

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL

***LGBT+ INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TOOLKIT
FOR COUNCILLORS***



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Introduction

Whilst rights and attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT+) people have come a long way in the UK over the last 50 years, there is still a huge amount of progress that needs to be made. Young LGBT+ people are often still growing up in challenging and hostile environments.

The harsh reality for young LGBT+ people is that nearly half - including 64 per cent of trans pupils - are bullied for being LGBT+ in Britain's schools. Two in five LGBT+ pupils are taught nothing about LGBT+ issues in school. More than four in five trans young people have self-harmed, as have three in five lesbian, gay and bi young people. More than two in five trans young people have attempted to take their own life, as have one in five lesbian, gay and bi students¹.

LGBT+ Inclusive Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Statutory Relationship Education and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) that is LGBT+ inclusive will be required to be taught in all primary and secondary schools in England respectively from September 2020. The new guidance for teaching RSE in schools was passed by the House of Commons by 538 votes in favour, to 21 votes against – showing huge cross party support for LGBT+ inclusive RSE.

A broad programme of RSE prepares children and young people for the realities of the modern world, and is vital for keeping children and young people safe. It provides them with the knowledge and skills to develop healthy and fulfilling relationships.

¹ <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/media/lgbt-facts-and-figures>

What do I need to know about LGBT+ inclusive education?

It is essential that LGBT+ identities, families and relationships are included throughout the teaching of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education.

Schools have legal duties, primarily under the Equality Act 2010, not to discriminate against pupils who are (or are perceived to be) LGBT+, and who have LGBT+ parents and carers. All areas of a school's provision, including their Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education teaching must comply with the Equality Act.

There has been some small but vocal campaigning and organising to oppose LGBT+ inclusive education, and also to oppose schools' efforts to teach about LGBT+ people more broadly in their work to meet their duties under the Equality Act.

What does the Labour Party say?

The Labour Party supports LGBT+ inclusive Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education for all maintained primary and secondary schools. Our manifesto for the 2017 General Election committed the Labour Party to:

Tackle bullying of LGBT+ young people, Labour will ensure that all teachers receive initial and ongoing training on the issues students face and how to address them. And we will ensure that the new guidance for relationships and sex education is LGBT+ inclusive².

In response to recent calls for an end to LGBT+ inclusive education, Labour's Shadow Frontbench have been clear that our commitment to delivering this education remains unwavering. Shadow Secretary of State for Education Angela Rayner MP said:

There is not only a moral imperative to ensure that all young children receive LGBT+ inclusive education, there is a legal requirement too, and schools must comply with the Equalities Act. There is no justifiable reason to stop the teaching of these issues³.

What does LGBT+ Labour say?

LGBT+ Labour is committed, fully and unequivocally, to the teaching of LGBT+ inclusive education for all. We will fail the next generation of LGBT+ people in this country if people are allowed to pretend that they don't exist.

The erasure of LGBT+ identities in school will not stop children from being gay, bi or trans, but it will again make them feel the shame and stigma that Section 28 forced upon our community. We will not stand by and allow our existence or appropriateness to be debated.

Children deserve to learn about their own identities, and about understanding and celebrating difference: this must include learning about LGBT+ identities and relationships if we are to create the safe and inclusive society that we want to see.

² <https://labour.org.uk/manifesto/a-more-equal-society/#third>

³ <https://labour.org.uk/press/schools-stopping-teaching-lgbt-rights/>

What are a schools legal duties to LGBT+ people?

In April 2019 parliament passed the new regulations and guidance for schools teaching Relationships and Sex Education in England by an overwhelming majority in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. This means that in England all primary schools will be required to teach Relationships Education, and all secondary schools will be required to teach Relationships and Sex Education.

Schools will be able to shape how they teach LGBT+ inclusive education, providing it is in line with the key information that the new guidance requires should be taught. At primary school, pupils must be taught about different family types including LGBT+ families. At secondary school, pupils must be taught about sexual orientation and gender identity.

They have a duty to not discriminate against LGBT+ people under the Equality Act 2010. This includes discrimination against pupils who are LGBT+, pupils who are perceived to be LGBT+, and pupils with LGBT+ parents/carers and family members.

