young people<sup>8</sup>.

## Ireland

### *Irish Acts*

Many strides have been made in improving the lives for LGBTI+ people. In the decades since the beginnings of the gay rights movement in the 1970s, to the Equal Marriage Referendum in 2015, Ireland has become a more accepting nation for LGBTI+ people. Very significant legislative changes have been vitally important, but should be seen as steps to creating cultural change to support LGBTI+ young people, rather than an end goal. Therefore, the different ministries within government have also published a series of plans and strategies to ensure that the aims of different laws are fulfilled.

### *Equal Status Act 2000*

Schools are legally obliged to deal with homophobic and transphobic bullying under the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2008). Under the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) all schools are required to have in place a Code of Behaviour. The Act requires that this code must be prepared in accordance with guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The NEWB’s publication “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools” was issued to schools in 2008. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the guidelines issued by the NEWB, all schools are required to have an Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of their overall code of behaviour.

The Equal Status Act (2000) prohibits schools from discriminating (with certain exemptions) on nine grounds, including gender and sexual orientation. Harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender is prohibited. This prohibition applies to all aspects of school life: in the classroom, during extra-curricular activities, on school trips, on the sports field, and so on.

A person who is responsible for the operation of a school must not permit a student of a school (or anyone else who has the right to be in the school) to be harassed because of their sexual orientation or to be sexually harassed because of their gender. Schools are also liable for discrimination or harassment by an employee (including teaching and ancillary staff), whether or not it was done with the school's knowledge or approval.

#### ***Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014***

This act places a legal obligation on publicly funded organisations, including schools, to adhere to their Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

## **Irish Government Policy**

#### ***An Equal Opportunities / Diversity Policy and Strategy Objectives for the Health Service (HSE) - 2005***

Many youth services are supported by initiatives from the HSE, including interventions for drug and alcohol and sexual health services. The HSE is committed to providing equality of service to LGBTI+ young people and LGBTI+ staff.

#### ***Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020***

Goal three of *Connecting for Life*, Ireland's national strategy to reduce suicide, 2015-2020, aims to target approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health amongst priority groups. The strategy recognises LGBTI+ people as one such priority group, stating that there is evidence of vulnerability to and increased risk of suicidal behaviour in the LGBTI+ community.

#### ***Department of Education & Skills Action Plan on Bullying and Mandatory Reporting Procedures (2013)***

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) Action Plan on Bullying replaced the DES 1993 Guidelines on Bullying. It features a detailed overview of the latest research on bullying and recommendations for key strategies that schools, and the DES need to take to fully address bullying. The Action Plan was groundbreaking in its recognition of the importance of tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

The Action Plan includes an analysis of the role of prejudice-based or identity-based bullying, a term that encompasses homophobic and transphobic bullying, along with, for example, racist bullying and bullying of those with special educational needs. It discusses the impact of bullying, including the devastating impact of homophobic bullying on young people's mental health. The Action Plan draws attention to how equality legislation gives schools particular responsibilities regarding homophobic and transphobic bullying. The Action Plan notes that the 'development of new national anti-bullying procedures for schools including the promotion of school cultures that are welcoming of diversity; and the recognition that elimination of homophobic and transphobic bullying will lead to improvements in school climate for all students.'

The interaction of legislation and school ethos sometimes raises concerns for Principals. However, this Action Plan clearly states that 'a school's ethos cannot and should not be a barrier to: promoting a school that recognises, respects and values all identities, including those of LGBTI+ members of their school community; comprehensive delivery of curriculum subjects like RSE and SPHE; and tackling homophobic bullying'.

In December 2015, the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 passed into law, and in part amended the provisions of Section 37(1) of the Employment Equality Act. The amended section had previously allowed religious schools to opt out of employment equality legislation on the grounds of preserving religious ethos, which meant that LGBTI+ teachers and school staff were uncertain of their employment protections. The amendment now means that no uncertainty exists and LGBTI+ teachers and staff have the same employment protections as everyone else under the law.

The DES Anti-Bullying Procedures and accompanying Circular 0045/2013 now makes it mandatory for both primary and post primary schools, and centres of education, to address homophobic and transphobic bullying and to develop education strategies to ensure that LGBTI+ young people are welcomed and supported in every school. This involves:

- The development of anti-bullying policies naming homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- All Boards of Management formally adopting and implementing an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of these procedures. This policy must be reviewed annually.
- Schools making their anti-bullying policy available to parents, Parents Association, pupils and the Department of Education.
- Schools documenting reports of incidents of homophobic and transphobic bullying and gathering data so that they can identify trends in their school.
- Schools documenting the actions they take to create a school culture that is safe and welcoming of LGBTI+ young people.

Arising from recommendations made in the Action Plan on Bullying, 'the Inspectorate will be placing a stronger focus on the actions schools take to create a positive school culture and to prevent and tackle bullying... this will apply to whole-school and other evaluations.' Adopting the recommendations included in this toolkit will assist schools in meeting their obligations as outlined above.

### ***Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020***

In 2014, the Department for Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) published its national policy framework for children and young people - *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* (BOBF). This framework extends throughout government activity, but also to statutory and non-statutory organisations, including schools, that work with and for children and young people. The framework seeks to ensure Ireland is the 'best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and, in the future'.

The framework identifies five national outcomes for children and young people to ensure they:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.
2. Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.
3. Are safe and protected from harm.
4. Have continued security and opportunity.
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world.

### ***National Youth Strategy 2015-2020***

As a result of the publication of BOBF, a National Youth Strategy was launched in 2015 to address the needs of young people aged 10-24 years of age. The aim of the strategy is to enable young people to achieve their potential, to have their voices heard, and support their transitions to adulthood.

The strategy identified LGBTI+ young people as a specific group to be supported, given the significant challenges that remain for LGBT+ young people.

### ***LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020***

In 2018, the Department for Children and Youth Affairs published its first LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy. The strategy contains three goals:

1. Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people.
2. Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people.
3. Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people.

Objective 1 of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy is to:

*“Create a more supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings”*

Government Commitments under this objective include:

- Encouraging schools in the “development of a whole-school policy to ensure the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people, with particular regard to exploring opportunities for the appropriate inclusion of LGBTI+ lives in the teaching curriculum as part of curriculum review at both primary and senior-cycle levels. Schools will be required to consult with parents and students on all school policies, including school uniform policy”.
- Reviewing and updating “professional development supports for teachers to take account of the LGBTI+ Youth Strategy”.
- Conducting “a thematic evaluation of SPHE (including RSE) and related culture of inclusion in schools and publish a composite report. The evaluation will address all aspects of that programme, including how issues of different types of sexuality and the different types of gender are treated”.

It is significant to note that this toolkit and the self-assessment model will greatly contribute to schools achieving these objectives and will support the Education Sector to meet its obligations under the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy as a whole.

