

The School Report

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The Survey

- ★ Conducted in 2006 by the Schools Health Education Unit on behalf of Stonewall.
- ★ Young people from Great Britain who are lesbian, gay, bisexual (or think they might be) asked to complete a survey about their experiences at school.
- ★ Largest poll of its kind ever carried out in Great Britain.

Homophobic bullying

- ★ Almost two thirds (65%) of young LGB people experience homophobic bullying in British schools.
- ★ This figure rises to 75% of young LGB people attending faith schools.
- ★ Of those who are bullied, 92% experience verbal abuse
- ★ 41% experience physical abuse
- ★ 17% have received death threats.
- ★ 98% of all LGB pupils report hearing phrases e.g. 'that's so gay' in school.

Case study

“I was once threatened by a friend’s brother over an instant message that he would beat me to death in the streets if he saw me or torch my house whilst I’m sleeping in it. He also told me not to go down to a local event as he worked there and if he saw me he would get his friends to help him.”

Sean, 16, Secondary School in Wales

Who does the bullying?

- ★LGB pupils experience bullying from all members of the school community – including adults and younger pupils
- ★Nearly 4 in 5 LGB pupils experience bullying from boys in their year, over half experience bullying from girls in their year.
- ★LGB pupils also report bullying from older and younger pupils in their school, as well as those from other schools.
- ★Over half have heard homophobic remarks from teachers or school staff.

Responses to homophobic bullying

- ★LGB pupils report that half of teachers never respond to homophobic language when they hear it.
- ★Only 7% of teachers are reported to respond every time they hear homophobic bullying.
- ★58% of LGB pupils who experience bullying don't report it.
- ★If they do tell a teacher, in 62% of cases, nothing is done.
- ★Over 60% of young LGB people feel that there is neither an adult at home nor school who they can talk to about being gay.

Case study

“I can’t tell anyone because, basically, no-one knows that I am gay...I got punched in the corridor today for example, and I can’t tell the teacher because it will involve coming out.

Nick, 14, Secondary School in Wales

Consequences of homophobic bullying

- ★ Over a third of all LGB pupils don't feel safe at school.
- ★ Seven out of ten of those who experience homophobic bullying state that this impacts on their school work.
- ★ Half have skipped school because of bullying. One in five has skipped school more than six times.
- ★ 35% of LGB pupils disagree that their school is an accepting, tolerant place. This rises to 47% among those who attend faith schools
- ★ Over a third of young LGB people don't feel part of their school community. Two in five don't participate in any extra-curricular activities

Curriculum and Teaching

- ★ Seven in ten pupils have never been taught about LGB issues in class.
- ★ LGB pupils who have been taught about these issues are 13% less likely to have been bullied.
- ★ Teaching is often misleading and inaccurate, which can lead to further bullying.

Case Study

“My teacher was very ignorant about gay issues and the laws about gay sex but I didn’t want to correct her because I didn’t want to draw attention to the fact I knew about it.”

Rhiannon, 17, Comprehensive School in Wales.

Resources for LGB pupils

- ★ Four in five young LGB people have no access to any information at school about LGB issues.
- ★ Only 6% of schools have a club specifically for LGB pupils and their friends.
- ★ Only 15% of young LGB people have attended an LGB youth group.
- ★ Young people are more likely to seek support and community in pubs and clubs, even if underage.
- ★ Nearly two in five LGB pupils have attended a pub or club. They are more than twice as likely to go to a pub or club rather than a youth group.

What works well?

- ★ Less than a quarter of young LGB people have been told that homophobic bullying is wrong in their school.
- ★ In schools that have explicitly stated that homophobic bullying is wrong, LGB pupils are 60% more likely not to have been bullied
- ★ They are twice as likely to feel welcome
- ★ They are 70% more likely to feel safe at school
- ★ They are 40% more likely to feel that their school notices when they are good at something
- ★ They are two and a half times more likely to feel able to talk to an adult at school about being gay.

What works well?

- ★ In schools which respond to homophobic bullying when it occurs, LGB pupils are more than three times more likely to feel their school is accepting and tolerant.
- ★ They are 78% more likely to feel that their school recognizes when they are good at something
- ★ They are more than twice as likely to feel respected
- ★ They are more than twice as likely to enjoy going to school

What works well?

- ★ Pupils who have been taught in a positive way about LGB issues are more likely to feel supported at school
- ★ They are 60% more likely to be happy at school
- ★ They are 40% more likely to feel respected
- ★ They are 62% more likely to feel that their school has ways to help them solve problems with other people
- ★ They are more than 69% more likely to feel able to be themselves.

Case Study

“We were just taught to be accepting in our PSHE lessons and that is fine...We’ve also had some references in English, e.g. one of the writers was lesbian, and we all just accepted it and it was just a fact.”

Pru, 16, Academy School in Wales

Recommendations

★ **Acknowledge and identify the problem**

Schools should acknowledge that homophobic bullying occurs in schools and take steps to prevent it.

★ **Develop policies and tell young people about them**

LGB pupils feel more positive about their school if it has developed policies about homophobic bullying. They are twice as likely to feel their school is an accepting, tolerant place where they feel welcome. Schools should develop explicit homophobic bullying policies, tell pupils about them and implement them.

Recommendations

★ **Promote a positive social environment**

LGB pupils are three times more likely to feel that their school is an accepting, tolerant school if staff respond to incidents. Staff should feel able to contribute towards a social environment where LGB people and LGB issues are respected

★ **Address staff training needs**

Staff need training to help them respond to, and prevent, homophobic bullying and support LGB pupils.

Recommendations

★ Provide information and support

Schools have a responsibility to help all young people stay safe. LGB pupils frequently don't receive this support. Schools should ensure that pupils have access to the information and support they need.

★ Integrate sexual orientation into the curriculum

Schools need to consider ways in which sexual orientation can be integrated into the curriculum, in a positive and constructive way which enables all pupils to understand and respect difference and diversity

Recommendations

★ **Use outside experience**

LGB organizations can provide support to schools and young people to help LGB pupils feel more positive and included in their community. Working with bodies such as local authorities can also help schools support individuals and classes to prevent homophobic bullying

★ **Encourage role models**

Positive role models can help a young person feel more confident and comfortable. Teachers who are LGB are in a strong position to fulfil this role, provided they are supported by their schools

Recommendations

★ Don't make assumptions

Not all LGB people are alike, not all will experience being LGB in the same ways. Not all parents, governors or teachers will be heterosexual and not all pupils will grow up to be heterosexual

★ Celebrate achievements

Acknowledge and celebrate progress so that all pupils, parents, governors and staff know and understand the progress that is being made. Celebrating work will also allow other schools to learn.

Stonewall Cymru

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