

The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils

A Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

produced with **LGBT+ Jews**

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A message from KeshetUK

Our school experiences should provide a solid foundation for our future lives.

With the support of a nurturing community of teachers and peers, we discover and develop our identity and aspirations, and the resilience to deal with the realities of adult life. Jewish schools seek to do this in a framework and environment that reflects our heritage and values, while equipping young people to live rich and fulfilling lives in Jewish communities. To help create this guide, KeshetUK heard from numerous LGBT+ people who generously shared their stories, often speaking with great warmth about their Jewish school experiences, teachers who had inspired them and friends they had made. Many spoke about their continued involvement in and contribution to Jewish life and communities.

Like all schools, Jewish schools need to ensure they are meeting the needs of all young people in their care. All young people in our community deserve the opportunity to achieve their potential, free from bullying, discrimination and fear. School years are a critically formative period when young people come to understand their sexuality and gender identity. It is also the time when young people are developing their ideas about belonging, community, diversity and inclusion.

Young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are particularly vulnerable to bullying and harm, as are children of LGBT+ parents. This is reflected in data showing poorer school attendance in these groups, worse mental health, and risk-taking behaviour including self-harm and suicide. All young people, regardless of sexuality or gender identity, can be affected by anti-LGBT+ bullying, which can be used to aggressively enforce gender stereotypes and limit young people's academic, career and personal life aspirations.

It doesn't have to be this way. In recent years, KeshetUK has delivered training for staff at both Jewish primary and secondary schools to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to address the needs of LGBT+ pupils and their families in a Jewish framework. Alongside this, KeshetUK has supported internal curriculum development and lesson planning and delivered in-depth multi-year curricula to pupils in Jewish secondary schools.

This Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools has come about because of the passion and commitment of the Jewish community to get this right. Jewish educational professionals, Rabbis and other communal leaders have a desire to work with KeshetUK to make sure that young LGBT+ people are safe and can feel welcome in their Jewish school environment. Nowhere have we seen this more clearly than in our close and collaborative work in recent months with the Chief Rabbi and his office. We are deeply grateful to all those who have supported this project for their hard work and the energy they have put into creating this guide.

Dalia Fleming, Executive Director
Benjamin Ellis, Chair

Introduction from the Chief Rabbi

Our schools are our most essential communal vehicle for cultivating the next generation of committed young Jews and we are proud of their achievements in both *Kodesh* (religious) and *chol* (secular) studies.

A priority for every school is the wellbeing of its students. In this context, for some time, numerous professional and lay leaders of our schools and many Rabbis, have shared with me their view that there is an urgent need for authoritative guidance which recognises the reality that there are young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) students in our schools to whom we have a duty of care. While many such students are thriving in Jewish schools, there are many others who endure deep unhappiness and distress due to the mistreatment and hurt they experience. Head teachers, teachers, lay leaders and Rabbis feel an urgent responsibility to put in place effective measures to prevent the harmful effects of bullying, name-calling and insensitivity. There is also a need to provide appropriate pastoral support to those who seek it, all within the parameters of *halacha* (Jewish Law), our Jewish values, ethos and current regulatory requirements.

To our great regret, without appropriate measures in place, harm has too often been caused in our schools and this is a problem that persists today. With this in mind, I consider it a *chiyuv* (obligation) to provide appropriate direction to our schools and to ensure that Rabbis and other suitable members of staff are on hand to provide support and guidance to our students.

During the particularly formative period of their school years, we have a responsibility to create and maintain a nurturing community of teachers and peers for all of our students. In seeking to meet their needs, we must introduce robust behaviour policies that will enable all students to achieve their potential, free from bullying, discrimination and fear.

Young LGBT+ people are particularly vulnerable to bullying and harm, as are children of LGBT+ parents. It is of great importance that all members of staff should have the knowledge, skills and confidence to address the needs of these pupils and their families, providing support and guidance in a Torah framework.

Orthodox schools have understandably found it difficult to engage with LGBT+ issues. As challenging as the task might be, and it is exceptionally challenging, I believe that failure to address it at all amounts to an abrogation of our responsibility to the Almighty and to our children.

We are, of course, aware of the Torah's *issurim* (prohibitions) here, including Vayikra/Leviticus 18:22, but when homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is carried out with 'justifications' from Jewish texts, a major *chilul Hashem* (desecration of God's name) is caused. We must be ever-mindful of the *mitzva* to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18), considered by Rabbi Akiva to be the most important principle of the Torah.

Bearing this in mind, this important guide is aimed at school leadership and those charged with ensuring a responsible school environment that meets the needs of pupils, current regulatory requirements and, of course, all predicated upon *halacha* (Jewish Law), Jewish values, ethos and *hashkafa* (outlook). It will enable, inform and empower school leaders to prevent harm that can be caused to LGBT+ people within their school community.

