

Each school has its own behavior policy. If your child is experiencing indirect or direct homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, then it should be dealt with by using this policy. You can ask the school to see a copy to make sure that they are following the correct steps. If the policy is not being followed, then the school may be in breach of the Equality Act (2010). It deals with the way schools treat their pupils, rather than the relationship between pupils. Therefore, it does not bear directly on issues of anti-LGBT bullying by pupils. However, if a school treats homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying less seriously than other forms of bullying, that could be treated as unlawful discrimination.

'Exploring the school's actions to prevent and tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying' is an Ofsted's Inspectors Briefing for a Section 5 inspection. It states that inspectors should make sure that questions are age-appropriate and asked in the right context.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-homophobic-bullying-and-ingrained-attitudes-at-school>.

With primary pupils, inspectors might explore whether:

- Pupils ever hear anyone use the word 'gay' when describing a thing, or whether they have been told by teachers that using the word 'gay', to mean something is rubbish, is wrong, and why it is wrong.
- Pupils ever get picked on by other children for not behaving like a 'typical girl' or a 'typical boy'.
- Pupils have had any lessons about different family types, including having same sex parents.

With secondary pupils, inspectors might explore the above, and whether:

- There is any homophobic bullying or name calling in school or on social media sites.
- If a gay pupil was 'out' in school, they would feel safe from bullying.
- They have learned about homophobic/ transphobic bullying and ways to stop it happening in school.
- They learn in school about different types of families.

You can get further advice from Ofsted. See the further information section for details.

The important thing to note is that even though the bullying or harassment might not be related to your child's own sexual orientation or gender identity, because they are connected to LGBT communities through you, their parent, it may still be a homophobic, biphobic or transphobic hate crime or bullying. If you do need to report the incident as a hate crime, the ways of reporting and understanding hate crime should be the same as if it were a crime against you.

Section 2: Tips for talking to your children about bullying

Talking to your child about such a sensitive subject can be difficult. Above everyone else you know your child best. These pointers will give you some ideas to help you broach the subject of LGBT hate crime in an age appropriate way.

Your child will probably have to go through a stage of 'coming out' about their family makeup and with that they might come across homophobia, biphobia or transphobia. This process is up to them, let them lead the way but make sure they are armed with the right information and support in case they have a negative response.

To start with you need to make sure they understand what you are comfortable with them telling people at school and in the playground regarding your family structure, sexual orientation and gender identity. Explain that there are lots of different types of families. If you don't want them to tell their classmates or friends, that's okay but make sure they know why.

- Talk to your child about different families. Many LGBT parents use this as a starting point.
- Talk with them about sexual orientation and gender identity in general. Many LGBT parents use this as a starting point to support their understanding of the topic.
- Talk to them about kindness and if someone is being unkind, that they need to tell you or another grown up.
- Make sure you are comfortable with talking to them about it, in a relaxed and calm atmosphere. The less you make of it, the less they will think it is something to be upset about.
- Talk to your child in a private area where the conversation can't be overheard, in case they want to tell you about their experiences.
- Make sure you broach the subject with your child, rather than letting them find out from someone else. This will help them be able to discuss it with you later on, if necessary.
- Talk to your child in age-appropriate language. Children understand love and kindness rather than hate and aggression.
- Listen to your child and try to gain as much information as possible about their understanding of LGBT hate crime and bullying.
- Make sure your child knows that you are happy to talk to them about this topic whenever they want to.
- Try to provide opportunities for your child to talk to other people with LGBT parents. This could be through LGBT family networking groups such as Proud 2 b Parents or through other local groups.

Further information

To speak to Ofsted directly for information and support about specific schools:

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Department of Education:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Information and guidance on the Equality Act 2010, summary for schools:

www3.hants.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-briefing-for-schools.doc

You can find support and report a hate crime here:

Proud 2 b Parents: www.proud2bparents.co.uk

Galop: www.galop.org.uk/online-report-form

National LGBT Hate Crime Partnership: www.lgbthatecrime.org.uk/#get-support

Police (through their True Vision website): www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force

Other local groups and services that may be able to help: www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk/directory

This information sheet was produced by Proud 2 b Parents, a service for LGBT parents and their children based in Greater Manchester. It is a part of a series of 17 resources on hate crime for LGBT people and service providers, created on behalf of the National LGBT Hate Crime Partnership. Other useful information sheets include:

1. Glossary of Terms Relating to Hate Crime
2. Diary Sheets and Guidance on Keeping a Written Record of Hate Crime
3. Hate Crime Laws: A Guide for LGBT People
4. LGBT Hate Crime and Emergency Accommodation
5. Non-Emergency Housing Options for LGBT People Facing Hate Crime
6. Financial Assistance Schemes
7. Talking to your Children about Bullying and Hate Crime: Advice for LGBT Parents
10. Tackling Biphobia: A Guide for Safety Services
11. Tackling Transphobia: A Guide for Safety Services
12. Complaints to Statutory Agencies: A Guide for Advice Workers

Find out about our work at www.proud2bparents.co.uk and www.lgbthatecrime.org.uk

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