

LGBT+ Inclusive Staffroom

Good Practice Guidelines for the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Staff

While our LGBT+ colleagues are legally protected from discrimination, it is up to all of us to ensure that our schools are open and welcoming places for them to work in. Here are some ways to build an LGBT+ inclusive staffroom.

- 1** Be conscious that some of your colleagues, members of their families and/or friends are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (and may or may not be 'out').
- 2** Ask staff members what pronouns they use (e.g. they, she, he) and use them.
- 3** Respond positively when a colleague discloses their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 4** Challenge homophobic, biphobic or transphobic comments and jokes. It is important to speak up as silence implies that you agree.
- 5** Encourage the use of inclusive and gender neutral language, e.g. partner. This is especially important if you do not know the gender of a person's partner. Avoid assuming heterosexuality.
- 6** If you are unsure of what language to use, ask an LGBT+ group for guidance e.g. INTO LGBT Teachers' Group, TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland). In some circumstances, it may also be permissible to ask an LGBT+ staff member but use discretion; they are not responsible for the education of the staff body on LGBT+ issues.
- 7** Review the adult anti-bullying policy to ensure it includes an explicit reference to homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- 8** Ensure that your positive staff relations policy includes a way of dealing with situations when 'gay', 'queer' etc are used as terms of abuse.
- 9** Be proactive in creating an LGBT+ inclusive space. Display LGBT+ inclusive posters in the staffroom. Provide access to gender neutral toilets, where possible. Consider an LGBT+ perspective when drawing up workplace policies or organising staff social events.
- 10** Talk about issues that affect LGBT+ people alongside all other equality issues discussed in the staffroom. Break the silence.