They also have a duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and to promote good relationships between groups with different protected characteristics, under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

While this duty applies to state schools specifically, Ofsted and other relevant inspectors will assess the extent to which all schools promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to prevent any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, against those with protected characteristics, including LGBT+ people.

Maintained schools' obligations under section 78 of the Education Act (2002) and independent schools' (including academies and free schools) obligations under the Independent School Standards, to promote the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society. The Department for Education has stated that this should include teaching that promotes respect for other people, including different cultures and faiths.

Their duty to promote British Values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

We know that as Councillors you often get asked questions by your constituents on topical issues, so we've put together some helpful FAQ's which should help you to answer some of the common questions. If there are any questions that parents and carers ask you that aren't included below and you're not sure about, drop us an email on lgbtlabouruk@gmail.com

Why are schools teaching about LGBT+ people at primary school?

Teaching about LGBT+ people at primary school is essential and timely. It gives children and young people the information they need to understand what happy, healthy and respectful relationships look like (including friendships and family relationships), how to have them, and to make informed decisions about their own wellbeing.

It helps all young people grow up with respectful attitudes towards people who are different to them, helping to tackle the prejudice-based bullying. It also supports children and young people to stay safe, including online, and know when to ask for help. Overall, it helps to foster a safe, supportive school environment for young people to grow up in.

Children at primary school age are the right age to start learning about LGBT+ people as they exist in children's worlds already whether through parents of school friends, characters on TV shows, or through the local Pride celebrations. As children will come into contact with LGBT+ identities, it is important to equip them with the knowledge to understand and celebrate those identities. Teaching about LGBT+ people in primary schools helps all pupils to grow up developing inclusive and respectful attitudes towards LGBT+ people.

Do parents or carers have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education?

Under new regulations, parents and carers will not have the ability to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.

Receiving high quality relationships education is vital to children and young people's development, which is why it has been made a statutory subject.

How will parents and carers be consulted on the development of my school's RSE policy?

Under the new guidance, all schools will be required to engage parents and carers closely in the development of their RSE policy, and in the planning and delivery of this teaching. Clear communication between schools and parents and carers is essential for building trust and confidence.

What if LGBT+ relationships are against the religious beliefs of parents or carers?

There are of course different religious perspectives on LGBT+ relationships. By building understanding for people from all different backgrounds – including LGBT+ people, people of different faiths and none, people from different ethnic backgrounds and more – schools can support all pupils to respect people who are different to them, helping to tackle the prejudice-based bullying that remains common in many of our schools and wider society.

Hundreds of faith schools, church schools and schools with faith pupil majorities are already teaching about people with all different backgrounds, including LGBT+ people, to help meet their legal duties and ensure that all pupils feel included. They're committed to tackling anti-LGBT+ bullying, and promoting respect for people with all different backgrounds, because of the values of love, respect, tolerance and understanding that lie at the heart of all major religions.

Resources developed by national faith bodies on tackling anti-LGBT+ bullying include:

- Valuing All God's Children (Church of England)⁴
- The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils: A Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools (Office of the Chief Rabbi and Keshet UK)⁵
- Made in God's Image (Catholic Education Service)⁶
- Imaan, the UK's leading LGBTQ Muslim charity⁷

⁴ https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%20July%202019_0.pdf

⁵ <https://chiefrabbi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/The-Wellbeing-of-LGBT-Pupils-A-Guide-for-Orthodox-Jewish-Schools.pdf>

⁶ http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/images/CES-Project_Homophobic-Bullying-Booklet_JUN18_PROOF-9.pdf

⁷ <https://imaanlondon.wordpress.com/>

What can I do?

Showing solidarity with the LGBT+ Community

The recent protests and opposition from a small but vocal minority towards the teaching of LGBT+ inclusive relationships education has created significant concern amongst the LGBT+ community. We do not want to see a return to the days of Section 28.

As leaders in the community, Labour councillors showing their solidarity and full support for inclusive education for all can reassure members of the LGBT+ community that they are not standing alone in their fight for a more loving and understanding society.