The Department for Justice and Equality is also working on developing a National LGBTI+ strategy for people of all ages, based on the foundations of the youth strategy.

#### ***Department of Education and Skills Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018-2023)***

The Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice is designed to help ensure effective implementation of a multi-component, whole school approach that positively impacts all children and young people in line with best international practice. The Department considers that the following four areas of wellbeing promotion are key:

1. Culture and Environment
2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
3. Policy and Planning
4. Relationships and Partnerships

The following diagram outlines this approach:

### **Whole School Approach - Four Key Areas for Wellbeing Promotion**



The vision and ambition of the Department of Education and Skills in relation to Wellbeing Promotion sets out to ensure that by 2023:

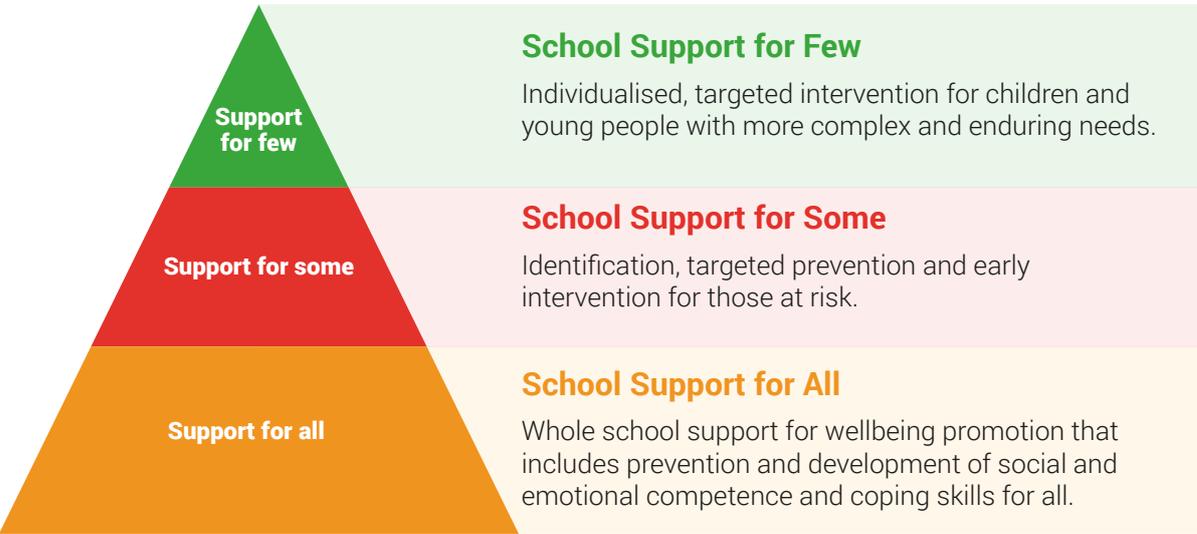
- The promotion of wellbeing will be at the core of the ethos of every school and centre for education.
- All schools and centres for education will provide evidence-informed approaches and support, appropriate to need, to promote the wellbeing of all their children and young people.
- Ireland will be recognised as a leader in this area.

It is important to note that the LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Whole School Community Model is in line with and compliments the Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. Both are whole school community approaches which emphasis the promotion of wellbeing, inclusion and connectedness.

Recognising that individual children and young people can have different needs at different times, the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice suggests a Continuum of Support approach to address educational and wellbeing needs. The document states:

*“Those at greater risk and with greater needs may require more specific and targeted support, in addition to the support provided to all children and young people in their class-based groups.”* It is also acknowledged that *“some children and young people will still require additional support from special support services external to the school”*. (pp.14-15)

**Table 1: Continuum of Support**



The Safe and Supportive Whole School Community approach outlined in this toolkit is in keeping with the Continuum of Support in that it recognises that individual support may be required for ‘some’ and ‘few’ students (see Direct Support to Young People page 26), while broader actions can be taken to create a safe and supportive school community that will benefit ‘all’ students and indeed staff and the wider community.

# Introduction to the Whole School Community Model

It is recognised that implementing change takes time and effort, and schools have many commitments to realise with limited resources. However, time invested proactively is well spent when an issue arises and the school can respond in an effective, appropriate and consistent manner in keeping with educational policy and best practice. The Whole School Community Model intends to support schools to meet this goal in a clear and straightforward way.

The model comprises six key areas that overlap and interlink to provide a comprehensive approach to developing a safe, supportive and inclusive school that includes:

- Creating a supportive school culture and environment for all students, including LGBTI+ students.
- Developing and implementing effective school policies and plans.
- Implementing a curriculum that supports diversity and respect.
- Ensuring that staff are LGBTI+ aware and equipped to address LGBTI+ issues and support vulnerable students.
- Providing direct supports to LGBTI+ young people through the appropriate school structures including:
  - Responding appropriately and supportively when an LGBTI+ young person ‘comes out’.
  - Signposting LGBTI+ young people as appropriate to outside agencies and supports.
- Working with the community outside the school gates, including any local LGBTI+ youth projects/groups, parents and community organisations to promote a wider LGBTI+ inclusive community.

This is in line with Department of Education Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework which aims to support “appropriate, high quality, approaches to the ongoing review and development of school culture and environment, teaching and learning, policy and planning, and relationships and partnerships. This multicomponent, whole school approach will be key to ensuring that schools are places that augment the wellbeing of all children and young people by teaching and encouraging them to be active, responsible, connected, resilient, respected and aware” (Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework page 20).

In the sections that follow, each key area will be explained in detail including recommendations for school implementation.



# Policy and Planning



Making specific reference to diversity and difference (including sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, and sex characteristics [SOGIESC]), in school policies sends an important message to all students and staff, including LGBTI+ students and staff, that they are valued and equal members of the school community and that they will be supported within the school setting<sup>9</sup>.

## ***Anti-Bullying Policy***

It has been consistently highlighted in Ireland and in the UK that homophobic bullying is lower in schools that have developed anti-bullying policies that explicitly state that homophobic bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated. In these schools, LGBTI+ students are less likely to experience harassment and are more likely to report incidents when they occur. Furthermore, teachers in these schools are much more likely to intervene in incidents of homophobic bullying.

It is imperative that 'every incident of homophobic bullying (including homophobic name-calling) is taken seriously and acted upon quickly, with clear and consistent sanctions for those responsible<sup>10</sup>.' To support this, the Anti-Bullying Policy should clearly outline what happens if someone is found to be engaging in bullying behaviour. It should also state the supports and follow-up provided to the person engaging in bullying behaviour and the person on the receiving end of the behaviour. Anti-bullying policies, as with other policies, should be regarded as 'living documents', which are continuously reviewed. In line with the DES mandatory Anti-Bullying Procedures, as part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management of each individual school must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation.