Introduction from the Chief Rabbi continued

This guide promotes a whole-school approach to the wellbeing and safety of LGBT+ young people. This requires robust behaviour policies alongside wider school work to integrate understanding and awareness about LGBT+ experiences. It is for this reason that we have specifically included the reflections of LGBT+ people which provide an essential insight for teachers into how some of their pupils may be experiencing their education.

This essential document is the culmination of the efforts of many individuals and organisations who have come together for the express purpose of reducing harm to young Jews and making our schools safer, more nurturing places. We are indebted to all concerned for the assistance given.

Many Rabbis, head teachers, heads of *Kodesh* (Jewish Studies) and LGBT+ members of our community have given freely of their valuable time to make this resource possible – we are indebted to each and every one of them for their commitment and sincerity. I would like to thank Rabbi David Meyer and his team at PaJeS, a valuable resource who provide essential guidance for our schools to achieve the best possible education across our community.

This work has only been possible because of the commitment, energy and leadership of the KeshetUK team, particularly Benjamin Ellis and Alma Reisel who have, with the support of KeshetUK staff and volunteers, devoted hundreds of hours of their time to help bring this Guide from inception to publication. They have, at all stages of our collaboration with them, been totally respectful of Torah values, never seeking to undermine or contradict any *issurim* (prohibitions) or important areas of *hashkafa*. They have not sought acclaim or praise – their only motivation has been the well-being of young Jews. I consider that the production of this document together with KeshetUK represents something far more powerful than the sum of its parts. It is a statement that individuals, organisations and communities can have fundamentally different beliefs about important issues and can, nonetheless, see the humanity in others and truly care about one another.

I hope that this document will set a precedent for genuine respect, borne out of love for all people across the Jewish world and mindful of the fact that every person is created *betzelem Elokim* – in the image of God.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

What do we mean by LGBT+?

The term LGBT refers to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. Throughout this document, the term LGBT+ is used, the '+' denoting additional identities, such as those who are gender-fluid, non-binary or questioning their sexuality or gender identity.

For a full glossary of terms, see **Appendix 4**.



Lo ta'amod al dam rei'echa

Preventing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying

לֹא תֵלֵךְ רֵכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תִעַמַד עַל דַּם רֵעֶךָ אָנֹכִי ה' . ויקרא יט:טז

Do not go about as a talebearer among your countrymen.

Do not stand idly by your fellow's blood: I am the Lord. *Vayikra/Leviticus 19:16*

The Torah (Vayikra/Leviticus 19:16) commands *Lo ta'amod al dam rei'echa* – do not stand idly by your fellow's blood.

The *Gemara* (Sanhedrin 73a), cites a *Beraita* (a teaching by the authors of the *Mishna*) which explains that this verse teaches that if one sees a person in a life-threatening situation (e.g. someone drowning in a river or being attacked by a wild animal), one has a *chiyuv* (obligation) to do something in order to save them. Note that the Torah does not merely consider acting in such a case to be commendable or ideal – it is an absolute obligation.

Any person who doubts that there are young LGBT+ people in our schools who have been left feeling so isolated that their very lives are in danger, has simply failed to grasp the reality confronting some of our students. Indeed, the numbers of LGBT+ young people who have self-harmed or attempted to take their lives is frightening.

Of course, not all LGBT+ students will feel so maligned or suffer intolerably at the hands of bullies, but it is clear that many do. The evidence is that distress and harm would be reduced if communities and schools were more understanding of the needs and life experiences of LGBT+ young people.

The *Gemara* states that one who humiliates another in public is like one who has shed their blood and the *Mishna* in *Avot* 3:11 teaches, “Whoever humiliates another in public forfeits their place in the World to Come”. Just as the concept of *lo ta'amod al dam rei'echa* (do not stand idly by) applies to preventing physical harm, Judaism demands that we never stand idly by when someone is being bullied and humiliated.

Most importantly, within our schools there are students whose lives are in danger, both spiritually and physically. As a community, we have a collective *chiyuv* (obligation) to address this issue together.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is a serious and widespread issue. Anyone who has been bullied or witnessed its effect on a young person can testify that all it takes is a cruel word to turn a safe space into one of fear. Unfortunately, for many young people who are LGBT+ or perceived to be so, this fear is a daily reality.

Preventing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying continued

“If only teachers had noticed that I was hurting and being bullied for who I was.”

“When I was at school, I wasn’t sure of my sexuality, and there were girls bullying me about it. I was worried that if I told a teacher I would be expelled for not being straight, as I thought the school would support the girls bullying me, because they were just saying what I’d been taught Judaism says. I left the school without telling anyone there.”



Former Jewish day school pupils

The Stonewall School Report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain’s schools in 2017, written in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, collected the experiences of over 3,700 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils in Britain’s schools.