Pass our model motion through your Labour Group and full council

Below is a model motion to take to your Labour Group and to full council that can be used to send a clear message of support for the LGBT+ community and for teaching LGBT+ inclusive Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education:

This council notes that LGBT+ inclusive relationships and sex education is crucial to the development of young LGBT+ people, and in creating a more tolerant and open society. Council notes that the current climate for LGBT+ people in the UK means that that nearly half - including 64 per cent of trans pupils - are bullied for being LGBT+ in Britain's schools. Council notes that the repeal of Section 28 was a pivotal moment for LGBT+ rights, and that the UK must never move backwards on LGBT+ rights by stopping LGBT+ inclusive education in schools. Council notes that people of all faiths and none are LGBT+ and it is vital that all children receive comprehensive and inclusive relationships and sex education, regardless of their parents' beliefs.

Council welcomes the introduction of statutory Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), which all primary and secondary schools in England respectively will be required to teach from September 2020. Council affirms unequivocally its support for compulsory LGBT+ inclusive Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education in all state funded primary and secondary schools. Council commits to ensuring that schools are delivering RSE in line with new Government guidance.

If you pass this motion, please let us know by emailing lgbtlabouruk@gmail.com and tweeting us about it at @LGBTLabour.

What can I do?

Attend a local pride

A good way to show solidarity with the LGBT+ community is to be a part of local Pride events and marches. Many Labour Groups already have a presence at Prides in their area.

LGBT+ Labour helps to organise a Labour presence at Prides all over the UK. To get involved or to get help in organising a presence at a local pride, email lgbtlabouruk@gmail.com.

Write to local schools

Write a letter of support to all of the schools within your local authority area, stating your support for LGBT+ inclusive relationships education and relationships and sex education. Reassure your schools that Labour councillors will always stand firmly alongside them in delivering LGBT+ inclusive education and will never bow down to bigotry or allow intolerance to dictate what is taught to our children.

Request a speaker from LGBT+ Labour

Elected officers from LGBT+ Labour's National, Regional and Nations committees are regularly invited to speak at Labour Party branch and CLP meetings about LGBT+ issues and campaigns. If you would like one of us to attend a meeting of your Labour Group to talk about the importance of LGBT+ inclusive education you can do so by emailing lgbtlabouruk@gmail.com

How should I respond to protests/ misunderstanding in my community?

You know your community best, and you will know the best way to approach protestors, members of the LGBT+ community, and local schools. Use your judgement around who to talk to and who not to engage with - you do not need to engage with everyone if you feel it will be unhelpful to do so.

Be unequivocal in your support of LGBT+ people at all times – do not use language in meetings, public or on social media that suggests knowledge of their existence is dependent on age, subject to other's religious/political views, or invalid in our society. Be clear in your understanding and promotion of the message that LGBT+ inclusive education makes us a better, more tolerant society.

Meet with local schools to understand their point of view on the issues and on the dialogue they have had with parents. By asking them to talk you through how they intend to teach Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, you can communicate this to parents and your wider community too.

Do not be afraid to meet with, listen to, and challenge the protestors or complainants. Listen to their points respectfully, but clearly and consistently reject arguments that are rooted in or allude to discrimination against LGBT+ people. Try to understand where misinformation or misunderstanding is causing problems and work to reduce those.

Work together – where possible work with Council leadership, local schools, local MPs, and LGBT+ groups to come up with a plan on reducing tensions. Ask for help – reach out to organisations like LGBT+ Labour, local LGBT+ charities, and other Councillors or MPs who are dealing with these issues in their communities too.

LGBT+ Labour Councillors Network

The LGBT+ Labour Councillors Network was established in September 2018. The Network exists to support Labour candidates and councillors who identify as LGBT+, and to encourage Labour run councils and Labour Groups in opposition to work towards making their local authorities more LGBT+ inclusive.

The Network is run jointly by LGBT+ Labour and the Local Government Association Labour Group.

If you would like to get involved with the Network or to be added to our mailing list, please email lgblabouruk@gmail.com with the subject line 'LGBT+ Labour Cllrs Network'.



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