

Ten Things Your School Can Do To Challenge Homophobia

1. Acknowledge and identify the problem of bullying.

The most important step is to recognise that all sorts of bullying takes place in formal and informal settings even if some forms are not immediately visible.

2. Develop policies which recognise the existence of homophobic bullying.

Ensure that your anti-bullying policy takes homophobic bullying into account. Take other appropriate action such as challenging use of the word 'gay' and ensuring fast removal of graffiti.

3. Promote a positive social environment.

The ethos of the entire school community, including all staff and parents, ought to be to support all young people, regardless of their differences, and to ensure that they are happy and safe.

4. Address staff training needs.

Do not assume that only lesbian, gay and bisexual staff are able to deal with homophobic bullying, but ensure all staff are confident they know how to react to such situations.

5. Provide information and support for young people.

Make age-appropriate information about services and support available through notice boards, school planners and websites.

6. Include addressing anti-bullying, including homophobic bullying, in curriculum or activity planning.

Try to include awareness-raising about anti-bullying including homophobic bullying in an age-appropriate way so that all understand and appreciate diversity. This can be done in formal and informal settings e.g. by providing information about LGB groups in appropriate places within formal and informal settings.

7. Feel able to use outside expertise.

People working in external agencies (such as EACH, lesbian and gay charities, youth workers or telephone helplines) can offer support in addressing homophobic bullying.

8. Use positive role models.

Openly gay staff, governors, youth workers, parents/carers and/or pupils can all be strong role models for a young people's setting.

9. Do not make assumptions.

Do not assume that all young people are, or will be, heterosexual. Do not assume that all adults working with young people are heterosexual. Do not assume that all young people experiencing homophobic bullying are gay.

10. Celebrate achievements.

Make successes known, such as updating your anti-bullying policy or reducing the incidence of bullying, through tutorial or information sharing time, newsletters, notice boards or websites etc.

