Time for Inclusive Education

@tiecampaign

tiecampaign
Throughout our campaign, we have collected the stories and experiences of individuals from their time in Scottish schools. Furthermore, we have received support from a cross section of society. This booklet is a compilation of some of the evidence and advocacy that we have received: which further highlight many of the issues that have been raised in our petition. The diverse nature of support for this campaign emphasises that this is a cause that everyone who believes in true equality and a fairer Scotland should endorse. As well as raising many of the live problems in our schools, this booklet also aims to offer a number of solutions - with reference to some of the good work that is going on - and features recommendations from those who specialise in this field.

TIE
(TIME FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION)

Education is an absolutely vital tool to tackle LGBTI-phobia and discrimination, and it must be utilised. We believe that both the contributions of the LGBTI+ community, and issues affecting LGBTI+ pupils, should be recognised and taught within school environments. We recommend that a working group be established that can directly seek to address this, with the ultimate goal of LGBTI+ inclusion in all school curricula and pastoral care resources. School reviews should henceforth be carried out, to evaluate whether individual institutions are creating an LGBTI+ inclusive schooling environment.

Teachers can play a key role in eradicating LGBTI-phobia and tackling the issues that have been highlighted within this booklet, and so we would urge the Scottish Government to prioritise teacher training in this regard. With a guarantee that all schools have the financial means to send teachers to the inclusive training programmes that are currently available, we can go a long way in addressing longstanding issues. Further, we hold that all trainee teachers should receive LGBTI+ training as part of their required qualification.

If we truly are a progressive nation, then we need a progressive education system to reflect this.
Statistics

Stonewall Scotland’s “School Report”

52% of LGBTI+ youth have experienced direct homophobic bullying in our schools

26% (1 in 4) have attempted suicide as a result of homophobic bullying

54% are deliberately and regularly self-harming.

99% of LGBTI+ pupils in Scotland hear phrases such as “that’s so gay” in school

97% hear phrases such as “poof” “faggot” “dyke”

54% of LGBTI+ youth do not feel part of their school community

49% do not feel they are achieving their best at school

LGBT Youth Scotland Education Report

Over 50% of all LGBT youth believe homophobic bullying negatively impacted their education

88% of trans youth believe transphobic bullying negatively impacted their education

14% of all LGBT youth have left education due to homophobic bullying

42% of trans youth have left education due to transphobic bullying

This is clearly an epidemic; one that is having a destructive impact on a group of young people, whom we should be supporting.
During my school life, from primary six to fourth year at secondary, I was constantly bullied for being gay. I would get called names such as “poof”, “faggot” and “queer”. I was punched, kicked and pushed. It was a very dark time. I would skip school by pretending to be sick.

When I started at high school I thought it may stop as I wouldn’t be near any of the bullies from primary school, well I was wrong. It wasn’t easy to make friends or be myself. I still continued to skip school. The bullying got physical... As my guidance teacher wasn’t doing anything about it, I went one step further and went to see my head teacher but was fobbed off and shown a copy of the schools anti-bullying policy with its one line stating: “This school does not condone homophobic bullying”. The problem is that they did not practice what they were preaching.

It was a very dark time, where I could not focus on any of my work and - plus - life at home wasn’t going very well either. Trying to be someone you are not just to please people is a horrible thing to do. I had to pretend I was straight just to get people to like me.

I came out when I was at the end of fourth year at school. I thought if I did this, it would allow me to be who I am and the bullying would stop but it got worse. The bullies continued to shout ‘faggot’, ‘bum-boy’, ‘queer’ and ‘poof’ at me in the corridors. The teachers continued to fob me off with the usual response, which I believe to be wholly inadequate. This never stopped me from achieving my eight standard grades. I did want to continue on through school to achieve some highers but the bullying was getting to me too much and I had to leave.

