

Lowerhouses CE Primary School



LGBTQ+ Policy

Working and achieving together to enrich lives and nurture bright futures

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1. Statement of intent

All pupils at Lowerhouses CE Primary School are entitled to an education which is free from discrimination and harassment. The learning environment in which all our pupils engage should be welcoming to gender diversity and supportive and safe for all as they develop their sexual and gender identity.

In conjunction with the existing school Equality Policy and the Anti-bullying policy, this policy provides further clarification on:

- the prevention of, and where necessary the handling of, any homophobic or transphobic incidents
- the support provided, if required, to pupils who identify themselves to school staff as lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender dysphoric or transgender

The school is committed to valuing, respecting and understanding pupils' developing and differing gender identities and the policy aims:

- To create and foster a learning environment which is free from harassment and discrimination, regardless of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression.
- To promote healthy communication between educators, pupils and parents to support the successful education, development and wellbeing of every pupil.
- To adhere to relevant legislation concerning bullying, harassment and discrimination.

All staff, parents and pupils will work together to eradicate any instances of discrimination, harassment or bullying, including any which relate to a pupil's gender or identity, in our school.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Criminal Justice Act 2003

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

“Transgender” is defined as an individual whose gender expression or identity is different from their biological sex. An individual may choose to express their trans* identity through a number of means, such as: behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voices and mannerisms.

“Bisexual” is defined as a man or woman who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of both sexes.

“Gay” is defined as a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of the same sex, and is usually used to describe a man being attracted to another man. This is also known as being “homosexual”.

“Gender dysphoria” is defined as a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity, which continues through childhood and into adulthood

“Lesbian” is defined as a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of the same sex, and is usually used to describe a woman who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to another woman. This is also known as being “homosexual”.

“Coming out” is defined as the process through which an individual recognises that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans*, and may disclose this as their identity to others.

“Transition” is defined as the process during which a person transitions from one gender to their preferred gender. This does not always involve a medical procedure, but a ‘social transition’ whereby an individual begins to live with their preferred gender identity.

“Non-binary” is defined as an identity which is neither male or female, a combination of both, or in-between.

“Preferred gender identity” is defined as an individual’s preferred gender, irrespective of their biological sex. An individual may prefer to be a male, female, neither, in-between, or both.

4. What are transphobic and homophobic incidents?

For the purpose of this policy, “transphobia” is an fear, dislike or abuse of transgender people. Transphobic behaviour may include the deliberate harassment of someone who is, or is thought to be, LGBTQ+ or trans.

For the purpose of this policy, “homophobia” is an fear, dislike or abuse of LGBTQ+ people. Homophobic behaviour may include the deliberate harassment of someone who is, or is thought to be, LGBTQ+ or trans.

Transphobic and homophobic incidents must be dealt with as seriously as other bullying incidents within our school. The handling of all such incidents should centre on supporting the victim, helping the perpetrator to understand the nature and effects of their actions and reducing the risk of any future transphobic or homophobic behaviour.

5. Managing Transphobic and homophobic incidents & bullying

In accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, teachers have the power to discipline pupils who engage in misbehaviour either inside or outside the school premises. This can relate to any transphobia, homophobia or other bullying incident that occurs anywhere inside or outside of the school premises. It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment/discrimination as the highest priority. Pupils will understand that homophobic and transphobic language will not be tolerated either within or outside of school.

The school recognises that those who are victims of transphobic or homophobic bullying may not be identified as an LGBTQ+ pupil. Care will be taken when handling an incident that no assumptions are being made about the victim's gender or sexual identity, nor about the victim or the perpetrator's understanding of sexual and gender issues.

Homophobic/transphobic incidents are highly personal and sensitive and will be treated appropriately in the context of a primary school setting. The school will ensure that there are private spaces available within the school for pupils to discuss concerns, if they feel they are, or someone else is, being bullied. This will involve taking into account the understanding and intentions of both victim and perpetrator and focusing on establishing healthy communication and relationships going forward.

