

LGBTI+ SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

# STAND UP!

## Resource Pack

Promote a positive, inclusive  
LGBTI+ atmosphere in your school



**Stand Up! Awareness Week**  
13-17 November 2017

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &  
Trans Young People in Ireland



# WELCOME,

By participating in Stand Up Week, you are joining hundreds of schools across Ireland taking a stand against LGBTI+\* bullying.

Stand Up Awareness Week helps to protect LGBTI+ students from bullying, and empowers students to support their LGBTI+ friends. Unfortunately, bullying of LGBTI+ students is widespread, and it has devastating effects on their mental health.

In this Resource Pack you will find information so that you can educate yourself around LGBTI+ inclusion, alongside activity ideas for your school. We share with you how lots of schools have found simple and creative ways to mark Stand Up Week and create a positive, inclusive atmosphere in their school.

## Becoming a Supportive School

Together with the HSE, we have developed a comprehensive approach to help make all schools welcoming and supportive – not just during Stand Up Week, but all year long. It's called the LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Schools (SASS) model. It's an exciting approach - based on the Whole-School-Community Change model. The SASS toolkit offers a clear and straightforward approach to creating schools that are fully inclusive of LGBTI students. You can download a copy of the toolkit from our website [www.belongto.org/safeandsupportive](http://www.belongto.org/safeandsupportive)

Thank you for joining us as we work to create a safer, more supportive school experience for all of our young people.

**Carol-Anne O'Brien**

Director of Advocacy, BeLonG To Youth Services



## CREATING SAFE SCHOOLS: A CHILD PROTECTION ISSUE

By the end of 2017, The Children First Act, covering child protection measures, will be fully in effect. As part of the act, schools and other organisations will be required to 'keep children safe from harm.' What does this mean for homophobic bullying and other forms of LGBTI+ bullying?

Dr Geoffrey Shannon, government's Special Rapporteur on child protection, has stated that homophobic bullying is a serious child protection issue. Dr Shannon reported that such bullying has a devastating impact on young people's lives, especially in relation to mental health difficulties such as self harm and attempted suicide. Dr Shannon said: As such, schools need to address homophobic and transphobic bullying through rigorous prevention and intervention measures.

### What You Can Do

Your school can actively participate in Stand Up Awareness week. Schools find that Stand Up is a highly useful measure for creating a positive school climate. The DES Anti-Bullying

Procedures recommends initiatives that deal explicitly with homophobic and transphobic bullying by, for example, putting up LGBTI+ posters, and participating in LGBTI+ awareness weeks.

In addition to this we recommend that if a school is reporting child protection concerns due to homophobic bullying, that you carefully consider the safety of the child when disclosing information to parents. This is because another type of child protection concern may arise if a parent responds negatively to any suggestion that their child is perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or non-binary. As in other situations where providing certain information to parents could raise concerns, it would be vital to put other supports in place for the child, both internal supports from the pastoral care team, and external supports that could be accessed from BeLonG To's National Network of LGBTI+ youth services:

[www.belongto.org/groups](http://www.belongto.org/groups)

# STAND UP SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

There are many ways your school can Stand Up for LGBTI+ students. Here are just a few ideas to get you started.

- Be visible! Display the Stand Up poster on prominent notice boards in your school to create a welcoming and diverse school environment, especially for LGBTI+ students.
- Our short videos about Stand Up and LGBTI+ issues can be a useful way to start a discussion around homophobia, transgender visibility, and other LGBTI+ issues. Visit our YouTube Channel for our full list of video content: [www.youtube.com/belongto](http://www.youtube.com/belongto)
- Fly the flag! Do you have a flag pole at your school? If so, consider flying the LGBTI+ rainbow flag for Stand Up week or even the entire school year. This flag is a symbol of LGBTI+ pride and was created by an artist and activist called Gilbert Baker back in 1978. The flag is typically flown horizontally, with the red stripe on top.
- Use same-sex couple examples. Whenever possible, include examples of diverse families, including same-sex couples and LGBTI+ parents, whenever referencing families in the classroom.
- Dress to impress. Last year, teachers at one school showed solidarity with their LGBTI+ students by each dressing up as a colour of the rainbow flag. Such a small gesture can be incredibly meaningful in creating an inclusive atmosphere.
- Get creative! Check out the artist ideas developed by other schools in these photos and expand these to include the other flags in the Stand Up 2017 poster: the Trans Flag (pale blue, white and pale pink) and the Bisexual Flag (deep pink, purple and deep blue.)
- For teachers who have experience and confidence facilitating LGBTI+ discussions, walking debates are a great way to promote critical thinking. Ask all students to stand in the middle of the room. Select one side of the room for those who 'agree' and the other for those who 'disagree'. Read out a list of statements and ask those to move to the side of the room that corresponds with their opinions, then discuss. Here are some statements to get you started:
  - There are some words that are so offensive they should never be used.
  - Everyone should be able to say anything they want to say.
  - It is all right to say something offensive in private, but not in public.
  - It is better to let hateful opinions be spoken so that they can be known and challenged.
  - It's equally damaging if an LGBTI+ person tells a homophobic joke.



