

## Inclusion of LGBT Identities in CLE programmes and SCARF

This briefing summarises Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) identities, the DfE's statutory guidelines, best practice recommendations and how Coram Life Education has incorporated these into our programme.

Coram Life Education takes a values-led approach in the design and delivery of its education programmes and resources. The principles of SCARF are promoted through respectful and safe relationships, celebrating diversity and the rights of children as reflected in the Equality Act and key articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children
- Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously
- Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

### How should schools include LGBT identities into RSE?

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance (2019) states that:

*"...schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that **all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect**. Schools must ensure that they **comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010** ... under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics." (section 36).*

*"Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age-appropriate in approach and content. **At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT**, they should ensure that this content is **fully integrated into their programmes of study** for this area of the curriculum, rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and **we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point** as part of this area of the curriculum." (section 37).*

*"Teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching, based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. **Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children**. (Families can include for example, single parent families, **LGBT parents**, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures.) Care needs to be taken to ensure that **there is no stigmatisation of children** based on their home circumstances and needs, to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them; e.g. looked-after children or young carers." (section 59).*

“Pupils should be taught the facts and the law about sex, **sexuality**, sexual health and **gender identity** in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity **should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner**. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity.” (section 75).

The government therefore expects schools to ensure the following:

- **All pupils understand the importance of equality and respect.** This will play a key role in reducing incidences of bullying both at school and within the wider community. Bullying and poor mental health affects LGBT young people at alarming rates. Nearly half of LGBT pupils (45 per cent) are bullied at school for being LGBT (Stonewall, 2017).
- **Schools comply with the Equality Act.** Schools are already required to teach in a way that does not discriminate against people with *protected characteristics*, including sex, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment.
- **Schools are responsible for deciding when they will introduce the teaching of LGBT identities to pupils.**

SCARF plans anticipate and encourage the inclusion of people with LGBT identities in discussions from the early years, where children are also encouraged to talk about the people who are special to them and who provide a nurturing environment; for some children this will include having two mummies or two daddies, or a lesbian aunty or a relative who has transitioned.

SCARF includes LGBT identities content throughout the school years as part of a spiral curriculum and – as illustrated by the list below – teaching about this is integrated into lessons about families, marriage, civil partnerships, similarities and differences, stereotyping, prejudice, media, puberty, bullying, body image and diversity, as required by the guidance. The Subjects and Issues tool will be helpful in identifying these lessons; search LGBT, Sexual Orientation and Transgender. The SCARF medium-term mapping, which also shows skills progression, lists the specific learning outcomes of SCARF lesson plans against the DfE statutory requirements’ 67 end-of-primary statements.

If we are to avoid stigmatisation and promote inclusion, then children must be able to recognise themselves and their circumstances (such as having a family with two mums or two dads) in the lessons they are being taught. They can then see their own lived experiences validated and valued. We have a responsibility to normalise the diverse range of trusted people in children’s lives.

In England, teaching about gender identity is a statutory requirement (section 75) and falls within the End of Primary School Statements of *Respectful Relationships*. Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) sits within the Health and Wellbeing area of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence.

It's clear that children develop ideas about what it is to be a boy or a girl from the messages they pick up from the world around them. It's therefore important that children are provided with opportunities within RSE to explore, discuss and challenge these messages so they feel free to express themselves in a way that feels authentic to them, in order to fulfil their true potential.

### **Which DfE end-of-primary statements include LGBT identities?**

The statutory guidance lists the learning that children should cover by the end of primary school. Statements that ensure LGBT identities are fully integrated include:

- That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care (p20).
- That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up (p21).
- That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. (*Acknowledging that Marriage in England and Wales, Scotland and, from September 2020, Northern Ireland is available to both opposite sex and same-sex couples*). (p21).
- The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs (p21).
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help (p22).

The guidance states that pupils should be made aware of the legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught including, for example, sexuality and gender identity. Same-sex marriage and civil partnerships have been legal for some years as has the Gender Recognition Act.

Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) sits within the Health and Wellbeing area of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. This includes understanding and experiencing feelings (HWB 0-04a, 1-01a, 2-01a), fairness, equality and love (HWB 0-05a, 1-05a, 2-05a), supporting people who feel left out or misunderstood (HWB 0-08a, 1-08a, 2-08a) valuing individuals (HWB 0-10a, 1-10a, 2-10a, 3-10a), understanding the range of relationships that exist (HWB 2-44a) and the qualities and skills required to sustain relationships (HWB 3-44b), people who care for us (HWB 0-45a, 1-45a), similarities and differences (HWB 0-47a).

## What about the Equality Act 2010?

The Equality Act is UK wide. It states that:

*“The content of the school curriculum has never been caught by discrimination law, and this Act now states explicitly that it is excluded. However the way in which a school provides education – the delivery of the curriculum – is explicitly included.*

*Excluding the content of the curriculum ensures that **schools are free to include a full range of issues, ideas and materials in their syllabus, and to expose pupils to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging or controversial, without fear of legal challenge based on a protected characteristic.** But schools will need to ensure that the way in which issues are taught does not subject individual pupils to discrimination.” (sections 28 29, guidance to schools).*

The public sector equality duty was created under the Equality Act and requires schools and other public authorities to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality in its everyday business, in the design of its policies and curriculum.

It is essential that pupils explore a range of family models and relationships and that this is normalised. Schools have the freedom to choose the resources they use to teach RSE, and can choose to include faith perspectives alongside essential information about the law, legal rights and medical facts.

SCARF Lessons that cover LGBT identities, gender stereotyping and body image and which provide the building blocks to body ownership:

| Eng | Sco | Lesson Title                            | Context  |
|-----|-----|---|--|
| Y1  | P2  | <b>Who are our special people</b>       | Children may contribute to the lesson by suggesting people in their lives who are LGBT.  |
|     |     | <b>Taking care of baby</b>              | Children may contribute to the lesson by suggesting parents who are LGBT.  |
| Y2  | P3  | <b>My special people</b>                | Children may contribute to the lesson by suggesting people in their lives who are LGBT.  |
| Y3  | P4  | <b>Family and Friends</b>               | Learning point: Same-sex couples create families too   |
|     |     | <b>Looking after our special people</b> | Children may contribute to the lesson by suggesting people in their lives who are LGBT.  |
|     |     | <b>Let’s celebrate our differences</b>  | Gender is recognised as something that makes us similar to and different from each other. Children may contribute an example of a transgender person in their lives. |
|     |     | <b>Zeb</b>                              | Learning point: Sexuality and gender is recognised as something that makes us similar to and different from each other and that people can form a prejudice against. |
|     |     | <b>I am fantastic!</b>                  | Learning point: Understand why some groups of people are not represented as much on television/in the media, e.g. transgender.                                       |
|     |     | <b>Relationship Tree</b>                | Children may contribute to the lesson by suggesting people in their lives who are LGBT.  |
| Y4  | P5  | <b>Together</b>                         | Learning point: Recognise that marriage includes same-sex and opposite-sex partners.   |
|     |     | <b>That is such a stereotype!</b>       | Understand and identify stereotypes, including those promoted in the media.  |
| Y5  | P6  | <b>Is it true?</b>                      | Learning point: Understand and explain the difference between sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.  |

| Eng | Sco | Lesson Title  | Context  |
|-----|-----|---|--|
|     |     | <b>Changing Bodies and feelings</b>                                   | Learning point: Some young people who identify as transgender may have difficult feelings about puberty and it is important that they talk to someone about how they are feeling.  |
|     |     | <b>Stop, Start Stereotypes</b>  | Learning Point: Recognise that some people can get bullied because of the way they express their gender or due to their sexual orientation.  |
|     |     | <b>Boys will be boys? - challenging work-place gender stereotypes</b> | Learning points: Recognise how the media can sometimes reinforce gender stereotypes. Challenge stereotypical gender portrayals of people, particularly those relating to the work place.   |
|     |     | <b>Star qualities</b>   | Learning points: Recognise that the way people are portrayed in the media isn't always an accurate reflection of them in real life (building blocks for challenging stereotypes).  |
| Y6  | P7  | <b>We have more in common than not</b>                                | Children are encouraged to think about what makes us different; including gender identity and sexual orientation.  |
|     |     | <b>Don't force me</b>   | Learning point: Same-sex couples can have a civil partnership or get married.  |
|     |     | <b>I look great</b>   | Learning point: Identify qualities that people have, as well as their looks (building blocks for challenging stereotypes).   |
|     |     | <b>Media Manipulation</b>   | Learning points: Define what is meant by the term stereotype; recognise how the media can sometimes reinforce gender stereotypes; recognise that people fall into a wide range of what is seen as normal; challenge stereotypical gender portrayals of people. |

### Being transgender inclusive

SCARF resources acknowledge sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. Using an inclusive approach, challenging stereotypes, and encouraging children to be themselves, we aim to ensure every child is able to express their gender in the way they choose, safely and without fear of bullying.