Once I left school, I felt I could be who I am. Homophobia certainly had a bad effect on my schooling, as it became unbearable for me to stay on after fourth year. Lets fight to change this in Scotland and around the world. LGBTI+ education in schools would really help, as people would see that being gay is okay and that homophobia must be tackled.

ANONYMOUS

I am 23, so I finished school in 2010, in Falkirk. I identify as bisexual and this was definitely never talked about as an identity in school, so I did not actually understand my identity until I was at University. I often thought I was gay at school and was deeply terrified of this, and I was not out. The vast majority of LGBTI+ people in my year have came out since leaving school.

We studied and debated issues in religious, philosophical and moral education - but LGBTI+ issues were never mentioned. Learning about sex and relationships, as well as discussing gender issues in PSE, without any discussion of sexual or orientation seems very incomplete!

There was an openly gay boy in our year who I witnessed a lot of homophobic jokes and comments being directed at. I feel failed by my school a bit. Personal and sexual education did nothing to help me understand the confusing feelings that I was having of bisexuality. Homophobia/ biphobia / transphobia were never challenged.
When I came out as bisexual...I was pressured to hide my sexuality and relationship in public (no holding hands, no romantic talk and absolutely no kissing) for fear of being attacked. Any time my girlfriend and I broke one of these rules we had abuse shouted at us and worse, intimidating threats by men to “fix us” with rape.

When I went to college, my first experience of the education system as a teenager, I wasn’t bullied by the other students, but by one of my tutors. When he found out two of his female students were dating his attitude towards us changed overnight. He was rude, unhelpful with coursework and would spend the whole day ignoring us, choosing to go up and down the desks checking peoples work and instructing them one at a time, skipping us, and then going around everybody else again. Eventually I went to his supervisor about his behaviour only to be told “that’s just the way he is” and he advised me to “be more discrete in future”.

I went to a catholic school in South Lanarkshire and I don’t remember being taught about LGBTI+. I didn’t realise I was non-binary or asexual until college as a result of this. I knew people who were beaten up and bullied regularly for being LGBTI+. I also knew someone who presented themselves as a gay cis guy, but only after leaving school could they come out as transgender and finally start transitioning. I think that they maybe felt the need to stay in the closet due to how prejudiced our school was.

I myself have not came out to everyone in my school. The ‘popular’ boys in my year will make remarks about me and how my other friends are either bi, lesbian or gay and how we want each other. It honestly doesn’t bother me because I can deal with it and don’t really care what other people think of me or see me as but I know that it hurts some of my friends especially my best friend who has been made fun of his whole life for being feminine. Being called gay is a natural occurrence in classes but the teachers don’t say anything about it. There has even been a time where me and my two best friends - who are boys (both of whom have been taunted for being effeminate) - asked if we could leave class to go finish an art project. A boy who sat right beside the teacher said “They’re probably just away to go fuck each other under the stairs” and not a single thing was said to him by the teacher.
PERSONAL STORIES

BENEDICT GARRETT

As a former teacher (not to mention student who was regularly taunted with homophobic slurs throughout his school life), I understand acutely the hurdles we face in trying to make our schools acceptable places for LGBTI+ students and staff to learn and work, without fear of discrimination and persecution. It is not enough that SOME schools are doing their bit to address these concerns. We need each and every school across the land to ensure that no pupil leaves education thinking homo/bi/transphobia is ever acceptable, and has an understanding of the rights each and everyone of us is, and must be, afforded in relation to living a life along whichever sexual and/or gender lines we so choose. I commend TIE for leading this campaign across Scotland and urge all of us, whether in education, or not, to support their aims.

STUART RUSSELL

I was bullied throughout my time at high school for being gay. I was outed before I even had time to figure myself out. The bullying was all day, every day. At lunch times I would have younger kids throw food at me and shout abusive comments at me. People would occasionally follow me home shouting abuse and try to beat me up. The police were involved a few times. I had very few friends so high school was lonely. I was made to be an outsider and felt so insecure about myself.