# LGBTI+ YOUTH STRATEGY: STAND UP, SPEAK OUT

This is an exciting time for the future of LGBTI+ young people. Ireland is the first country in the world working to create an LGBTI+ Youth Strategy.



The strategy aims to address the challenges faced by young members of Ireland's LGBTI+ community. The LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy was launched in April 2017 by Minister for Children and Youth, Katherine Zappone. The Oversight Committee is chaired by Irish Times' journalist Una Mullally and is made up of representatives from key government departments and community organisations, including BeLonG To.

We are working with Minister Zappone and young people across Ireland to create an Ireland where young LGBTI+ people are valued, equal and safe. As part of this process, young people across Ireland have been speaking out

and sharing their experiences and feedback on the strategy. A Youth Advisory Panel, of 13 young people, is actively involved in the strategy development. Consultations with young people were held nationwide and 4,046 young people responded to an online survey.

One in five of these respondents said they continue to face bullying and harassment despite major social changes such as equal marriage here. By taking part in Stand Up Awareness Week, you are showing solidarity with these students in your school. The Strategy will be completed by the end of 2017, but there is still time be part of the action.

# LGBTI+ YOUTH STRATEGY: TAKE ACTION



## It's not too late for your students to have their voices heard!

The LGBTI+ Strategy are inviting submissions to help guide the Strategy – BeLonG To would be delighted to gather your submissions or letters from students across Ireland and we will share them with the Independent Chair of the Strategy. Writing a submission or letter would be a great way for students to prepare for Stand Up LGBTI+ Awareness Week, while learning about democracy in Ireland and how to have a voice in government decisions.

As experienced teachers, you will know best how to set up student projects on this topic, but here are some ideas:

- Invite your students to research the strategy. Look at the the LGBTI+ Youth Strategy page on Facebook and on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA.) The DCYA website also has Press Releases about the Strategy.

- Visit the Strategy Facebook page and as a class, watch the Facebook Live video of the launch on April 12th. The video is 40 minutes and features members of the Youth Advisory Panel telling their stories and sharing their ideas about the most important issues for LGBTI+ young people in Ireland today. Your class will probably find them very inspiring!
- Pose the following question to your class and start a discussion: What should life in Ireland be like for LGBTI+ young people in 10 years?

Share your students' work by submitting your ideas to us, by post or email. Students might like to use Twitter to share their individual recommendations **#StandUp2017**.

**Email:** [standup@belongto.org](mailto:standup@belongto.org)

**Post:** Moninne Griffith  
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BeLonG To Youth Services  
13 Parliament St.  
Dublin D02 P658

# UNDERSTANDING THE T IN LGBTI+

Transgender (or trans) is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were given at birth.



Transgender people may identify as male or female, or they may feel that neither label fits them. In the past, we would have used the word 'transsexual'. Gender identity is different from sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is about romantic or sexual attraction. Gender identity means our deep internal feelings about our own gender.

Transgender young people are students in schools across Ireland. You may also have students who describe themselves as 'non-binary'; this gender identity means that they don't feel exclusively male or female.

In order to express their chosen gender, transgender people may transition, or change, from the gender they were given at birth. They may change their names, pronouns or style of dress. Some transgender people also choose a medical transition, with the help of medical specialists, who will prescribe hormones and/or surgery.

## WATCH ONLINE

Some of our young trans people at BeLonG To have developed a series of videos to explain what trans is, how you can be an ally, and coming out as trans. Watch these with your students:

[www.youtube.com/belongto](http://www.youtube.com/belongto)

# CREATING A TRANS INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

With the help of young people in BeLonG To, we developed these suggestions for how your school could become more welcoming for trans and non-binary students.