The use of homophobic/transphobic language is often common-place in schools and in society in general. It is often tolerated as it is sometimes not directed at a particular person; however, it is almost always used pejoratively. It is reported by LGBTI+ people as distressing and damaging. A no tolerance approach should be taken in relation to all homophobic/transphobic language. When the use of such language is witnessed, it should be clearly named as homophobic/transphobic with the message given that it is not accepted in the school.

LGBTI+ students are often afraid to report bullying incidents, including name-calling for fear of being 'outed'. Non-LGBTI+ students may also fear reporting the same in case they are labelled as LGBTI+. Note that all bullying, which makes reference to LGBTI identities, is homophobic/transphobic bullying, regardless of the person's sexual orientation or gender identity. This should be made clear within the whole school community.

Parents need to be involved in bullying issues in schools. For the student who is LGBTI+, this does not necessarily mean that their sexual orientation needs to be disclosed. The LGBTI+ young person needs to be involved in how the issue is dealt with. As above, it must be remembered that anyone can be a target of homophobic and transphobic bullying, so the focus should be on the nature of the bullying behaviour rather than the sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation) of the person being targeted.

In relation to school policy, see also the guidance published in 2015 by GLEN, with the support of the Department of Education and Skills, *Being LGBTI+ in School* (2016): A resource for post-primary schools to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying and support LGBTI+ students<sup>11</sup>.

### **Responding to a student who has 'come out' as LGBTI+**

'Coming out' to others, including peers and teachers, is often very challenging for an LGBTI+ person, and not all LGBTI+ young people will publicly come out during their time at school. How to appropriately respond when a student discloses their LGBTI+ identity can be an issue of concern for staff, who often fear that they will 'say or do the wrong thing'. Although it is important that the Student Support Team are aware of how to respond to a student's disclosure of LGBTI+ identity, it is likely that the student will talk to the member of staff that they feel most comfortable with. For this reason, it is important that all staff members are aware of best practice in this regard and can make an appropriate and supportive response. The needs of LGBTI+ young people should be carefully considered and included in the School's Guidance Plan. For further details, see the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN)'s guidance, *Being LGBTI+ in School: A resource for post-primary schools to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying and support LGBTI+ students*.

## **Policy and Planning Actions: What Your school Can Do**

- Review the Anti-Bullying Policy in line with the DES Action Plan on Bullying (2013) and the Anti-Bullying Procedures, ensuring that:
  - :: Homophobia and transphobia are explicitly named as identity-based bullying in the policy definition.
  - :: All staff are aware of the policy and their role in implementation, particularly in relation to homophobic/transphobic language and name-calling.
  - :: A 'no tolerance' approach is taken by all staff in relation to homophobic/transphobic language and homophobic/transphobic name-calling throughout the school and in all aspects of school life.
  - :: Students (including the Student Council), parents, and the Parents Association have had an opportunity to input into the Anti-Bullying Policy and other relevant policies to promote ownership and awareness.
  - :: The policy is openly discussed and communicated with students and parents, so that everyone is aware of the school procedures for discussing and reporting bullying should a concern arise.
  - :: Homophobic/transphobic bullying is recorded as such in the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures 'Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour' and monitor related trends.
- Encourage a specific team of interested staff members to progress the school's response to LGBTI+ issues to ensure that they are embedded in policy and practice, including responding appropriately to a student who 'comes out'. Ensure that policies are communicated to all staff and the rest of the school community. Make explicit reference to the nine grounds of Equality Legislation, including sexual orientation and gender identity, in the school policies and school mission statement.

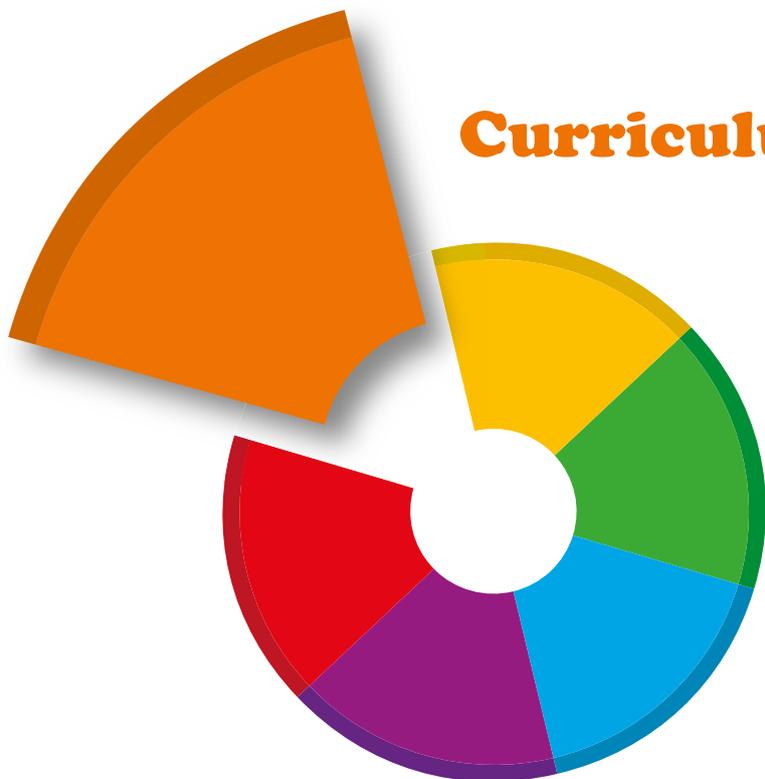
# Focus:

## Trans Young People

With the help of trans young people, BeLonG To developed suggestions for how your school can become more welcoming for trans and non-binary students.

- Be attentive and respectful around using the name and pronoun that young people choose. Pronouns are ways people refer to themselves – often related to gender e.g. he/she. Some trans and non-binary people prefer to use they/them pronouns. Rather than assuming someone's pronouns if you are not sure, just ask!
- Ask the young person what is needed for toilets and changing rooms - it's great to have a choice between male, female and gender-neutral options.
- Be flexible about gender inclusion in sports activities.
- Develop policies that include trans and non-binary members.
- Please don't ask about or comment (good or bad) on body changes.
- Engage all young people in learning about trans issues. Show the BeLonG To Trans Awareness Video Campaign (available on YouTube) to promote understanding and conversation.
- Respect young people's confidentiality about being trans.
- If they ask for it, please support young trans people in talking to their parents.
- Invest in staff training on Trans and LGB issues.
- Challenge transphobic bullying and fully implement your Anti-Bullying Policy.

# Curriculum



There are many opportunities within the curriculum to specifically educate on LGBTI+ identity, as well as generally address issues relating to respect and inclusion, discrimination and bullying.