When I went to teachers about the abuse I was suffering, nothing was done. I was sent to a therapist and nothing happened to the bullies. By sending me to therapy, my school made me feel even more insecure, as if I was in the wrong. They pawned me off on someone else and swept it under the rug, something that happens a lot in Scottish schools. Teachers need training, they are not trained to support LGBTI+ issues.

RABIA SALEEM

When I was at school, a boy in my class was bullied for being gay. The pupils threw sweets at him in order to hurt him, booed him and called him names. The situation was not handled well by teachers, as the individual culprits were not told off, apprehended or told that it was wrong. Later, I heard the boy was suicidal as he was not given the support he needed.

I made numerous attempts on my life as a teenager, my mother was the only other person who knew about it. Art club was my saviour, it gave me a place to hide and be invisible for a lunchtime.

I don’t find living in Scotland a very positive experience. I am still made to be this outsider and I still spend the vast majority of my time alone. I escape to London a lot. I think gay equality has a long way to go here, especially in small towns, closed mindedness is still an issue. I think many people believe, well gay marriage is a thing now that’s it, that’s equality achieved. That’s not the case. There is a lot more to it. LGBTI+ education is still such a major issue. I spoke to experts who agree more needs to be done to protect and inform young LGBTI+ people.
ANDREW MARSHALL

I have some personal experience of how affecting the absence of LGBTI+ education can be...I loved every subject I was taking in high school, loved the process or learning and did well in all of my classes. That is why it stung so much that my marks started to slip from midway through fifth year onwards, when they mattered most, as I started to experience constant, horrible feelings of alienation, isolation and depression without understanding why. It took realising I was gay in first year of uni – which was my first experience of being part of an institution which provided recognition and support for LGBTI+ people - and looking into similar accounts to realise that these feelings and reactions had been brought on by my school’s complete lack of any kind of acknowledgement of LGBTI+ students and issues.

This problem was not just in PSE, wherein my first year teacher told our class that any same sex attraction any of us might feel was just a ‘phase’ that we’d ‘get over’, with no mention of anything LGBTI+ related in that class ever again; not the lack of reprimand for the department head who shouted to two boys entering her class holding each others’ hands that there’d be ‘none of that’ in her classroom; nor the constant climate of homophobia that pervaded the school and peaked whenever any student was suspected or found to be anything other than straight; but the lack of any kind of mention of LGBTI+ issues or support services as part of the curriculum, including mandatory teacher training.

Pleased though I am with my recovery from this experience and my accomplishments since, I remain angry at what was taken from me in those years, as well as at the knowledge that students are still facing similar failings in schools across the country.

DEAN

I am seventeen years old, I live in Scotland, and I identify as Transgender.

In the last three years of my life a lot has happened, I have accepted and discovered a great deal about myself, those include my sexuality and gender identity. An important lesson that is left outside the classroom is gender. A few months ago I came out as gender fluid: meaning that I do not identify as male or female.

I feel that the education system is failing young people in helping them discover who they are. Knowing who you are isn’t just about knowing what job you want to do, or the kind of things that you like. It’s also about your sexuality and your gender identity. If school had taught me about those things, then I feel that I would have discovered who I was a lot sooner; resulting in me feeling less like a freak and less alone.

Maybe it would have prevented me from struggling with self hate and mental health issues. I have struggled with this; with discovering myself, and all without any help or education on the matter. I really don’t want other young people to have to do this alone, or feel like a freak because they don’t know what is wrong with them.

Schools need to teach us about the LGBTI+ Community. It could bring many young people closure, and comfort in knowing just that little bit more about themselves, and having others around them to support them.

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PERSONAL STORIES

NEIL DALLIMORE

I am writing this because I have a great concern about how my son will be treated in the years to come. My wife and I have known that our youngest son is gay for at least two years. He is eleven now and in the past couple of months, he came out to us both. I’ve grown increasingly frustrated by the lack of education my children have received on LGBTI+ issues at school. By lack, I mean zero. Nothing. I know this, because I ask them every year if anything has come up in the curriculum.

