

"How Good is Our Ethos?"

The University of Edinburgh
Pollock Halls

June 2005



ORGANISATION

LGBT Youth Scotland

FOCUS

LGBT Young People and a Positive School Ethos

Please give a brief description of your initiatives which illustrate ways in which ethos can be used as a connecting theme across a number of school activities, such as attainment, achievement, equity, inclusion, rights, health and personal safety.

A school with a positive ethos is one in which all young people feel included and supported and are enabled to reach their full potential. However, LGBT young people can often feel isolated, unsafe, unsupported and victimised in school – this has a proven link with early school leaving, low educational attainment and mental health issues.

LGBT Youth Scotland works with LGBT young people aged 13-25, many of whom are in education and are experiencing these problems. The organisation is experienced in understanding and dealing with the needs of LGBT young people and the following services and initiatives can help to promote a positive school ethos in which all pupils feel included:

- ✓ LGBT awareness training, resources and information for teachers and young people
- ✓ Homophobia and homophobic bullying awareness raising for teachers and young people
- ✓ LGBT sexual health information and support for young people
- ✓ Links with the police service with regards to safety for LGBT young people in the school and the wider community.

How are these initiatives being monitored and evaluated?

- ✓ An annual Stakeholder Survey
- ✓ Feedback and evaluation from participants in our work
- ✓ Continued funding and success

CONTACT INFORMATION

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What are some of the biggest challenges faced by teachers and young people or members of your organisation, in implementing the initiatives or projects?

The sensitivity surrounding the discussion of LGBT issues in schools poses a challenge for LGBT Youth Scotland and for teachers who wish to engage with our initiatives and services.

There are no coordinated national guidelines in place with which to tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying. As a result, teachers may feel unconfident or unwilling to approach LGBT issues. Those teachers who do feel that this is important may be hindered by a lack of support or fear of disapproval from members of the school community.

What has worked well?

- ✓ Training sessions with teachers regarding LGBT issues in school settings.
- ✓ Work with young people using creative approaches such as Theatre in Education.

What did not work & lessons learned?

General schools equality policy and practice which refer to 'all young people' without specific mention of LGBT issues, homophobia and sexual orientation.

Future plans?

LGBT Youth Scotland has been commissioned by the Scottish Executive to undertake research into homophobic incidents in Scottish schools. Our recommendations regarding current policy, practice and areas for improvement will feed into the design of future guidelines and action on tackling homophobic incidents.

Any materials the school or organisation is willing to share or relevant publications that are for sale?

The following resources are available on the Schools and Education area of our website
<http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk>:

A Guide for Teachers on LGBT Issues
 (downloadable)

Developing Practice for the Reduction of Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Youth Settings
 (£3 or downloadable)

An Anti-Homophobic Bullying 4 Poster Set for use in schools is available for £10



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www.antibullying.net

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