The recent NCCA Junior Cycle Short Course specification for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (2016), which all post-primary schools are encouraged to adopt, has specific learning outcomes relating to sexuality, gender identity and sexual health (Strand 3: Team Up), as well as general learning outcomes on rights, anti-bullying and respectful communication. Likewise, the NCCA Junior Cycle Short Course specification for Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) (2016), has learning outcomes on human rights that could present an opportunity to discuss equality and discrimination.

The full report which accompanies this toolkit 'LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Schools: An interim evaluation', highlights that consideration should be given as to how LGBTI+ content, as well as existing within the SPHE curriculum, can be embedded in other curriculum areas.

It is acknowledged that there are varied experiences of SPHE/RSE in schools. Research into the implementation of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) highlighted that SPHE is not implemented consistently in all schools with RSE implementation being even less consistent<sup>12</sup>. An Irish study<sup>13</sup>, conducted in 2010, highlighted that almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of young people did not have RSE classes the previous year. When asked, "What was the least emphasised theme?" students reported that it was "understanding sexual orientation". The absence of opportunities to discuss LGBTI+ issues in a respectful way can perpetuate negative beliefs and attitudes; whereas raising the issue in class in a positive way provides opportunities for teachers to challenge negative beliefs and attitudes, and promote respect and dignity for all.

In 2013, the DES, in partnership with BeLonG To, the HSE and GLEN launched '*Growing up Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender*', a groundbreaking resource for SPHE and RSE, which includes a DVD and teacher manual with a series of lesson plans for all post-primary years that can be integrated into the SPHE/RSE curriculum. It covers topics such as respectful communication on LGBTI+ issues, coming out, friendship, discrimination, homophobic and transphobic bullying, relationships, and supports available to LGBTI+ young people.

The resource includes helpful materials for teachers such as teaching notes, background information and a detailed glossary of terms related to LGBTI+ issues. Teacher Training on this resource is available through the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). The 'Life Skills Series' for Junior Cycle SPHE also has a comprehensive RSE section that includes relevant lesson plans on respectful relationships, sexual orientation, prejudice and discrimination, gender and the diversity of families.

In all subjects and in the wider school environment, hearing staff promote respect for diversity is affirming for all students, not just those identifying as LGBTI+.

## **Curriculum Actions: What Your School Can Do**

- **Ensure that sexual orientation and gender identity is included in the SPHE/RSE policy and curriculum.**
- **As outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Action Plan on Bullying (2013), ensure delivery of a comprehensive SPHE/RSE programme that includes specific lessons on sexual orientation, gender identity and bullying, as well as promoting respect for diversity in general.**
- **Ensure that teachers of SPHE/RSE have availed of training to support the delivery of lessons that explore sexual orientation and gender identity.**
- **Encourage all staff to attend general LGBTI+ awareness training that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and comfort levels to discuss LGBTI+ issues in the classroom.**
- **Encourage staff to respond positively when references to LGBTI+ arise in the classroom and wider school environment.**
- **Encourage staff to proactively consider ways to make LGBTI+ people and issues visible in all areas of the curriculum.**

# Safe and Supportive Environment

A sense of belonging to and connecting with a school community are fundamental to the well-being of all students. Students who are LGBTI+ have been described as an 'invisible' minority and one of the most significant at-risk groups of adolescents.

Many LGBTI+ students feel that they do not belong to or are not accepted by their school community and find school an intimidating environment where they face continuing challenges. By creating an LGBTI+ supportive physical and social environment (e.g. displaying posters and information relating to LGBTI+ or actively taking part in LGBTI+ awareness campaigns), schools are acknowledging the existence of an LGBTI+ community, in and out of school, as well as promoting respect and acceptance of diversity that goes beyond sexual orientation. Promoting diversity sends a message that everyone is welcome, accepted and supported in the school, including LGBTI+ students, LGBTI+ parents/guardians and LGBTI+ staff. There is evidence that addressing this form of bullying also has a positive impact on all forms of bullying in the school.

The Department of Education and Skills Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice draws particular attention to whole school and classroom climate and culture. In terms of the whole school, the framework mentions how a school's mission statement can influence its culture and classroom climate. It talks about the need for children, young people and staff to experience a 'sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported'. This is vital for LGBTI+ young people.

# Safe and Supportive Environment Actions: What Your School Can Do

Promote a supportive physical and social school environment by:

- **Creating a safe space where everyone is valued and treated with respect.**
- **Displaying LGBTI+ affirming posters and provide information about local and national supports for LGBTI+ young people, which young LGBTI+ students can access confidentially outside of the school environment if desired<sup>14</sup>.**
- **Encouraging whole school participation in the BeLonG To annual Stand Up Awareness Week campaign.**
- **Encouraging all staff members, including ancillary and support staff, to challenge homophobic and transphobic language in the wider school environment, including the school yard, school events, sporting events and field trips.**
- **Ensuring ongoing monitoring and supervision of toilets for the occurrence of bullying incidents. This isolated environment, as well as the vulnerability of LGBTI+ young people, can result in dangerous situations.**
- **Remove homophobic/transphobic graffiti immediately. If appropriate, remind perpetrators of school policy on homophobic/transphobic language as well as the Code of Behaviour for destruction of property.**

# WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY MODEL

6

## SAMPLE ACTIONS

**Encourage** staff training and development especially for key staff providing support

**Ensure** trained staff disseminate information and guidelines

**Include** Board of Management in training initiatives

5

## SAMPLE ACTIONS

**Give** young people a positive 'coming out' experience

**Be guided** by the young person's needs

**Identify** key members of staff to provide further support

**Keep** contact details of support services and local LGBTI+ youth groups

**Display** sensitivity towards Trans students' needs around issues like bathrooms, uniform and pronouns

4

## SAMPLE ACTIONS

**Inform** parents/carers of LGBTI+ friendly policies and initiatives

**Support** LGBTI+ staff

**Develop** links with local youth and community groups

**Inform** visitors to school of expectations around LGBTI+ issues

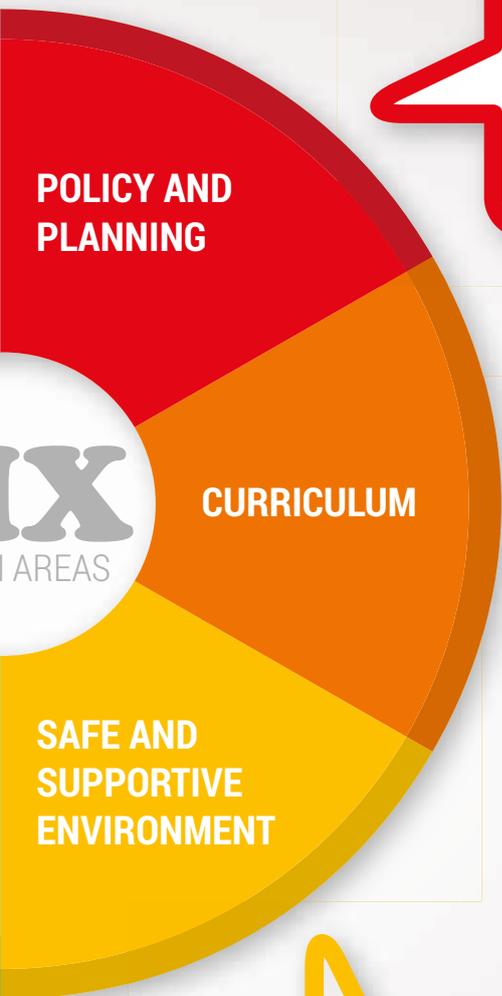
**Support** parents/guardians through Home-school links