We now have equal marriage in Scotland. That means that no homophobe can stop my son from expressing his love the way he wants to. Yet, what my older son received before leaving primary for secondary school this year was a leaflet about “God’s Loving Plan”, which tells us that marriage is between a man, a woman and god. It is a complete disgrace. I did expect such literature to be a thing of the past.

My youngest has asked us to keep his sexuality quiet. For all our progressiveness, for all our teaching and calls for inclusiveness, for all our love, our son still fears his sexuality being revealed. And to whom? His teachers. He told us that another boy came out last year and once he had, the teachers began to treat him differently. They now treated him negatively, whereas before they had been fine.

My son’s future is equal to the heterosexual children’s future. His loves and hopes and desires are equal. He’s worth more than our education system is teaching. Our children in the LGBTI+ community are worth more.

Let my son be among the last to worry about his teachers, who like him now, treating him badly because he’s gay. Let him be among the last to worry he won’t be a parent. Let him be among the last to feel he’s not really equal.

SEAN QUINN

Growing up, I was deathly afraid of my sexuality. I knew there were gay and lesbian people, but I was still frightened of the reaction I’d get to coming out. I went to Catholic schools with pretty cursory sex education which was focussed on straight relationships.

SUSAN HART

Here in the Scottish Borders we have come across teachers who identify as LGBT+ but are too scared to be out. We have found teachers who believe that clause 28 still exists. We have heard of schools who actively discourage any LGBTI+ education. It seems to come down to individual heads as to whether or not the school is inclusive of LGBTI+ education.

ANDREW ASHE

Attending a Catholic high school in Lanarkshire in the early 2000’s, I experienced narrow mindedness and homophobic views from the teachers which legitimised the taunts of fellow pupils. No action or omission, however how subtle should reinforce homophobia or transphobia in schools. That’s what refusing to teach about sexuality and gender identity does and it needs to end.
QUOTES

AAMER ANWAR
HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

“Surely one of the most fundamental human rights must be the freedom to love who you want. For far too long LGBTI issues have been considered taboo but paid lip service to. When people are being murdered because of their sexuality or forced to live a lie for fear of attack, it is essential that our schools take the lead in exposing and tackling such discrimination. For me, there should be no hierarchies in the fight against discrimination, they are all equally valid. The key to creating a 21st Century Scotland society free from racism, sexism and homophobia is the education of our young people so I would urge everyone to support this campaign.”

CAT BOYD
FEMINIST AUTHOR, RISE

“Education absolutely must be accessible to everyone. This campaign highlights the serious issues for LGBTQI young people in our institutions and I hope it is successful in changing the current trajectory.”

NICOLA FIELD
LESBIANS AND GAYS SUPPORT THE MINERS

“The experience of LGSM in the 1980s showed clearly how divisions and prejudice between ordinary people are sown and fostered by bosses, politicians and the right-wing media, to make us blame one another for the difficulties we experience. Although we are now told we have equal rights, LGBT-phobia is still a danger, as is shown in the shocking statistics about depression rates and suicidal thoughts amongst young LGBTI+ people. TIE is working in an inspirational way to ensure that all school students today have a chance to learn and develop in an environment free of prejudice, misunderstanding and blame. As a member of the original LGSM group, I encourage everyone to support their work and hope all of us do what we can to make sure that their message reaches far and wide across all sections of society.”
ROBIN MCALPINE
DIRECTOR OF COMMON WEAL

“When I first met them I found the story of how Jordan and Liam came together to start this campaign one of the most inspiring to have emerged from the recent political awakening of Scotland. In particular I hope that the way that Liam, who had never had any connection with the LGBTI+ community, came to realise that this is a fight for all of us and not just for that community will make many other people realise that this is their fight too. I just hope that our politicians, influence leaders, the public and the media can show as much enlightenment and support this important initiative.”

