



FAQs for Parents and Carers

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What is School Diversity Week: Home Edition?

School Diversity Week is the national celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) equality in education. Organised by the charity [Just Like Us](#), the week empowers pupils and school staff to take responsibility for tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying. In 2019, around 1.4 million pupils and school staff signed up to take part. This year is set to be even bigger, but given the current situation will be running a little differently.



With pupils across the country learning remotely we've launched **School Diversity Week: Home Edition**, allowing LGBT+ young people, school staff and parents and carers to celebrate and learn from their homes. We've featured a range of opportunities, including exclusive **activity plans, challenges and daily online masterclasses**. We're hoping pupils everywhere can still have a week that is both educational and fun.

Why do we need School Diversity Week?

Whilst we've certainly come a long way as a society in the way we talk about and treat LGBT+ people, sadly it is still the case even in 2020 that growing up LGBT+ can be unacceptably tough.

At school 86% of LGBT+ young people hear homophobic remarks and 45% of LGB young people have faced bullying (rising to 64% of trans young people). This has an incredibly damaging effect on self-confidence, mental wellbeing and attainment in school.



School Diversity Week puts the spotlight on LGBT+ young people, promoting **awareness and understanding**, displaying **commitment to ensuring** all LGBT+ people are rightfully granted a **safe, comfortable and happy experience during their time in education and beyond**.

Why run School Diversity Week at home?

School Diversity Week is an incredibly positive experience; creative, educational and promoting values of kindness in the midst of a time which for many young people is unsettling. Learning about diversity, equality and inclusion at home allows for young people to explore these topics and ask questions in a safe, comfortable environment.



This digital format, allowing access to our toolkit from your home also means we're able to provide new and exciting opportunities such as our masterclasses with LGBT+ experts in a range of fields. Particularly with many LGBT+ young people away from their communities, School Diversity Week is a **show of togetherness and community** at a time when it is truly needed.

How do I introduce LGBT+ topics in an age appropriate way?

As part of our Home Edition we've compiled a range of session plans, ideas and activities **tailored to a range of ages**.

It can be useful to gain a sense of their **existing knowledge**. For many students, LGBT+ topics may have been covered in school assemblies, however for others this might be completely new. We've provided a **terminology guide** so your child can establish understanding or refresh their knowledge on LGBT+ terms and their definitions.



If your child has never knowingly met anyone LGBT+ it can be beneficial to think about **LGBT+ role models** they may know and look up to. You can then discuss their identities and further cement their understanding of definitions.



Our resources encompass the **importance of diversity, fairness, representation and understanding**. If you feel like you want to talk to your child before they take part in the activity and lesson plans we've suggested some questions which relate to these terms. These discussions should help them form a good level of base knowledge before they engage with these activities:

- Why is diversity important? Not just in terms of LGBT+ identity, but also sex, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, and so on?
- Do you feel like LGBT+ people are treated fairly today?
- Why is it important that we tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia?
- Growing up, do you think it's important to be around or see people who are similar to you?

What if I don't know much about a particular topic?

If you're not entirely familiar with LGBT+ topics, learn along with your child. Be honest and approach it from the view of 'let's find out about this together'. We've provided plenty of resources to get conversations started and run activities that are interactive and educational. Learning about LGBT+ people, issues and history is important for young people in accepting differences and preparing them for life in the modern world. We recommend watching this **Tedx Talk by Just Like Us founder Tim Ramsey: [is my child too young to learn about being gay?](#)**



How do I approach School Diversity Week if I think my child is LGBT+?

If you believe your child might be LGBT+ themselves, School Diversity Week: Home Edition allows for the topic to be introduced and normalised in a safe space.



There's no formula for how a LGBT+ young person might act or look. It's important not to make direct assumptions until a child does or doesn't come out but instead **talk about LGBT+ people in a positive light**. This means that if they are LGBT+ **they'll feel supported and it will make their journey easier**. If they are not LGBT+ they'll have an **open-minded and understanding outlook on the topic**.

It's also good to remember that because a child **may not conform to gender norms** (this includes clothing preferences, behaviours, likes or dislikes) it **does not necessarily mean they are LGB or trans**. Support your child however they choose to express their gender at any given time. Empower them to dress however they like and engage in the activities they want to, even if they don't align with gender expectations. In some instances it may transpire that young people who don't conform to gender norms are trans, but for many it is simply a case of gender exploration.



The School Diversity Week: Home Edition toolkit encourages you to talk about topics of romantic attraction and gender identity. If your child is LGBT+ this could be the first time they've heard about these topics and it's likely to be an **incredibly formative experience** on which they will look back and feel **heard and supported**.

If your child is openly LGBT+ this is a **wonderful opportunity to explore a topic that is important to them** in a fun way. Allow them to take the lead on discussions and talk about how engagement in LGBT+ focused activities might be a positive experience for them. Playing a role in School Diversity Week as a parent of an LGBT+ child is a **great way to show support**.

How do I ensure my child is engaging with the online material safely?

We've taken every step to ensure our online materials and masterclasses are safe for all pupils, and **you can ask your child's school to share our safeguarding information with you**.



It is likely that your young person will be doing much of their learning independently. Have a discussion beforehand about sites which may be the most beneficial to use in keeping the topic age-appropriate and positive. Websites of LGBT+ organisations often have educational resources available, are well-informed and positive in tone. We also recommend using a parental lock.

Masterclasses will be accessed via social media. The target age group for each masterclass will be clearly stated on its description and at the start of the class. They can be watched without parental supervision, but **we recommend you attend with your young person, particularly if they are 13 or under** so you can discuss the content and see what they have learned.

If you are concerned about the online safety of any apps your child is using, either for learning or social reasons, have a look at guidance from [Net Aware](#) (NSPCC).



Expert guidance recommends that as well as using appropriate safety measures, parents and carers create space for young people to engage in online content. They recommend **using conversation to take an interest** in apps or games they're using and address any concerns this way, without having to monitor everything they do online.