STAFF  
ORGANISATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT

DIRECT  
SUPPORT TO  
YOUNG PEOPLE

COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP

SI  
ACTION



1

### SAMPLE ACTIONS

**Include** homophobic/transphobic bullying in the anti-bullying policy

**Publicise** the policy to staff, students and parents/carers

**Create** a specific team of interested staff to respond to LGBTI+ issues

2

### SAMPLE ACTIONS

**Ensure** all staff challenge homophobic/transphobic language

**Encourage** staff to incorporate LGBTI+ identity into all areas of the curriculum

**Deliver** a comprehensive RSE/SPHE programme

3

### SAMPLE ACTIONS

**Display** information about national and local supports for LGBTI+ youth

**Participate** in Stand Up Awareness Week campaign

**Monitor** the environment outside the classroom including school yard, bathrooms, school trips, etc

**Remove** homophobic/transphobic graffiti

# Community Partnership



Proactively linking with those outside of the school environment in relation to LGBTI+ issues, including parents/guardians, schools and other organisations, will help to raise awareness that the school is an inclusive community that respects and embraces diversity.

## ***Parents and Guardians***

Parents and guardians of 'out' LGBTI+ youth may have specific worries about their child's safety in school. As outlined in the section on policy and planning, it is important to reassure parents that homophobia/transphobia will not be tolerated in the school and ensure they know who to approach with any concerns. Informing the wider group of parents and guardians of the school's participation in the Stand Up Awareness Week and of how LGBTI+ is addressed in school policy and the curriculum can help to promote LGBTI+ awareness, as well as supporting a culture of openness within the school community.

## ***Local Youth and Community Organisations***

Developing and maintaining links with local youth and community organisations allows a wider approach to be taken in making LGBTI+ young people feel safe, supported and welcome in the area where they attend school and often where they live. Many staff members in youth and community organisations have undertaken training in diversity and LGBTI+ awareness. Developing links with local LGBTI+ and non-LGBTI+ organisations may provide a more cohesive approach that goes beyond creating a safe and supportive school to creating a safe and supportive community for all young people.

## ***Visitors to the school including outside facilitators***

It is important to ensure that any visitor to the school, including outside facilitators and sports coaches, are aware of school policy relating to LGBTI+, including the use of homophobic/transphobic language and the expectation that LGBTI+ issues will be discussed with respect. In addition, specific guidelines on programmes and external facilitators to support the implementation of Wellbeing have been included in the recent DES Circular 0043/2018: "Best practice guidance for post-primary schools in the use of programme and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework Practice.

### **Further supports for LGBTI+ students with additional needs**

Mental Health and other support services for young people in the area may provide an important referral pathway for the 'some' and 'few' LGBTI+ young people within the school that may need additional support. A variety of supports are outlined in the *'Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention'* (2013)<sup>15</sup>. It is important that care teams within the school are aware of referral pathways and personnel in their locality. A strong relationship with local community Gardai may prove to be invaluable if an unfortunate situation of criminal bullying arises. It is important to note that not all LGBTI+ young people will require additional support or signposting to external services.

## **Community Partnership Actions: What Your School Can Do**

- **Make explicit reference to the grounds of Equality Legislation, including sexual orientation, and gender identity, in the school policies and mission statement.**
- **Use induction evenings and parent/guardian information evenings to highlight the Anti-Bullying Policy.**
- **Articulate that homophobia/transphobia will not be tolerated and affirm that the school supports all, including LGBTI+ students, families and staff.**
- **Display LGBTI+ inclusive posters in a visible area where visitors to the school can see them.**
- **Establish a direct link with LGBTI+ support groups in the community.**
- **Provide information on LGBTI+ support groups and other supports to families on request.**

## Direct Support to Young People



As previously mentioned in the Policy and Planning Section, a LGBTI+ young person may disclose their sexual or gender identity to any member of staff so *all* staff, need to be aware of how best to support this young person should the need arise.

It is a huge step for someone to 'come out' and because they have disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity to one person does not necessarily mean that they are ready to tell everyone. Their first worry may be about the reaction of the person they are telling so efforts should be made to ensure that this is a positive and supportive experience for them. A positive experience in coming out to others where they are met with acceptance is critical to safeguarding the young person's mental health and well-being; it can also lessen the fear of the young person eventually disclosing to his/her family or friends. The young person's next worry may be about "What happens next?" so it is important to reassure the student that they are under no pressure to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity until they are ready. The young person should guide this process and be supported in the decisions that they make around this. They may request direct support in talking to family members or friends. The young person may not want to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to anyone else and this should also be respected. The needs of LGBTI+ students are often on a case-by-case basis and the supports required by these students should be guided by the needs and desires of the young people themselves.

This approach is in-line with the Department of Education's Wellbeing Framework, which promotes a 'Continuum of Support', where schools implement individualised, targeted supports for children and young people who need them.

It is important not to assume that because a student is coming out as LGBTI+ that they are at risk and their parents need to be informed. Staff should use the same principles to assess risk as they would for any student who informs them of something of a personal nature, all the while respecting that student's privacy. "Only if school authorities have legitimate cause for concern for the student's safety should engagement with the student's parents/guardians be made without consulting the student" (*Being LGBT in Schools*, GLEN 2016).

### **Identifying key members of staff for further support**

It would be proactive for the school to have identified key members of staff, such as the Student Support Team or Care Team, to provide additional support to LGBTI+ students. All staff should be aware of who these key people are, but it is important to check with the young person before making contact or discussing their details with other staff. Support needs may vary amongst LGBTI+ students, though at a minimum it is likely that access to information and resources will be important. It is therefore important that the school has the contact details of support services and local/national LGBTI+ supports to give to the young person. The young person might need initial support in making contact with the support groups so it may be useful if the Student Support Team proactively establishes links with the support organisations.