JAI DÁRA LATTO
MISS TRANSGENDER UK

“I support the TIE campaign as we need to work to eradicate homophobia, biphobia and transphobia by making the lives and contributions of LGBTI+ people visible throughout education. We need to celebrate diversity in all forms. A good climate in school means children have a greater chance to learn well and have positive relationships with others. LGBTI+ students need allies and I believe that inclusive education gives them that. If we can give the younger generation the skills, through education, to combat prejudice then we have a chance to shape a positive future for everyone.”

LIAM STEVENSON
CO-FOUNDER OF TIE

“It has become very clear to me that there has to be a fundamental reform of our education system - LGBTI+ issues must be addressed in the classroom, and support must be available for anyone struggling to accept themselves, and find their place within society. As a progressive nation, we have a duty of care to our youth - thus, we will continue to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that the LGBTI+ community is included within - and visible across - the education sector, in order to tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia more effectively and allow all kids to learn in a safe and inclusive environment.”

Time for Inclusive Education
JORDAN DALY
CO-FOUNDER OF TIE

“It is one thing for a young kid to be struggling to accept themselves: it is another for them to feel trapped and excluded in an environment where they are supposed to feel safe and nurtured. 52% of LGBTI+ youth have experienced direct bullying in Scottish schools, and a subsequent 26% (1 in 4) of those kids have attempted to take their own lives. Too many educational institutions are failing to address these issues, and ignorance is perpetuation. In maintaining their undignified silence on the LGBTI+ community, such schools are consenting to the difficulty that many of their pupils are facing. In continuing to neglect an entire community and it’s history - we are sending a clear message to LGBTI+ kids at school: you are not included here. If we truly are a forward thinking society, then we need a progressive and inclusive education system to reflect this.”

ROB MCDOWALL
CHAIR OF LGBT NETWORK AND MEMBER OF THE EQUALITY COUNCIL

“I applaud the TIE campaign in it’s goals to have a more LGBTI+ representative curriculum taught in Scotland’s schools. Young people need to be empowered to reject bigotry in all its forms, and by embracing the positive contributions of our LGBTI+ community we can challenge the heteronormative attitudes which all too often colour our view. Our education priorities need to evolve to ensure Scotland is at the vanguard of the diverse attitudes in our ever-changing society.”

JONATHON SHAFI
A CO-FOUNDER OF RADICAL INDEPENDENCE CAMPAIGN

“This is a vital campaign, not just because of the high rates of homo/bi/transphobia in schools, but for our society as a whole. For the past few years, we have campaigned for a new Scotland - one that is inclusive, diverse and based on equality. That is why I am happy to be one of many supporting this important campaign.”
ALAN BISSETT
SCOTTISH AUTHOR AND PLAYWRIGHT

“Lots of young people are confused about their sexuality, and may be feeling things that their peers don’t consider “the norm”. This can make what’s a very stressful time for teenagers even worse. That’s why it’s important that LGBTI+ issues are raised in all schools, so that everyone can learn that these feelings are normal and that people shouldn’t be afraid of differences. I fully support the work that TIE are doing.”

PATRICK ROLINK
SCOTTISH COMEDIAN

“I support the TIE campaign, which seeks to enlighten and educate our youth and offer support to those who have been bullied and isolated through ignorance and bigotry. Inclusive education is the only way forward in this massive step towards making Scotland the open, honest and fair society that I crave and demand for myself, my children, my family and my fellow citizens.”