Should an incident occur, the pupil will be informed that this behaviour will not be tolerated and will be encouraged to reflect on the way in which their behaviour affects others during a meeting with their class teacher. The school will recognise that some incidences of inappropriate language are not necessarily transphobic or homophobic but may be based on pupils being unaware of the meaning of language they may be copying from others. Such incidences will be dealt with sensitively and appropriately. If a pupil persists with homophobic or transphobic bullying in the classroom, the class teacher may decide to remove the pupil from the classroom and discuss their behaviour in further detail with the headteacher. The headteacher will decide which sanctions are necessary and may consider inviting the parents of the pupil to discuss the matter.

Following an investigation into any incident and where it was deemed to be bullying, the headteacher will hold a meeting with the victim and their parents and the perpetrator and their parents (sensitivity will be given to whether the pupil has disclosed that they are an LGBTQ+ pupil or not) to discuss any support they feel necessary and will ensure that they continue to feel comfortable within the school environment. If necessary, external support will be sought.

Any incidents which occur shall be reported to the headteacher and recorded in line with the process in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

6. Ensuring an inclusive school environment

Roles and responsibilities

The school is committed to supporting all pupils to express their gender identity in healthy and age-appropriate ways. The school supports the concepts that “childhood should be a time where it is accepted that development is still in progress” and “children should be afforded freedom from the expectation of permanence”.

All staff therefore have responsibility for:

- promoting the freedoms and opportunities available to all pupils, whichever their biological sex;
- avoiding the portrayal of stereotypical gender expressions (eg. boys like football and become engineers, girls like dancing and become secretaries etc.)
- being cautious about applying the definitions in section 3 of this policy to any pupil in any context (including staff-staff discussions), recognising that children are in the process of developing their sexual and gender identities

All staff will ensure they meet the needs of LGBTQ+ pupils and assess any measures put in place on a case-by-case, individual basis. The school will respect all pupils' right to privacy and will not disclose a pupil's LGBTQ+ status at school to any other pupils, staff members or third parties. The school will know how to access further support for parents or pupils, via referrals to outside agencies such as Ask CAMHS.

The headteacher will make any necessary and appropriate changes to the support available to ensure the happiness and development of all pupils. The headteacher will keep a record of any reported incidents and the school will work to put measures in place which prevent these reoccurring. Training sessions will be delivered to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.

The governing body will evaluate and review this Policy and will make sure it is non-discriminatory taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents in order to improve procedures. The governing body will evaluate and review the success of support available to pupils on a termly basis via the Headteacher's report.

Teaching and learning:

Teaching of gender identities, sexualities and the LGBTQ+ community will be incorporated into PSHE lessons, sex and relationship education (SRE) to nurture an accepting, understanding attitude from other pupils and prevent transphobic incidents in line with our School's Christian Values.

Teaching of gender identities, sexualities and the LGBTQ+ community will also be included elsewhere in the curriculum, where appropriate, to ensure a whole-school approach.

The school will ensure resources are available in the school library regarding LGBTQ+, sexual orientation and gender identities that are relevant and appropriate for pupils of different school ages. Parents are able to view all books available to children if they wish.

Terminology and language:

The school educates pupils regarding inappropriate language and name-calling, and instances of such will not be taken lightly. The school will enquire as to what terms and pronouns individual LGBTQ+ pupils prefer and avoid using any terms which the pupil may find uncomfortable.

Training of staff:

All members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) will undergo training on an annual basis which will:

- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support LGBTQ+ pupils.
- Provide support for teachers incorporating gender identity into the curriculum.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and celebrates, Anti-Bullying Week (November).
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings of gender identity, gender expression, gender diversity and sexual orientation in children.

Absence:

In line with our Attendance Policy, the school will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support of LGBTQ+ pupils by external sources. All absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively by school business officers to ensure privacy of the pupil.

