



# Valuing All God's Children

Guidance for Church of England schools  
on challenging homophobic, biphobic and  
transphobic bullying

**Second Edition**  
Updated Summer 2019

# Executive Summary

## Why is this guidance offered?

In February 2017 following a debate in Synod the Archbishop of Canterbury stated:

*There are no problems here, there are simply people. People are made in the image of God. All of us, without exception, are loved and called in Christ. ... The way forward needs to be about love, joy and celebration of our humanity; of our creation in the image of God, of our belonging to Christ – all of us, without exception, without exclusion.<sup>6</sup>*

At an earlier Synod meeting he had called for the Church both to 'demonstrate a profound commitment to stamp out homophobic stereotyping and bullying' and to take action.<sup>7</sup>

This guidance represents the action and commitment that the Church of England is taking to eradicate any homophobic, biphobic and transphobic stereotyping and bullying that takes place in our schools.

## Why do Church of England schools need special guidance beyond that offered to all schools?

*The God of all creation is concerned with everything related to education.<sup>8</sup>*

*The vision is deeply Christian, with the promise of Jesus of 'life in all its fullness.'<sup>9</sup>*

Church of England schools have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually. Our aim is that all may flourish and have an abundant life. Schools have a duty to try to remove any factor that might represent a hindrance to a child's fulfilment. We want all pupils to willingly engage in learning in a safe and welcoming environment.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, alongside all forms of bullying, is a factor that can inhibit a pupil's ability to feel safe as well as their foundation for learning. Church of England schools must therefore implement measures to combat it.

Within the Anglican Communion there is a wide spectrum of understanding about human sexuality and gender, and within a school community many different views may be held too. It is

acknowledged that this is a sensitive topic. However, this does not negate the absolute necessity to combat bullying of any type, including HBT bullying and to create an inclusive school environment that enables all children and young people to flourish.

The aim of this guidance is to prevent pupils in Church of England schools and academies from having their self-worth diminished or their ability to achieve impeded by being bullied because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity. It is important to note that not only lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans pupils experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying; this kind of bullying and language can affect all pupils as well as school staff whether they are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans. This guidance challenges schools, DBEs and Diocesan or Church school-led MATs to ensure that they work towards a consistently welcoming culture for all pupils under the gospel mandate to 'love your neighbour as yourself.'<sup>10</sup> We have not offered lesson plans or materials for physical, social, health and economic education (PSHE) or relationships and sex education (RSE), but the appendices do provide practical examples and templates for schools to use as they instigate anti-bullying policies and strategies.

## Recommendations for schools

### 1. An inclusive school vision

Schools should ensure that their Christian ethos statement offers an inclusive vision for education. This includes affording pupils a sense of their own dignity and a vision of the innate dignity of all humankind. Inclusivity and hospitality should be hallmarks of Church of England schools: every child should be revered and respected as a member of a community where all are known and loved by God.

### 2. Clear policies

Schools should ensure that they have clear anti-bullying policies on preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour and language and that these policies are known and understood by all members of the school community. School leaders should present a clear message that HBT bullying will not be tolerated and that there can be no justification for this negative behaviour based on the Christian faith or the Bible. Schools should ensure that pupils understand how to report incidents. Pupils should be confident that if they report bullying it will be taken seriously.

### 3. Recording incidents of HBT bullying

Every incident of HBT bullying should be taken seriously and should be recorded. Systems for monitoring and analysing incidents of bullying should include homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying as separate categories.

### 4. Monitoring anti-bullying strategies

Governors should take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies (including curriculum, policies and school vision and ethos) and ensure that regular reports about bullying and wellbeing are part of the cycle of governors' meetings. On all governing bodies there will be a nominated lead governor on safety and behaviour which will include homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

### 5. Staff training

All teaching and non-teaching school staff (including teaching assistants, chaplains, church school workers and midday supervisors) should be trained to recognise and understand how to challenge all types of bullying including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and behaviour. Training to enable certain members of staff to offer appropriate pastoral support should be in place. All staff should understand recommended paths of referral to more specialised support.

### 6. Supporting pupils

Schools should ensure that appropriate pastoral support and information are available to all pupils, including LGBT young people, and that all pupils know how to access this support.

### 7. Collective Worship

In collective worship the importance of inclusivity and dignity and respect for all should be explored, as well as other themes and values that play a part in challenging all forms of prejudicial bullying, including HBT bullying and language.

### 8. Recognising and protecting against HBT bullying

Opportunities should be offered for pupils to explore why some people seek to bully and how bullying can take the form of HBT bullying. Strategies about how to protect yourself and others from bullying should be taught, including online safety and cyberbullying awareness.

### 9. Curriculum

Opportunities to discuss issues to do with self-esteem, identity and bullying, including HBT bullying, should be included in physical, social, health and economic education or citizenship programmes. The curriculum should offer opportunities for pupils to learn to value themselves and their bodies. Relationships and sex education should take LGBT people into account. Sexual orientation should be included within RSE in the secondary phase. The Church of England's teaching on human sexuality and a range of Christian views should be taught, as well as a range of perspectives from other faiths and world views.

### 10. SIAMS

Schools should make sure that they understand the expectations outlined for Church schools in the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule. Schools must ensure that their vision creates an environment where all pupils feel welcome and can flourish. Anti-bullying procedures and outcomes (including HBT bullying) will continue to be inspected as a performance indicator of an effective Church school.

## Recommendations for Diocesan Boards of Education

### 11. Advising schools

Diocesan Boards of Education should offer advice to all Church schools and academies in the Diocese about implementing the recommendations of this report and appropriate strategies for inclusion and the prevention of bullying, including HBT bullying.

## Recommendations for the Church of England Education Office

### 12. National Survey

The Church of England Education Office should carry out an annual survey to determine the impact of this resource and the accompanying training. This information should then be used to inform the work of the National Society Council and determine whether any additional resource is required to support dioceses and schools in this work.