- Be attentive and respectful around using the name and pronoun that young people choose.
- Offer flexibility around school uniforms (e.g. skirts or trousers) and hair length, jewellery, etc.
- Ask the young person what is needed for toilets and changing rooms – it's great to have a choice between male, female and gender-neutral options (please avoid using disability toilets as this option if possible).
- Be flexible about gender inclusion in school sports and PE class.
- Develop school policies that include trans and non-binary students.
- Please don't ask about or comment (good or bad) on body changes.
- Engage all students in learning about trans issues. Show the BeLonG To trans awareness videos to promote understanding and conversation.
- Respect student's confidentiality about being trans.
- If they ask for it, please support young trans people in talking to their parents.
- Invest in staff training on Trans and LGB issues, especially for school counsellors.
- Challenge transphobic bullying and fully implement your school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

## LEARN MORE!

Visit our website for more information or attend one of our teacher training sessions.

Visit [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org) for more info.

# LET'S TALK TERMINOLOGY

A simple, yet effective way of being an ally is to use LGBTI-related terms accurately and respectfully at school.

The best way to ensure that you are using the proper terms when referring to an individual is to ask them what they prefer. Talk to your students about the terms below so that they have an understanding of them. Before doing so, ask yourself which terms are you most comfortable using? Are there any terms you are uncomfortable using? Why?

**LGBTI+:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans+ and intersex people.

**Sexual Orientation:** Sexual and romantic attraction.

**Bisexual:** Someone who is attracted to two genders.



**Gay:** Someone who is mainly attracted to people of the same gender.

**Lesbian:** A woman who is mainly attracted to other women.

**Heterosexual:** Someone who is attracted to people of a different gender.

**Pansexual:** Someone who could be attracted to any person, regardless of their gender.

**Gender identity:** Our deeply felt internal experience of our own gender.

**Gender expression:** How we show our gender through our clothing, hair, behaviour, etc.

**Cisgender:** Someone who is not transgender or non-binary.

**Transgender, or Trans:** People whose gender identity differs from the sex they were given at birth. Trans+ includes non-binary people.

**Non-binary:** People whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female.

**Intersex:** People who are born with variations in their sexual anatomy or their hormonal patterns, variations that are not seen as fitting in with typical male or female bodies.

# TAKING A STAND



We love to hear from you!

Fill in the enclosed Feedback Form and return using the Freepost envelope provided. We will then send you a Certificate of Participation in Stand Up LGBTI Awareness Week 2017 to hang proudly in your school.

BeLonG To Youth Services is on Facebook so tag us in any events you hosting during Stand Up Week, and you can follow the conversation on Twitter with **#StandUp2017**

## How you can help

There are lots of ways you can help tackle homophobia and support LGBTI+ young people to be happy and fulfil their potential as outlined in this Resource Pack. You can also help by raising funds to support our work.

### Host Your Own Fundraising Event

There are lots of great ways to get your school involved to raise funds to help keep our services open:

- Host a 'no uniform' day and ask students to donate €2 (or what they can) towards BeLonG To. Why not ask each class to wear a certain colour of the rainbow!
- The Great British Bake Off has inspired wannabe chefs around the country! Host a school bake sale or even a bake off in support of LGBTI+ rights.

- Engage local business and ask them to donate prizes to an all school raffle. Sell tickets in and out of school and donate the funds raised to BeLonG To.
- Host a sponsored silence. Unfortunately, LGBTI+ people are denied their human rights in many countries around the world. Create posters and sponsored silence sponsorship forms, then ask family and friends to sponsor a length of silence in support of LGBTI+ rights.

### Get in Touch

If you have any questions, want to make a donation or want some help organising your own school fundraising event, please contact 01 670 6223 or [info@belongto.org](mailto:info@belongto.org)

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans Young People in Ireland



BeLONg To Youth Services is Ireland's national organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI+) young people. We have a network of youth groups around Ireland which provide vital support for LGBTI+ young people. We also work with government and other partners to combat LGBTI-related bullying in schools and communities, raise awareness around LGBTI+ sexual and mental health issues, and provide training to professionals who work with young people.

BeLONg To Youth Services  
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**BeLONg To is grateful for the support of our funders**



**BeLONg To is honoured that Stand Up Week 2017 is endorsed by**



**BeLONg To is delighted that Stand Up Week 2017 is endorsed by these youth and community sector partners**