JOSHUA BROWN
SCOTTISH POLITICAL ACTIVIST

“LGBTI+ inclusive education is sadly lacking in many schools, yet it is a necessary step towards rooting out all forms of discrimination, none of which are acceptable. Scotland must use education to clearly and consciously tackle discrimination against the LGBTI+ community, just like it very rightfully is required to do regarding impairments, race, ethnicity, religion etc. Education is one of the most effective ways we can install a lifelong commitment to human rights and equality for all. Let’s build on Scotland’s achievement of equal marriage and implement LGBTI+ inclusive education in all Scottish schools.”
ALICIA GARZA
CO-FOUNDER OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

“Centring the experiences of LGBTI+ students in our education systems will make sure that what students learn in school is reflective of the realities that surround them. The contributions of the LGBTI+ community to our society cannot be ignored. The TIE campaign is a step in the right direction to make sure that all people are respected, valued and loved.”

PAT NEVIN
RETIRED SCOTTISH FOOTBALLER

“No matter your sex, orientation, religion, race, political persuasion or nationality: there should be respect, fairness and equality for everyone in society - free from bullying, hatred and bigotry. I would like to live in a society where LGBTI+ people are not considered lessor. If LGBTI+ issues were treated and discussed in a mature and open manner within the education system, without prejudice, then their lives and, just as importantly - everyone else’s, would be richer for it.”

KIRSTEEN FRASER
SECRETARY OF THE SNP TRADE UNION GROUP

“The SNP Trade Union Group is proud to support the TIE campaign and its aims. We cannot allow LGBTI-phobia to take root in our schools, not when we have the ability to eradicate it entirely simply by adding to the curriculum. With education we can eliminate bigotry by having a more inclusive environment in schools, which tackles the attitudes that taint our society. Being able to live without fear or discrimination is not a gift that we can grant, but a fundamental right that we must seize. The SNP Trade Union Group intends to be in the vanguard of that struggle and will stand in solidarity with the TIE Campaign to that end.”
BRYAN SIMPSON
YOUNG MEMBERS’ OBSERVER - UNITE THE UNION, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

“Despite being one of the most progressive countries for LGBTI+ equality, our playgrounds and classrooms still remain a breeding ground for homo/bi/transphobic bullying and bigotry - which lives with the bully and their victims for the rest of their lives. It is time for the Scottish government to act and ensure that LGBTI+ inclusive education is implemented in all schools. Only then can we be confident in our ambitions to stamp out such intolerance from our society once and for all.”

MATT DAWSON
SOCIOLOGY LECTURER - GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

“This is an important campaign with a valuable goal. We now have ample evidence of the forms of discrimination experienced by LGBTI+ people, in schools and more broadly. A campaign which seeks to combat that through education is worthy of all of our support. It is my hope that the Scottish parliament will enact the recommendations of the TIE campaign.”

THOMAS CONROY
CHAIRPERSON OF UNITE PETROLEUM BRANCH SC/51/9

“We believe that the TIE campaign could play a pivotal role in eradicating LGBTI-phobic attitudes and behaviours. Our branch is proud to be backing this campaign - which is fundamentally about protecting all of our children, and helping to shape a more inclusive, equal society for future generations. We recognise the need for better, more inclusive education for LGBTI+ youth.”
JEAN URQUHART  
MSP

As an MSP I am privileged to have met many different people, groups and organisations across the Highlands and Islands over several years. Sometimes, I might meet a number of groups in one day, and life in the parliament can be incredibly busy. My reason for saying this, is that recalling meetings can prove difficult. But not so my meeting with the LGBTI+ group at the seminar in Inverness now a few years ago. I remember them, not only because they were great folk, but because some of the problems they faced as a result of their sexuality were harrowing. All as a result of ignorance. We in the Scottish Parliament, having passed the law on same-sex marriage, cannot think that the job is done. This is not something that we can or should legislate for, but it is something we need to address through our education system, culture change and leadership. Our Government, through the equality agenda, can take the lead on the request of young people to have someone in school to whom they can talk about their sexuality; to have subjects normalising the LGBTI+ community, same-sex partnerships and transgender identities. We can only acknowledge our differences by understanding them. We understand our differences by discussing them. And we accept our differences by treating everyone the same.

