



SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

- Read, learn, and talk more about sexual orientation and gender identity. Keep yourself up-to-date with trainings.
- Acknowledge the existence of LGBT+ students and avoid assuming that all students are heterosexual.
- Do not assign gender identities to students and do not assume that all students are cisgender.
- Accept LGBT+ students unconditionally and positively.
- Listen to LGBT+ students and give them a voice.
- Remember that students are diverse and have equal rights.
- Identify safe spaces for students to turn to (such as the school counsellor, a trusted teacher, or psychological counselling and guidance services), and discuss it openly.
- Adopt and encourage a zero-tolerance policy towards hate speech, discrimination, and violence in the classroom and school environment.
- Review classroom materials and eliminate content that reinforces gender stereotypes, promotes hate, discrimination, and violence, and is not scientifically based.
- Discuss family diversity (two mothers, two fathers, mother and child, father and child, etc.).
- Avoid binary gender grouping (girls and boys) during classroom activities, work, games, clubs, or sports activities. Allow students to choose for themselves.
- Explain to your students that they have the right to seek assistance if they need it, and that asking for help is not a sign of weakness.
- Talk with your colleagues about LGBT+ rights, needs, and issues related to homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, hate speech, discrimination, bullying, and violence.
- Display LGBT+ stickers or symbols on your door, notebook, or laptop to let your students know that you are an LGBT+ ally.

The Importance of Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations

Queer Cyprus Association (QCA) is a key organisation in terms of accessing resources and providing the necessary support to LGBTI+s. QCA provides psychological, legal, social service and peer counselling support for LGBTI+s. In addition, QCA provides training for trainers on sexual orientation and gender identity diversity. In order to support and access these resources, you can contact QCA Solidarity Line.

Queer Cyprus Association

Queer Cyprus Association is a civil society organization that works to combat discrimination based on gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Queer Cyprus actively works in the fields of law, education, psychology, health on the local and international levels to enable the access of LGBTI+'s to human rights.

Rainbow Project

The Rainbow Project, which is funded by the European Union under the Cypriot Civil Society in Action VII Grant Scheme and implemented by the Queer Cyprus Association, had commenced on 13 April 2022 and will continue for 30 months.

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LGBTI+ INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS POSSIBLE

PROMOTE EQUALITY, MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



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Introduction

All students, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, deserve to feel safe and supported at school. Unfortunately, many LGBTI+ students experience discrimination, harassment, and bullying at school, which can negatively impact their academic achievements, mental health, and overall well-being. This brochure provides information on how to promote acceptance and support for LGBTI+ students and communities in educational environments.

LGBTI+ Terminology

LGBTI+: It is an abbreviation consisting of the following identities: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Pluses

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, sexual orientation;
- Trans and non-binary gender identity;
- Intersex, on the other hand, are concepts related to gender characteristics/characteristics;
- Pluses represent the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity that fall outside the definition of LGBTI.

Sexual Orientation: It refers to the ongoing emotional, romantic and sexual attraction towards a person of a certain gender.

- **Gay (Homosexual):** A woman (lesbian) or man (gay) who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to people of the same sex.
- **Bisexual:** A person who is romantically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to more than one gender.
- **Heterosexual:** A person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Gender Identity: It is the inner self-perception that expresses the gender of the person and how they want to be seen by others.

- **Trans:** It is an umbrella term that refers to people who identify themselves in a gender different from their assigned gender.
- **Cis-gender:** It is the word used for non-trans people.
- **Non-Binary:** It is an umbrella concept that covers people who do not define their gender identity as "female" or "male". It is gender identity that is outside of the binary gender.

Gender Characteristic:

- **Intersex:** Apart from the masculine or feminine gender acceptance assigned to people at birth, intersexes are those who do not fit into these categories as assumed, or who have the characteristics of both categories (chromosomes, genital organs and/or hormonal structure).