There has been an increase in the number of young people who are seeking support around their gender. At Coram Life Education we acknowledge that there are a range of opinions on the most appropriate way to support children who experience gender dysphoria or difficulties with their gender identity. We acknowledge the range of these discussions, and the uncertainty that can result.

In 2018 The Royal College of Psychiatrists stated: *'The College acknowledges the need for better evidence on the outcomes of pre-pubertal children who present as transgender or gender-diverse, whether or not they enter treatment. Until that evidence is available, the College believes that a watch and wait policy, which does not place any pressure on children to live or behave in accordance with their sex assigned at birth or to move rapidly to gender transition, may be an appropriate course of action when young people first present'*.

Like the Royal College of Psychiatrists, we recognise that we don't know all the answers ourselves, and we will remain open and interested in all perspectives. Our work will continue to observe the law, and to place children's physical, mental and sexual health needs and rights at the centre. As experts within the primary school years, we know that children are growing and changing all the time, and that, in expressing themselves and who they are, they should be able to rely on trusted adults who can help them make safe and healthy choices, both now and the future.

## **Parental engagement**

Parents should be given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education, and Sex Education (RSE) if it is delivered. Schools should ensure that parents know what is being taught and when, and have the chance to ask questions. Some of the myths surrounding the content of an RSE programme have led a small minority of people to express concern about whether the content is age-appropriate and whether, for example, children will be learning about sexual practices stereotypically linked to the LGBT community. Schools must provide opportunities for those with a parental responsibility to access the resources being used and see for themselves how the programme is planned, as part of a carefully sequenced, age-appropriate spiral curriculum, helping to dispel these myths and aid understanding, so that valuable conversations can be continued at home where a family can discuss and share their values and opinions.

In May 2019 Damian Hinds, the then Secretary of State for Education, was widely quoted in the media when he stated that *“It is entirely right that schools should prepare children to thrive in our diverse society, a society that is based on tolerance and respect for others who are different.... We brought our curriculum for relationships up to date precisely so that it more accurately reflects the world that children are growing up in now.”*

Coram Life Education supports schools in engaging with their parents and carers by providing workshops, reading lists and an opportunity to view resources before they are taught. Schools subscribing to SCARF are supported with parent letter templates and an RSE policy template which takes into account the engagement of parents. We also offer teacher training, available to all schools, that looks at how to effectively engage parents. These processes recognise parents and carers as the prime educators, with schools taking responsibility for complementing and reinforcing this role.

## **Further reading:**

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance (June 2019):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Equality Act and Schools (2014), including Public Sector Equality Duty:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)

NAHT Parliamentary Briefing on relationships and health education (June 2019):

<https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/curriculum-and-assessment-news/anti-equality-protests-must-be-stopped-by-the-end-of-term/>

Royal College of Psychiatrists: Supporting transgender and gender-diverse people (March 2018) [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02\\_18.pdf](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02_18.pdf)

NHS Gender Identity Development Service <https://gids.nhs.uk/>

Department for Education: Parental Engagement on Relationships Education (2019)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/884450/Parental\\_engagement\\_on\\_relationships\\_education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884450/Parental_engagement_on_relationships_education.pdf)

National Association for Head Teachers: Policy Update: The Equality Act and Relationships Education in primary schools (May 2019)

<https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/curriculum-and-assessment-news/policy-update-the-equality-act-and-relationships-education-in-primary-schools/>

National Education Union: [Breaking the Mould: Challenging Gender Stereotypes](#) (2016)

[Sex Education Forum: RSE definitions \(April 2020\)](#)

DfE FAQs: [Government RSHE FAQs \(current\)](#)

Coram Life Education: Teacher Training Options

[https://www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk/Relationships\\_Education\\_Workshops\\_2020](https://www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk/Relationships_Education_Workshops_2020)