

Understanding the Views of your Pupils

*To generate commitment and dedication from young people, it is important for interventions to help young people feel some sense of ownership over the process and the end result. **Department for Education (2011)***

If our goal is to create an inclusive setting for all our young people then it is important that we make young people's opinions, concerns and ideas a key part of our work.

Before beginning work on promoting LGBT+ inclusion and tackling HBT bullying, it is important to hold consultations with young people. Below are suggestions for how you might do this.

Circle Time: Suitable for EYFS and Key Stage 1

Using circle time can be a quick and easy way to collect the opinions and ideas of the young people in your class. Before you start talking about issues that might be sensitive, take time to create a safe space for the young people to share their thoughts:

- Ensure all children have equal opportunity to contribute
- Only one person to speak at a time – using a talking object can help
- Ensure that children know that they can ask questions and share their thoughts and you will not be angry or laugh at anything that they say
- Remind the children to treat each other kindly
- Children don't have to speak if they don't want to
- Let children know what they can do if they feel upset by anything that is said during the conversation

Ways to elicit useful information from the young people include:

- Asking young people to vote on a few simple 'yes' or 'no' questions and recording their responses. A suitable question for this work might be, 'do you know what to do if you see someone being mean to someone else?'
- Getting young people to help you with a mini classroom audit. This can be done by asking young people if there are any things in the classroom that are only used by boys or by girls, asking for reasons why and recording their responses.

- Using boy and girl puppets or persona dolls and asking young children what toy each would like to play with and the reasons why. This type of question can help us understand the sort of gender stereotypes young people are internalising.
- Asking young people to vote on what makes a family. For example, showing images of different types of families and asking them to vote as to whether they think these are families or not and asking for the reasons why.

Observations: Suitable for EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Another possible tool is to observe pupils over a specified amount of time. In that time, keep a diary of relevant interactions between pupils. These could include:

- Use of homophobic language or statements that imply homophobia.
- Use of language or styles of play that assume heteronormativity or are based on gender stereotypes.
- Students talking about their gender or sex.
- Students talking about their families or what makes a family.

Focus Groups: Suitable for EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Bring together 6-8 pupils from across the year group or class.

For pupils in EYFS and Key Stage 1 pictures can be used to elicit conversations within the group. For instance, showing students pictures of different clothes or toys and asking whether these clothes are for 'boys', for 'girls' or for anyone. Once students have discussed their answers you could then ask them if they have ever seen anyone being mean to someone because of their clothes or the toys they choose to play with. The same can be done with pictures of different types of families.

Using a book as a prompt, such as "Dogs don't do Ballet" and asking questions as to why the characters act in certain ways, why some people think certain things are for girls or boys and if it is true.

For pupils in Key Stage 2 provide more open questions and allow students to discuss the answers within the group. Example questions might include asking students how far they agree with the following statements:

- This school teaches us about different types of families and relationships, including families with one parent, adoptive parents or gay parents.
- In this school we learn about the terms; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender.

- In this school everyone understands it is unacceptable to use the word 'gay' to mean rubbish or bad.
- In this school everyone knows that it is wrong to be mean to someone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.
- In this school everyone feels comfortable telling a teacher if they see someone being bullied.

Ask-it Basket- Suitable for Key Stage 2

Talk to your pupils about Free to Be and the work you are going to be doing. The aim of the project is to create a school in which everyone feels safe and valued, including people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender and where nobody is bullied for being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. You can talk to pupils about the sort of work your school might be doing, for instance you may be talking more about different types of families or what to do if you spot someone being bullied.

Inform your pupils that before you start the work, you would like to know if they have any questions that they would like answering or topics they would like you to cover. Provide pupils with a box to write their suggestions in.

These questions can then be read prior to creating your action plan and the pupil's suggestions incorporated in to your work. Alternatively, the box can be kept in the classroom so that pupils can post questions or ideas at any point throughout the project.

Questionnaires- Suitable for Key Stage 2

One of the easiest ways to collect a large amount of data is to hand out a questionnaire to pupils. Below is a questionnaire created by EqualiTeach that can be used for this purpose. Prior to pupils completing the questionnaire, it is important that you reassure pupils that the questionnaire is anonymous and that nobody will get in to trouble for anything they write. It is important that pupils are as honest as possible.

Free to Be Primary School Pupil Questionnaire

At our school we believe it is important for everyone to feel safe and included. To help us do this we would like you to answer some questions so that we can learn more about your experiences at school.

This questionnaire is anonymous. You don't need to tell us your name, and please don't write down any of your classmates' names either.

Thank you!

1. Do you know what the following words mean?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Gay			
Lesbian			
Bisexual			
Transgender			

2. How often in your lessons or assemblies do you talk about some people being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?

Never		Sometimes		Often		I don't know
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3. Explain what you have learnt about in school about some people being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. You can leave this blank if you are not sure.

4. How often do the following things happen at your school?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not sure
People making fun of someone, or being nasty to					

them, by calling them gay or lesbian.					
People making fun of someone, or being nasty to them, because people in their family are gay.					
People using the word gay to mean that something is bad or rubbish.					
People saying that hobbies, or interests are "not for girls" or "not for boys"					
People making fun of someone because they like or do things which are seen as for boys when they are a girl					
People making fun of someone because they like or do things which are seen as for girls when they are a boy					

5. If you have experienced or heard about any of the things above happening, please tell us more about them here.

6. If you experienced or heard about any of these things, did you tell a teacher?

	Yes		No
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7. If no, why did you not tell a teacher?

	I didn't think it was important to report it.
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	I didn't know how or where to report it.
	I dealt with it myself or with help from friends.
	I was too upset to report it.
	I was afraid of the person who carried out the incident.
	I didn't want to get the person who carried out the incident in trouble.
	I didn't think anything would happen or change.
	I didn't think I would be believed.
	I don't know/prefer not to say.

8. Do you know what you can do at school to report that you have experienced or witnessed bullying?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer Not to Say
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9. Do you think that your school responds well when they find out about people being bullied?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer Not to Say
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10. Would you feel confident enough to challenge someone using the word 'gay' to be nasty if you saw it?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer Not to Say
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11. If yes, what would you do/say?