STONEWALL SCOTLAND

Despite the progress that Scotland has made towards LGBT equality, the day to day experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people remain very different from their peers. Bullying and exclusion continue to blight the lives of young LGBT people. The impact can be devastating, with young people not achieving, not feeling safe, and their mental health compromised. The stories in this book show the real human impact when discrimination and intolerance go unchallenged.

Teachers need the confidence to challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language, and to discuss LGBT issues in the classroom, but unfortunately our 2014 research ‘The Teachers Report’ found that more than four in five teachers had not received any training on these important issues. This must change. That’s why we’ve developed our highly rated Train the Trainer programme to help teachers develop the skills and knowledge they need to tackle LGBT bullying, support their LGBT students and create an inclusive school. You can find out more at www.stonewallscotland.org.uk

Times are changing. More and more teachers are addressing LGBT issues, offering their LGBT pupils the support they need, and working hard to create inclusive schools. We must make sure that they are not the exception.
Common Weal was set up to develop policy, campaigning on social and economic inequality. We campaign for this for reasons of justice, because it is simply wrong that people should face discrimination, prejudice, economic exclusion, lack of access to power, violence and legal inequality because of their race, religion, gender, nationality or in this case sexual orientation. We simply and straightforwardly can’t claim to have created a good society when members of that society face these issues. But this is not only an issue for those who are members of groups which are affected - as the TIE campaign has so successfully shown. Greater social equality improves everything from rates of crime to economic performance, issues which affect everyone. The TIE campaign’s success in bringing together LGBTI+ activists and the truck drivers’ union is a perfect example of how our collective solidarity makes us stronger.

Common Weal believes that we should be looking carefully at the school curriculum to explore how to address many of these issues. There are three interlinked areas where educational practice has developed rapidly in recent years and decades and which continues to develop. These are empathy education, conflict resolution and anger and violence reduction. All three of these practise have crucial roles to play in creating a society more understanding and tolerant of others and which is better able to deal with disagreement and mistrust in positive and non-destructive ways. This approach to education will bring many benefits - for example by teaching people techniques which can help in everything from successfully resolving personal or progressional disputes through to encouraging positive approaches to pursuing happiness and wellbeing. Clearly at the heart of such an education would be the need better to understand those who are ‘not like me’ - male attitudes to gender, attitudes towards those of a different race or nationality and of course attitudes towards those who have different sexualities or gender identities from our own. There have been massive steps forward in the recognition of LGBTI+ rights over recent decades. It is now time to mainstream this social progress into our school system. It is a move which will benefit all of society in the future.
VALE OF LEVEN ACADEMY LGBT COMMITTEE

The VoLA LGBT Committee is dedicated to challenging and preventing negative experiences at school associated with being LGBTI+. Our objective is to help all pupils feel comfortable in themselves by creating a welcoming, inclusive school environment.

Our aim is to never to be quiet about the issues that we are working to erase, and to promote diversity and celebrate difference. In our opinion the words inclusive and education should go hand in hand. A school should be a place where everyone is given the opportunity to learn and succeed to the best of their abilities.

In our school, we released a homophobic bullying audit - which shed light on just how much of a problem the bullying is. The findings were presented at assemblies, to make sure that the issue was made known to the whole school. We have created a pledge board which the pupils and teachers could sign and pledge not to be a bystander to homophobic bullying. Further, a collection of LGBTI+ library books have been added to the school library, and there are not many classrooms that do not show their support through posters or badges. The group has been such a positive part of the school and we just hope that other schools can be inspired by what we have done and that one day inclusive education and acceptance will be in place everywhere.

EQUALITY NETWORK

All schools should promote to staff and students clear anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, explicitly covering LGBTI staff and students. Staff should act on those policies, addressing all incidents of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse or bullying. The lives and experiences of LGBTI people should be included in the curriculum and teaching materials, for example in History, Literature and Modern Studies, and of course in RSHPE.

