



**Children and Families Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**  
23 February 2010

**Report from the Director of  
Children and Families**

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

**Tackling homophobic bullying in schools**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The local authority has been working with the national charity Stonewall to tackle homophobic bullying through its Education Champions Programme. The programme is a two year programme and is aimed at supporting local authorities to work with schools to tackle homophobic bullying. The Strategic Coordinator for Behaviour and Attendance (School Improvement Services) and the Manager of Mosaic (Youth Service) have led the work of the local authority.

An initial survey of schools' anti-bullying policies in October 2008 revealed that 69% of those schools who responded (33%) had some reference to homophobic bullying in their policies. Another survey is being undertaken in February 2010 to see the extent of progress in this area. The DCSF guidance '*Safe to Learn*'; *tackling homophobic bullying* has been used by the local authority to support its work with schools.

The DCSF is intending to require schools to keep records of serious incidents of bullying and is currently consulting, until March 2010, on whether schools will also be required to record what type of bullying has taken place; this would include homophobic bullying. A workshop to tackle homophobic bullying is being held on 9 February 2010, where Brent schools will be sharing their work to tackle the issue.

**2.0 Details**

Local authority guidance for schools on tackling bullying has been updated and includes both advice on how schools can include references to homophobic bullying in their anti-bullying policies and what steps they can take to tackle it.

A number of secondary schools have tackled or have begun to tackle the issue of homophobic bullying. The reasons for schools developing work in this area include: incidents of homophobic bullying in an individual school, students taking the initiative because they have felt it is a type of bullying that they would like to tackle, the use of homophobic language and, in one school, an established structure for sixth formers to develop work in an area of interest to them and they chose to tackle homophobic bullying.

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- 2.1 Claremont High school is tackling the use of homophobic language by tackling the inappropriate use of language generally. This message was delivered by students themselves through year assemblies, coordinated by the Pupil Progress Manager with responsibility for anti-bullying work. Students used a variety of methods to convey the message that no inappropriate language is acceptable, for example through the use of rap music. Claremont will be extending their work to include tackling homophobic language as part of the induction programme for new teachers.
- 2.2 The student Behaviour Panel at Preston Manor High School, facilitated by the Head of Inclusion, identified tackling homophobic bullying as an area they wished to tackle during National Anti-Bullying Week in November 2009. During the week, a wide survey of student views was completed, and assemblies were delivered on the issue. The Behaviour Panel is currently analysing the results of the student survey, producing a poster to tackle homophobic bullying and is planning how best to give feedback to students from the student survey.
- 2.3 A sixth form student group, at Queens Park Community School, Envision, led whole-school work to tackle homophobic bullying. Their aim was to create awareness of homophobia in school and make an impact on how it is treated and dealt with. The students enlisted the support of the headteacher from the outset. They organised surveys of two whole year groups to get students' opinions on homophobic bullying, analysed the results and produced this data in graph form. They also delivered assemblies on homophobia and helped update the school's anti-bullying policy.

The group created a Facebook Group, Twitter, Flickr, Blog, YouTube page and linked all of these to their website called *Haware*. They wrote an article for the school magazine and designed posters and logos for their campaign. The students also met with Stonewall, local authority officers and made contact with the Terence Higgins Trust.

- 2.4 Wembley High Technology College was one of the first schools in the local authority to directly tackle homophobic bullying. The work was led by the headteacher and an Assistant Headteacher. Whole-staff INSET was delivered which looked at the issues surrounding homophobic bullying. This was followed by assemblies to all year groups on the issue with the clear message that this type of bullying was as unacceptable as any other type in the college.

The college's message was then reinforced in every form group by work delivered by the form tutor. This highlighted different student views and the opportunity to discuss them was given. Stonewall posters were put up in every classroom. The college will be revisiting this work later in this academic year.

#### **Contact Officers**

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