7. Pupils who identify with gender dysphoria or as transgender:

The school recognises that some primary school aged children may experience varying degrees of temporary or permanent gender dysphoria. Given the complexity and possible distressing nature of this experience, and the potential long term health and wellbeing impacts for the individual, the school will seek to explore the issues on an individual basis with the pupil and their parents and gain support from services such as CAMHS.

As a distinctively Christian school, all staff are responsible for reassuring any pupil struggling with their gender identity or any pupil who has transitioned that they are uniquely created by and loved by God, and that they are not alone in their experience.

Support plan for pupils:

The school will support individual pupils who identify with gender dysphoria or as transgender on a case by case basis. A support plan will be developed by the pupil, the headteacher, the class teacher and the parents. The support plan may include:

- consideration of referral for psychological support to CAMHS
- approach to single-gender activities

The school will limit the number of single-gender activities unless completely necessary.

- engagement in PE and Sports, including swimming

All LGBTQ+ pupils at our school are encouraged to engage in PE and sports in a manner consistent with their preferred gender identity. The school will avoid providing activities which are only specific for one gender, e.g. only providing dance classes for female pupils. We will ensure that varied programmes are available and are suitable for both genders. The school will carefully and sensitively manage all PE lessons in order to prevent any discomfort or discrimination the pupil may encounter.

- use of toilet and changing facilities.

The school will ensure that LGBTQ+ pupils are able to access the toilet and changing facilities which correspond with their preferred gender identity. *(As stated in the recent consultation on the Gender Recognition Act 2004, existing arrangements of separate sex facilities will not change but unisex toilet facilities are available for pupils should they prefer to use these.)*

- flexibilities around school uniform

All pupils have the right to dress in accordance with their preferred gender identity. Our school uniform and PE kit is non-gender-specific.

- close liaison with a new school if the pupil is changing schools
- School trips and overnight stays:

Any risks identified will be managed and discussed between the pupil, parents and headteacher. Appropriate measures and adjustments will be discussed to facilitate the participation of the LGBTQ+ pupil. Sleeping arrangements for overnight stays will be discussed between the pupil, parents and headteacher in advance of the trip.

At no time will any member of staff disclose any information regarding a pupil's gender identity to any other pupils, staff members or third parties, unless instructed to do so by the pupil.

The pupil will be encouraged throughout this planning to recognise the freedoms and opportunities available to them, without the need to fit into any fixed labels or categories and without needing to make any life-changing decisions prior to completion of puberty.

The headteacher will regularly review the support plan with the pupil, their parents and their class teacher.

The school will aim to provide ongoing and individualised support to the pupil, and to be responsive to any changes required so that the pupil is able to receive their education in a supportive and safe environment where they are accepted and valued as any other pupil.

The school recognises the possible need for support out of the school environment. The school will have identified LGBTQ+ support groups for parents and pupils and will gather information to share with parents should they request it.

8. Communicating with parents

The school will communicate any changes to policies and procedures to parents, to ensure that they are fully aware of the systems in place to prevent transphobic and homophobic bullying.

The headteacher will hold meetings with parents of pupils with support plans to discuss the success of support in place, to enable the information being fed back to the governing body.

The school will also communicate any planned educational lessons or sessions relating to LGBTQ+ issues to parents. These will be communicated in advance, in order to give parents a chance to request their child is withdrawn from the lessons.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child, the headteacher will attempt to explain the school's responsibility to implement anti-bullying prevention strategies, which includes educating pupils about wide ranging issues, in order to encourage the parent to let their child participate.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of, and know how to identify, the signs of bullying, and understand their responsibility to stop their child bullying others, should this occur.

Parents will be informed of the procedures to follow if they wish to raise a concern with the school, as well as the procedures for issuing complaints, in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2028.

When reviewing the policy, the headteacher will consider any incidents that have occurred and the effectiveness of the procedures currently in place, as well as any recent governmental or societal changes.