Pastoral care and support should be provided for LGBTI pupils, including the encouragement of peer support such as student LGBTI support groups, and signposting to external support organisations such as LGBT Youth Scotland. And to enable staff to make these changes, so that school can be a positive experience for LGBTI students, suitable training and materials should be made available to all staff.

Only by ensuring that these things happen across the country will schools become an environment in which LGBTI students can thrive alongside everyone else.
JOHN NAPLES CAMPBELL
TEACHER AND RECIPIENT OF THE GTCS PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AWARD FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY.

Homophobic bullying is a global problem: it is a violation of learners’ and teachers’ rights. It impedes our collective ability to achieve a quality Education for All. It has been fifteen years since the repeal of Section 28 in Scotland, yet - across the country - students are still facing homophobic and transphobic bullying in their learning communities. The new Curriculum for Excellence has detailed experiences and outcomes in the Health and Wellbeing curriculum regarding inclusive education - however, it has become apparent to me that this is a lottery depending on the school, local authority or teacher as to how or even if these issues are being taught. There is good work happening in some schools, but we must ask why this is not happening in every school, including faith schools, across the country.

Improving teacher training in this area would go a long way in tackling the issues that face the LGBTI+ community. Further, school policies are often vague and too general, and many do not even mention LGBTI+. We should be aiming for more direct action here to stop negative behaviour against LGBTI+ youth, promote social support for LGBTI+ youth, strengthen resilience and empowerment and reduce social distance within schools. We have a responsibility to the young people in front of us, regardless of our beliefs or opinions, to ensure that they feel safe, secure and can be authentic to who they are. It’s important that our teachers have the confidence to tackle LGBTI+ issues in the classroom.

RISE
SCOTLAND’S LEFT ALLIANCE

One of the fundamental principles of our movement is Respect. We stand for a society where we end racism, sexism, discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and where people of all backgrounds, colours and creeds are treated with respect and dignity. We fully believe that if our youth are offered a truly inclusive education, then we can eventually tackle many of the prejudices that still prevail within our society. This is why we are committed to supporting the TIE campaign; in its aims to shape an education system that is truly built on principles of equal opportunity and caters to the needs of all pupils. We would urge the Scottish Government to listen to the recommendations that are being proposed and take the appropriate steps to tackle the issues that have been highlighted. A strong education system that prioritises equality and respect is a vital move towards achieving the fairer Scotland that so many of us envision.
LGBT YOUTH SCOTLAND

We have over fifteen years’ experience of working in partnership with schools and local authorities to create more inclusive learning environments for LGBT young people through research, policy work and providing training and resources for staff in educational establishments.

Our research shows that:

- 69% of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people regularly face bullying in Scottish schools, rising to 77% of transgender young people.

We are managing partner of respectme, Scotland’s anti-bullying service. Our direct work with schools focuses on improving learning environments through the LGBT Schools Charter Mark – using a ‘whole school approach’ to ensure LGBT young people feel safe and included. We firmly endorse youth-led initiatives and pupil engagement and support GSA’s (Gender/Sexuality Alliances). These groups are a safe space for LGBT young people and their peers to access information and to support their school in becoming LGBT inclusive.

Whilst there have been some improvements in LGBT students’ educational experience this has not been consistent in schools across Scotland. We want all LGBTI young people to feel safe, supported and included in their education. They should experience an education that enables them to attain, and achieve their full potential while effectively protecting them from bullying and harassment.

To achieve this the Scottish Government should show leadership in areas of:

- Inspection of schools to include a focus on LGBT equality and inclusion.
- Curricular Inclusion of LGBT voices, identities and topics.
- Training & Support for new and practicing teachers on LGBT inclusion.
- Monitoring & Evaluation of the experiences of LGBT young people in schools in Scotland.
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