

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer

Educational Services Committee: 21st June 2023

Subject: Supporting LGBT+ pupils in Educational Settings

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) inform elected members of practices supporting (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) LGBT+ children and young people and;
- b) inform elected members of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in ensuring adherence to guidance.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members of the Educational Services Committee are asked to:

- a) note Educational Service's Guidance on supporting LGBT+ children and young people. (Appendix 1);
- b) note Educational Service's support practices contained within the guidance and
- c) note this guidance reflects the national guidance on supporting transgender young people in schools: guidance for Scottish Schools.

3. Background

3.1 Educational Services Guidance on supporting LGBT+ Children and Young People was produced by a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) in 2019. The final version was delayed and amended to reflect National guidance on supporting transgender pupils published in August 2021.

3.2 [National Guidance Supporting transgender young people in schools: guidance for Scottish schools](#) published in August 2021 aims to ensure provision of a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment for all pupils. It is therefore appropriate that our schools have the confidence to meet the needs of **all** pupils.

3.3 National Guidance 2021 reflects Equalities Act 2010, Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) duties as well as UNCRC principles and also <https://lgbteducation.scot/> as the national platform for supporting Local Authorities, schools and teachers.

3.4 For a variety of reasons, some LGBT+ pupils experience higher instances of mental health issues and bullying. It is our aim that all children and young

people feel happy, safe, respected, supported and included across our learning communities.

- 3.5** LGBT+ was the term selected by our pupils on the SLWG to reference young people who have changed their gender identification/orientation.
- 3.6** Data informs us that since 2016 there has been an increasing trend of pupils who have indicated to school that they have changed names, their use of pronouns, or their gender.
- 3.7** Guidance from the Commissioner's Report and The United Nations Rights of The Child 1989 (UNRC) is clear that all children are entitled to higher standards of protection and care due to their age and vulnerability; with a right to feel safe.
- 3.8** This guidance is intended to provide a supportive and inclusive framework, within which schools can effectively work with children and parents to maintain positive relationships, behaviour and safety in schools. It has been developed in articulation with the following legislation and National/Local Authority policy: Education (Scotland) Act(s) (1980 and 2016), Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) and Additional Support for Learning Acts (2004) as amended,
- 3.9** West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to the continuing professional development of all staff. This guidance ensures cognisance of challenges and support employees tell us they need; ensuring appropriate training and practice.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** WDC will work with a range of stakeholders, to ensure positive outcomes for all Children and Young People. We ensure all of our schools and Early Learning Centers are clear about the steps they need to take to actively promote and monitor high quality learning experiences and support of all children and young people. Guidance and approaches on supporting LGBT+ is shared and clear to all staff.
- 4.2** Senior Leaders in educational settings are clear of their roles in ensuring effective monitoring and impact of strategies and supports to ensure positive outcomes and the Rights of the child. This is clarified in guidance.
- 4.3** The continuing professional development of staff is essential in ensuring children and staff are supported in dealing with and learning from challenging or distressing situations. A programme of training has been developed to ensure support of all stakeholders.
- 4.4** Consultation has taken place with a range of young people, staff, parents and partners including the Catholic Church. Feedback was mainly positive and the support and guidance welcomed. Concerns remain for some parent and staff representatives around the aspect of not disclosing name or

gender change to parents at pupil's requests. This is in line with the National Guidance.

- 4.5** The guidance is intended to support schools to work in collaboration with pupils and parents to plan supports for their child or young person, ensuring their Rights, views and needs are central to this process.
- 4.6** Next steps include: developing an easy to access virtual platform which will support staff in easy access to a range of resources and signposting, delivering a series of professional learning sessions to key staff and ensuring our children and young people know how to access appropriate signposting and help.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications as a result of this report; however it is essential that robust systems are in place to ensure the Rights of children and young people are upheld with appropriate staff training to do so.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** All activities related to the implementation of this policy are contained within Service Budgets.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** If the Council is unable to ensure appropriate support to children and young people, we will not be meeting their needs (Children and Young People Act 2014) (Equalities Act 2010).
- 7.2** If the Council is unable to ensure safety and support for all children, young people and staff this could result in reputational damage.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The supports and guidance enhance the quality of the service provided to all children and young people and therefore can be seen to have a positive impact in terms of the equalities.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.
- 9.2** The guidance has been informed by consultation with a wide range of stakeholders: young people including those with lived experience, parents and carers, Educational Psychologists, central officers, the Catholic Church and local partners who are key in supporting LGBT+ young people in the community as well as third sector partners and teaching unions.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

Laura Mason
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Guidance on Supporting LGBT+ Children and Young People in Educational Settings
Background Papers:	https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-transgender-young-people-schools-guidance-scottish-schools/pages/1/ https://lgbteducation.scot/ https://respectme.org.uk/ Schools Equality Act (2010) Getting it Right for Every Child How Good is Our School 4 (HGIOS 4)/How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Every Child, Every Chance (2018)
Wards Affected:	All Wards