When seeking support for LGBTI+, it is important to remember that English may not be their first language. BeLong To has developed a digital project, which supports LGBTI+ young people whose first language is not English. They have a facility on their website for young people seeking advice and guidance in French, Polish, Lithuanian, Arabic, and Urdu. Within this online hub, helpful advice and tips can be found on the issues of mental and physical health, relationships, understanding sexuality, and gender identity, coming out and more. With this resource, more LGBTI+ young people will have the ability to access vital information important to their needs. Please see [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)



## Direct support to Young People Actions: What Your School Can Do

- Ensure that Student Support Teams can provide additional support to LGBTI+ students.
- Ensure that all students are aware of key staff members whom they can approach for support.
- Highlight to all staff that they may be the person to whom a LGBTI+ student discloses their identity and ensure that they can respond sensitively and appropriately. This includes:
  - :: Acknowledging that the disclosure of LGBTI+ identity takes significant courage on the part of the young person.
  - :: Giving the young person adequate time to talk, including setting aside a specific time/appointment if it is more convenient. (This appointment should be the same day if possible).
  - :: Being guided by the young person as to their support needs.
  - :: Signposting the young person to additional supports (internal and external to the school) if requested.
  - :: Recognising that the LGBTI+ young person's right to privacy and confidentiality should be the same as that of non-LGBTI+ young people (in keeping with Child Protection Guidelines).
- Consider that Trans students may have particular needs around bathroom spaces, uniforms, preferred names and pronouns. See the Focus section on transgender students on page 17. Schools should be guided by each young person as to their support needs.



**Proud to  
be LGBTI+**

# Staff Training and Development



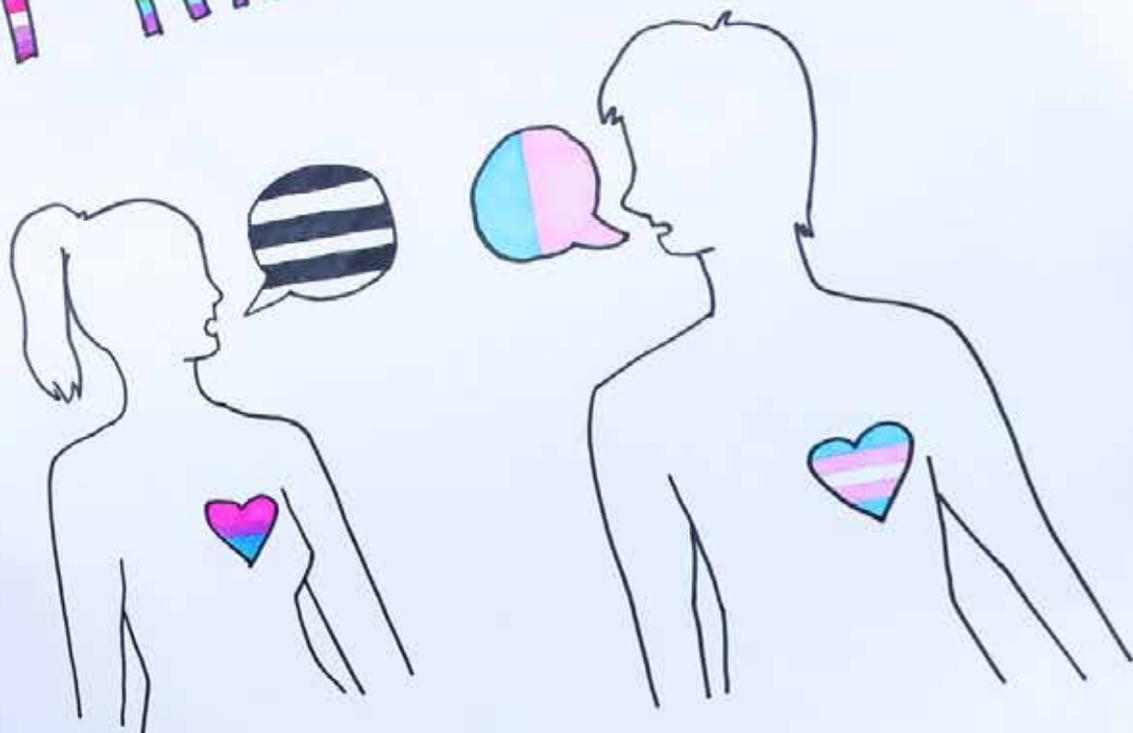
Fundamental to progressing the school's response to LGBTI+ issues, is the willingness of staff to be open to creating an environment that acknowledges LGBTI+ identity and is supportive of diversity. LGBTI+ awareness training allows staff, in a safe environment, to explore their attitudes to LGBTI+ identity and examine where those attitudes came from (thus allowing the individual to challenge them if willing). Training also provides information about LGBTI+ lives and looks at practical ways that schools can create inclusive environments to support LGBTI+ students and staff.

In the absence of training and clear policy, staff can often be apprehensive about addressing LGBTI+ issues for 'fear of doing or saying the wrong thing.' If the school does not collectively develop a 'whole school response' to LGBTI+, staff can be unwilling to advocate on LGBTI+ issues as they are unsure of the response from other colleagues, students and parents/guardians. Even interested staff can feel isolated in this regard. Board of Management and/or Parents Association Members could be included in training and can be useful champions when developing the school's response to LGBTI+ issues. At a minimum, key members of staff with a role in directly supporting young people e.g. Student Support Teams, should have participated in LGBTI+ Awareness Training so that they are equipped to support LGBTI+ students. Teachers of Wellbeing including SPHE/RSE and CSPE should avail of continuous professional development opportunities to ensure that they stay well informed.

## Staff Training and Development Actions: What Your School Can Do

- Source whole-staff LGBTI+ awareness training and include ancillary staff, Board of Management and Parents Associations, if possible.
- Source specific LGBTI+ Awareness training and development opportunities for staff, particularly senior staff and staff with a role in providing direct support to students and teachers of SPHE/RSE.
- Ensure that trained members of staff disseminate the main points and recommendations from training if not all staff can attend.
- Training should be practical in nature and include role-play e.g. responding to incidents of homophobic/transphobic name-calling; responding to a young person 'coming out'.

DON'T MAKE PEOPLE



HIDE WHO THEY ARE

# Appendix 1

**LGBTI+ Safe & Supportive  
Schools 2019**

**Rapid Assessment  
Tool**

*Adapted from the Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) Rapid Assessment Tool*

# Introduction

As part of becoming an LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive School, it is important to assess your school's current policies and practices relating to LGBTI+ identity to determine your school community's needs and priorities.