Gender: It refers to all of the gender roles and responsibilities that are socially imposed on people in different cultures, geographies and different historical times.

What is LGBTI+ Inclusive Education?

LGBTI+ inclusive education is an approach that aims to provide accurate information about students' sexual orientations and gender identities, protect their rights, create acceptance, and establish a supportive learning environment in educational institutions. LGBTI+ inclusive education is essential to prevent negative behaviours faced by LGBTI+ students such as discrimination, exclusion, and bullying, and to allow students to feel safe and learn freely. This education is intended not only for students, but also for teachers, other educators, and administrators so that a positive and inclusive learning environment can be created.

The Challenges Faced by LGBTI+ Students

In comparison to non-LGBTI+ students, LGBTI+ students face a much greater number of challenges in schools due to teachers, peers, and other school personnel. For example:

- Verbal violence, insults, and nicknames (such as 'fag', 'dyke', etc.)
- Physical violence (pushing, pulling, hitting, etc.)
- Sexual violence (non-consensual sexual behaviours, etc.)
- Gossip
- Exclusion from group activities and games
- Sexist uniforms, compulsory haircuts
- Gendered dressing rooms and toilets

Possible Impacts of Bullying and Discrimination Against LGBTI+ Students

- Low academic achievement
- Dropping out of education/not being able to complete it
- Running away from school
- Less friends and social networks
- Suicide attempt or suicidal thoughts
- Smoking and alcohol addiction
- Risky sexual behaviour
- Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, school phobia

These risks increase when LGBTI+ individuals are exposed to discrimination and prejudice. We must keep in mind that when LGBTI+ individuals have access to the necessary support, these risk factors can be reduced and prevented.

What is Required to Ensure an Inclusive and Supportive Education for LGBTI+ Students? ¹

An Inclusive Policy: Schools should have a clear policy prohibiting discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. Every student, teacher, and staff member should be made aware of this policy.

Trainings on LGBTI+ Awareness: Teachers and staff should be provided with trainings on LGBTI+ issues, including the impact of discrimination and bullying on LGBTI+ students.

An Inclusive Language: Schools should use inclusive language in all written and oral communications, including school policies, class materials, and presentations; for example, the use of gender-neutral pronouns (e.g. they/them).

Safe Spaces: Schools should create safe spaces for LGBTI+ students, such as support groups and gender-neutral toilets. These spaces should be easily accessible and clearly marked.

Embracing Diversity: Schools should celebrate diversity by recognizing and encouraging events such as LGBTI+ holidays, Pride Month, Coming Out Day, and Zero Tolerance for Discrimination Day.

Fighting Against Bullying: A zero-tolerance policy should be implemented in schools against bullying and harassment, as well as assistance provided to victims. Teachers and staff should address bullying and harassment with caution.

An Inclusive Curriculum: The lesson curriculum should address issues such as human rights, sexual orientation diversity, gender equality, hate speech, discrimination, bullying, and violence where relevant.

LGBTI+ and Gender Clubs: LGBTI+ individuals and supporters should form clubs to fight against discrimination and create a safe environment for LGBTI+ students.

1 Kaos GL Derneği. Eğitimciler İçin Kilavuz: LGBTI+ Öğrencilerin Haklarını Nasıl Korumalı? Erişim tarihi: Nisan 8, 2023, <https://www.kaosgl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/LGBTI-Ogrenci-Haklari-Kilavuzu.pdf>.

What Can You Do for Trans Students?

When compared to other students, trans students are subjected to stricter CIS normative and heteronormative impositions, difficulties, and violations of their rights in the education system.

- Pay attention to names and titles; students have the right to be addressed by the name and title that corresponds to their gender identity.
- Even if the student's name and gender on the ID is used in official school records, try to use the name they choose and the gender they identify with in unofficial records & respect their choice.
- Trans students have the right to wear clothing that is in line with their gender identity in accordance with the school regulations. Do not impose strict dress codes on them and respect their right to express themselves.

