



# EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

ENDING HOMOPHOBIA THROUGH EDUCATION

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR ALL STAFF

## IS HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING A PROBLEM AT YOUR SCHOOL?

### What is Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying?

**Homophobia is a fear of people who are attracted to the same sex.**

Homophobic bullying is motivated by prejudices against lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

### How does it affect schools?

**65% of lesbian, gay or bisexual young people have experienced homophobic bullying.**

The majority of teachers have never received training on how to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying. Many teachers say that they would not feel confident enough to talk about lesbian and gay issues in class and may lack the support and confidence needed to provide support and advice to lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.

If homophobic bullying goes unchallenged, it can have severe negative consequences for young people.

Seven out of ten lesbian and gay young people say homophobic bullying affects their school work and many have skipped school because of it (Source: The School Report, Stonewall).

### What are the legal responsibilities for schools?

**Teachers are free to discuss homophobic bullying and lesbian, gay and bisexual issues in the classroom.** (Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act never actually applied to schools and was repealed in 2003).

All schools have a duty of care over their pupils to ensure their safety and to protect their emotional well being. (*The Children Act 1989*)

Teachers have a legal duty to ensure homophobic bullying is dealt with in schools. (*Education and Inspections Act 2006*)

It is unlawful for schools to treat students less favourably because they are gay or lesbian or perceived to be or because they are associated with someone who is. (*Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) 2007*)

### Why do we need to challenge homophobia in school?

**Evidence suggests that homophobia is endemic in Britain's schools.**

As part of our work in Manchester, Exceeding Expectations has found that over half of all school goers feel that their school is an unsafe place for LGB pupils.

Pupils who reported homophobic abuse found that only 1 in 8 cases actually resulted in anything being done about it.

### What is Exceeding Expectations?

**Exceeding Expectations is a multi-agency award winning initiative that aims to support schools in tackling homophobic bullying.**

It is a partnership initiative involving Manchester City Council, Manchester Healthy Schools, Hope Theatre Company, Manchester Community Health and the Lesbian & Gay Foundation.

The initiative is part of the Children's Services Equality Strategy and has the backing of Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board

Fully supported by Manchester Healthy Schools, the initiative aims to help schools safeguard all young people from bullying and discrimination and assist in all our attempts to create a safe and happy learning environment.

Exceeding Expectations has successfully reached over 3,000 young people and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with the project being Highly Commended in the North West Public Health Awards 2008.

**The Exceeding Expectations project recognises that each school's needs are unique. The initiative is always eager to tailor the basic package with any additional requirements.**



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### What does the Exceeding Expectations initiative involve?

The initiative aims to empower all young people, building their aspirations and well-being.

Exceeding Expectations supports schools in the delivery of all five outcomes of Every Child Matters as well as Safeguarding Children.

The play 'OUTLOUD' is a specially commissioned piece of verbatim theatre produced by Hope Theatre Company designed to voice the words of Manchester Young People on the subject of homophobia and sexuality.

Performances are followed with a discussion which highlights recent cases of homophobic murders in the UK. Discussion also covers language use and the impact of what we say on our friends, family and those coming to terms with their own sexuality.

- Full staff training prior to working with pupils.
- Opportunity for pupils to get involved in the Exceeding Expectations young person's group focusing on initiative development and peer support.
- Teachers and pupil resources are also available for follow up ideas in the planned curriculum.
- Anti-bullying policy development and support.

### Key Findings

**Our local findings back up national research on homophobia and homophobic bullying.** Following on from the play over 3,000 questionnaires have been completed by young people before and after they have seen Outloud.

- **94%** of pupils have heard the word gay being used negatively in their school.
- **71%** of pupils think that their school did not deal with homophobic bullying well.

## POSITIVE EFFECTS OF EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

- **When Exceeding Expectations first went into schools, 2 in 10 pupils understood the term 'Homophobia.' After the second visit, 8 in 10 understood the term.**
- **When Exceeding Expectations first went into schools, 3 in 10 pupils thought it would be safe to come out at school. After the second visit, 7 in 10 pupils thought it would be safe to come out at**

- **61%** of pupils do not feel that they would be able to come out at school.
- **56%** of staff do not believe that it would be safe for a teacher to come out at school
- **39%** of pupils have witnessed homophobic bullying in school. (Source: Exceeding Expectations Questionnaire findings 2009).

### Resources for Young People

- Have your pupils seen the latest Exceeding Expectations resource for young people called 'THIS BOOKLET IS SO GAY?'
- The Lesbian & Gay Foundation have also produced a new resource designed to inspire young people to achieve. 'AIM HIGH' features 20 high profile lesbian, gay and bisexual people from the worlds of sport, entertainment and business.

For copies of any of the above resources please e-mail: [exceedingexpectations@lgf.org.uk](mailto:exceedingexpectations@lgf.org.uk)