This Rapid Assessment Tool has been designed to help you in this self-evaluation process. The Rapid Assessment Tool consists of a series of questions related to the whole-school approach, based on the key areas of the LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Whole School Community Model. Answering the questions can help your school to identify what it already does well, what areas need improvement and what areas need a priority response. The Rapid Assessment Tool can also be used as a follow up tool to assess your school's progress. It can help you identify further priorities and actions to progress in your school. It is preferable that statements in this tool be considered by all teaching and non-teaching staff, rather than a single person, so that a comprehensive picture is gained.

It is important to set up clear ground rules for this activity and encourage open communication. Some questions may be challenging, so it is vital for senior management to give staff permission to speak openly, honestly and respectfully with a view to improving the school.

## Instructions

### **Part 1**

Divide staff into groups and give each group one section of the Rapid Assessment Tool (note that some sections are longer than others so divide accordingly). Ask each staff group to discuss the questions and, by consensus, rate the school's current status only in relation to each question using the rating key provided as follows:

**Current Rating:** the school's current situation on a three point scale:

1= not in place;                      2= partly in place;                      3 = fully in place

Ensure that each group provides evidence for their rating as follows:

**Evidence for Rating:** Consider what is the evidence (written or otherwise) for giving this rating and is it sufficient enough? See middle columns in the assessment tool labelled 'evidence'.

## **Part 2**

When the group has completed the 'current' and 'evidence' sections, ask them to review their answers and decide on how much of a 'priority' they think this is for the school as follows:

**Priority:** How much of a priority is this for the school community on a three-point scale:

1 = low/no priority; 2 = medium priority; 3 = high priority.

See right-hand columns in the assessment tool labelled priority.

When all groups have completed the exercise, have each group present their questions, rating, evidence and priority rating back to the whole staff group. Other staff members can comment, agree or disagree until a final rating is reached. This can be recorded separately. It would be useful to have each section of the Rapid Assessment Tool displayed on a whiteboard as each group provides feedback for the whole staff to see.

The results can be interpreted by:

- Analysing each question separately
- Summarising the results of all seven focus areas by calculating the mean score per section. A template has been provided for you to tally the results.

Questions/areas with both a low mean score on the school's current rating and a high mean priority can be a focus for future actions in the process of becoming an LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive School.

### **Notes:**

The terms 'Sexual Orientation' and Gender Identity' are used frequently throughout the Rapid Assessment Tool. Please ensure that staff members are familiar with these terms prior to completing the tool. The following information may be useful in doing this:

**Sexual orientation ranges along a continuum, from exclusive sexual attraction to the opposite sex through to exclusive attraction to the same sex. People can identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or pansexual.**

**Gender identity is a person's feeling of being male, female, both, a mixture, or neither, which is shown to other people through gender expression (clothes, hairstyles, mannerisms, etc.). It is separate and independent from sexual orientation. Trans people can be lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, straight or pansexual.**

## Rapid Assessment Tool – General Overview

**Your rating:** 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place  
**Your priority:** 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

General Overview	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				(please tick)		
	1	2	3		1	2	3
1.1 Our school has an open attitude to all students, staff and families irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity.							
1.2 Sexual orientation, gender identity and LGBTI+ issues are discussed openly in our school.							
1.3 Respect and tolerance for diversity is promoted in our school.							
1.4 There is a nominated person or core team with overall responsibility for LGBTI+ issues in our school i.e. keeping LGBTI+ on school agenda, keeping staff informed, providing direct support to students, etc.							
1.5 The Board of Management and Parents Association are kept informed of LGBTI+ issues on an ongoing basis.							

## Rapid Assessment Tool – Staff Training and Development

**Your rating:** 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place

**Your priority:** 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

Staff Training and Development	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				(please tick)		
	1	2	3		1	2	3
2.1 Our school has undertaken whole staff LGBTI+ Awareness training.							
2.2 Particular members of staff, such as those that provide face to face support/care/one-to-one work etc., have undertaken LGBTI+ Awareness training (either as whole staff or in-service training).							
2.3 Our school has a mechanism whereby individual staff who participate in specific training can disseminate key messages to all staff.							
2.4 Staff delivering programme activities have been trained to deliver topics covering diversity and inclusion.							
2.5 In our school, all staff feel confident and competent in relation to dealing with incidents of homophobic/transphobic bullying in the organisation.							
2.6 In our school, all staff feel confident and competent to respond appropriately if a service user, participant a student or staff member was to disclose his/her/ their LGBTI+ identity.							
2.7 In our school, all staff feel confident and competent to respond appropriately if an LGBTI+ topic arose within a group setting.							

## Rapid Assessment Tool – Policy and Planning

**Your rating:** 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place  
**Your priority:** 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

Policy and Planning	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				1	2	3
	1	2	3				
3.1 The relevant school policies explicitly refer to the grounds of Equality Legislation, including sexual orientation and gender identity.							
3.2 The school's mission/ vision statement explicitly welcomes LGBTI+ students, staff and parents.							
3.3 The school has an equal opportunities statement in relation to LGBTI+ students and staff (admissions policy and staff recruitment policy).							
3.4 The school's Anti-Bullying Policy makes explicit reference to identity-based bullying such as homophobic and transphobic bullying.							
3.5 Our school will develop, implement and document anti-bullying procedures that will explicitly deal with identity based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.							
3.6 Homophobic/transphobic bullying incidents are formally noted and recorded as such (regardless of the person's perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity).							

Policy and Planning (continued)	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				1	2	3
	1	2	3				
3.7 Students and staff are aware that homophobic language (e.g. anti-gay) is not tolerated in our school and all staff reinforce this 'no tolerance' approach.							
3.8 Our School Guidance Plan makes explicit reference to supporting LGBTI+ students and how to appropriately respond to a student who 'comes out' as LGBTI+.							
3.9 Our school has protocols in relation to confidentiality in relation to a student who 'comes out' as LGBTI+.							
3.10 Students, possibly through the Student Council, and Parents via the Parents Association have had the opportunity to input into the Anti-Bullying Policy and other relevant policies to promote ownership and awareness.							
3.11 School policies are communicated to all students, staff and parents and there is a high level of policy awareness in our school community.							
3.12 Students and parents know how to report a bullying issue should a concern arise.							

## Rapid Assessment Tool – Curriculum and Learning

**Your rating:** 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place  
**Your priority:** 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

Curriculum and Learning	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				1	2	3
	1	2	3				
4.1 In our school, SPHE is valued as a key part of our school curriculum and is delivered comprehensively to all students.							
4.2 In our school, RSE is delivered comprehensively to all students as part of SPHE or through other subjects.							
4.3 In our our school, the themes of sexual orientation and gender identity are an integral part of the SPHE/RSE curriculum for all year groups and are included in the SPHE/RSE policy.							
4.4 In our school, specific lessons on LGBTI+ Identity (such as the 'Growing Up LGBT' curriculum resource pack) are delivered in our school as part of SPHE/RSE.							
4.5 In our school, homophobic/transphobic bullying is explicitly mentioned when discussing bullying as part of SPHE/RSE.							
4.6 In our school, the diversity of families is discussed in SPHE/RSE including same-sex parenting.							
4.7 In our school, sexual orientation and gender identity are raised and/or taught about in subjects outside of SPHE/RSE.							
4.8 In our school, respect and tolerance for diversity is promoted in all subjects and in all classrooms.							

## Rapid Assessment Tool – Safe and Supportive Environment

**Your rating:** 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place  
**Your priority:** 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

Safe and Supportive School Environment	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				(please tick)		
	1	2	3		1	2	3
5.1 Our school displays LGBTI+ affirmative posters (such as BeLonG To's Stand Up posters, LGBTI+ information / support service posters, etc.).							
5.2 Our school participates in BeLonG To's annual Stand Up campaign to promote LGBTI+ awareness.							
5.3 All staff members, including ancillary staff challenge homophobic/transphobic bullying/name-calling in the wider school environment e.g. throughout the school's grounds, events, sporting activities, field trips, etc.							
5.4 In our school, homophobic/transphobic graffiti is immediately removed when noticed and if appropriate the perpetrators reminded of the policy on homophobic/transphobic language as well as the Code of Behaviour for destruction of property.							
5.5 Hot spots in our school (e.g. toilets) are monitored on an ongoing basis for the occurrence of bullying incidents. (These isolated environments can be dangerous places for LGBTI+ young people.)							
5.6 Consideration is given to Trans students in relation to bathrooms and changing facilities.							

## Rapid Assessment Tool – Community Partnerships

**Your rating:** 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place

**Your priority:** 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

Community Partnerships	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				1	2	3
	1	2	3				
6.1 All parents/guardians feel welcome in our school regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.							
6.2 Our school has established links with local and national LGBTI+ organisations to promote LGBTI+ awareness within the school community.							
6.3 Our school has established a referral or signposting system with local/national LGBTI+ organisations that can provide additional support to LGBTI+ young people if requested.							
6.4 Our school has established links with other organisations in the community who might provide support or services for LGBTI+ students.							
6.5 Our school has a system for identifying and referring students with particular needs to outside professionals if the student's needs are beyond the scope of the school's expertise.							

## Rapid Assessment Tool – Direct Support to LGBTI+ Young People

**Your rating:** 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place

**Your priority:** 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

Direct Support to LGBTI+ Young people	Current Rating			What is the evidence for giving this rating? (please comment) Priority	Priority		
	(please tick)				(please tick)		
	1	2	3		1	2	3
7.1 In our school, a trusted person is always available for all students who have the need to talk with someone privately when they want to share concerns or thoughts.							
7.2 In our school, students know the appropriate people to talk to when they have concerns or problems.							
7.3 In our school, all staff that provide direct support for all students are confident and competent in how to appropriately respond to an LGBTI+ young person.							
7.4 In our school, all staff that provide direct support to students are aware of recommendations in relation to linking in with parents/guardians around LGBTI+ issues (i.e. being led by the student unless there are issues in relation to safety).							
7.5 In our school, all staff that provide direct support to students are aware of local and national support organisations that can provide additional support.							
7.6 In our school, trans students are called by their chosen name/pronoun e.g. he/she/they.							
7.7 In our school, trans students can wear a school uniform that matches their gender identity if desired.							

## Rapid Assessment Summary of our Service in relation to LGBT Safe and Supportive Services

Your rating: 1 = fully in place      2 = partly in place      3 = not in place

Your priority: 1 = low/no priority      2 = medium priority      3 = high priority

Key area	Question	Current Ranking	Priority
<b>General Overview</b>	1.1		
	1.2		
	1.3		
	1.4		
	1.5		
<b>Staff Training and Development</b>	2.1		
	2.2		
	2.3		
	2.4		
	2.5		
	2.6		
	2.7		
<b>Policy and Planning</b>	3.1		
	3.2		
	3.3		
	3.4		
	3.5		
	3.6		
	3.7		
	3.8		
	3.9		
	3.10		
	3.11		
	3.12		

Key area	Question	Current Ranking	Priority
<b>Curriculum and Learning</b>	4.1		
	4.2		
	4.3		
	4.4		
	4.5		
	4.6		
	4.7		
	4.8		
<b>Safe and Supportive Environment</b>	5.1		
	5.2		
	5.3		
	5.4		
	5.5		
	5.6		
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	6.1		
	6.2		
	6.3		
	6.4		
	6.5		
<b>Direct Support to LGBTI+ Young People</b>	7.1		
	7.2		
	7.3		
	7.4		
	7.5		
	7.6		
	7.7		

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14. See [www.BelongTo.org](http://www.BelongTo.org) for details of LGBTI+ support groups.
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# Further Reading

- Barron, M (2016). LGBTI+ young people and homophobic and transphobic bullying: ***The European and International Human Rights Context in Perspectives on Youth***. Volume 3 - Healthy Europe: confidence and uncertainty for young people in contemporary Europe, Council of Europe and European Union.
  - Barron, M (2016). ***Equal opportunities for all children: Non-discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) children and young people***, Council of Europe.
  - BeLonG To ***Stand Up Awareness Week*** including a resource guide, posters, and information on national network of LGBTI+ youth services.
  - BeLonG To Videos, especially: ***Stand Up! Don't stand for homophobic bullying*** (2011) and ***Stand Up! Let's support our LGBTI+ friends*** (2012) [www.youtube.com/belongto](http://www.youtube.com/belongto).
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  - ***National Youth Council of Ireland Access All Areas Diversity Toolkit*** (2012). Available here: [www.youth.ie/diversity](http://www.youth.ie/diversity).
  - ***National Youth Council of Ireland 8 Steps to Inclusive Youth Work*** (2016). Available here: [www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI-8-steps-inclusive.pdf](http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI-8-steps-inclusive.pdf).
  - Pobal: Local Development Inclusion Programme (2006). ***More than a Phase: A Resource Guide for the Inclusion of LGBTI+ Learners in Formal and Non-formal Education***.
  - ***Safe and Supportive Schools: Interim Evaluation (HSE, BeLonG To)***.
  - Transgender Equality Network Ireland (2010). ***Transgender and gender diversity: Information for Guidance Counsellors***.
  - UNESCO (2012). ***Education sector responses to homophobic bullying***, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Paris.
- In addition, a range of Irish Toolkits, Resources and Policy Documents are available in the resources section of [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org).

# LGBTI+ Safe & Supportive Schools

Creating schools that are fully inclusive  
of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Young People

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &  
Trans Young People in Ireland



Building a  
Better Health  
Service

Seirbhís Stáinte  
Níos Fearr  
& Forbairt



Healthy  
Ireland