- Nearly half of LGBT+ pupils (45%) – including over three in five (64%) transgender pupils – are bullied for being LGBT+ in Britain’s schools.
- Just over half (52%) of LGBT+ pupils hear homophobic slurs ‘frequently’ or ‘often’ at school.
- Nearly seven in 10 (68%) LGBT+ pupils report that their school says that homophobic and biphobic bullying is wrong; just two in five (41%) LGBT+ pupils report that their schools say that transphobic bullying is wrong.
- More than four in five (84%) transgender young people have self-harmed, as have three in five (61%) lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.
- More than two in five (45%) transgender young people have attempted to take their own life, and just over one in five (22%) lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils have done the same.

The pervasiveness and impact of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is such a particular problem that it needs to be explicitly addressed in schools’ anti-bullying policy and practice.

When language is used to harm, teachers, and ideally bystander pupils, should feel empowered to respond to it as they would any incident of bullying (see Appendix 5 for practical tips for addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying).

Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying is common in schools. A zero-tolerance approach to any kind of bullying requires a strong and confident response to every single instance of that behaviour, however minor or isolated it may seem. Minor incidents and throwaway comments lead to a culture where more endemic, premeditated bullying can thrive. This means taking the time to counter and record every incidence of abuse, however casual or flippant it may seem.

Ona'at devarim

Using language responsibly

וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת עֲמִיתוֹ וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיכֶם. וַיִּקְרָא כה:יז

And you shall not wrong (*tonu*) one another and you shall fear your God, for I am the Lord your God. *Vayikra/Leviticus 25:17*

כְּשֵׁם שְׂאוֹנְאָה בְּמִקַּח וּמִמְכָר, כֵּן אֹנְאָה בְּדִבְרִים. משנה בבא מציעא ד:י

Just as there is wrongdoing regarding commerce, so too there is wrongdoing with words. *Bava Metzia 4:10*

It is clear from here, that if one knows that a particular subject or form of words is likely to cause pain to another but chooses to go ahead and use those words nonetheless, one is guilty of *ona'at devarim* (wrongdoing with words).

Further to the comments of the *Mishna, Chazal* (our Sages) go to great lengths in the *Gemara* which follows the *Mishna* cited above to offer detailed examples of the kind of instances in which people can be guilty of this.

שְׁלֹא לְהוֹנוֹת אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל בְּדִבְרִים, כְּלוּמַר, שְׁלֹא נֹאמֵר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל דְּבָרִים שְׂיִכְאִיבוּהוּ וַיִּצְעְרוּהוּ וְאִין בּוֹ כַּח לְהַעֲזֹר מֵהֶם. ספר החינוך, מצוה של"ח

To not mistreat one of your nation with words, meaning to say that one shall not say to a person words that hurt them or cause them pain against which they cannot stand. *Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 338*

As the *Sefer Hachinuch* makes clear, none of our pupils should have to face such unbearable treatment. Today, we refer to this behaviour as bullying and it is completely forbidden.

It is also forbidden to inadvertently cause people pain, even where the intention was to be constructive. The *Gemara* gives an example from a different context: when speaking to someone who is experiencing personal grief one may not say to them, "If you had only been a better person spiritually, perhaps this suffering may not have befallen you." This example makes it clear that even with the best of intentions one can inadvertently cause great pain. Whether as a result of insensitivity or ignorance, this is still *ona'at devarim*.

Using language responsibly continued

This lesson is particularly instructive in the context of the way that teachers regard LGBT+ students. A teacher might believe that they are addressing students with all due sensitivity, but without recognising LGBT+ issues and the life experiences of a young LGBT+ person growing up in the Jewish community, it is possible – and indeed likely – that they will cause physical and spiritual harm, potentially driving young people away from Judaism.

Thus, it is crucially important for students and staff alike to be fully aware of the impact of their words and actions on others. This can be suitably addressed with proper leadership, with clear policies in place and with appropriate training and support for staff.

In addition, the *Gemara* states that the Gates of Heaven are always open to receive the cries of pain of one who has been on the receiving end of *ona'at devarim*. Our shared responsibility is to ensure that our schools are similarly open to receive the cries of pain of their students, when homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is reported to them.

Reflecting on the power of the spoken word, the Book of Proverbs (18:21) states, “Life and death are in the hands of the tongue”.

“I remember teachers making homophobic remarks, and wish there was a discipline process for teachers who make those kinds of comments.”

“One of my teachers, not knowing I am gay, made a throwaway remark that stayed with me, and hurt a lot. He said: *I'd sit shiva for my son if he came out.*”



Former Jewish day school pupils

There is a long history of words being used to shame, victimise and persecute people in the LGBT+ community. This includes some particular abusive terms that should never be used. Used out of context with harsh intent, even the words recommended below can cause offense and upset. Sensitively using appropriate language helps bring about greater understanding of LGBT+ lives and experiences.

The vocabulary young people hear (and don't hear) at school shapes not only their sense of self-worth, but also their relationships with others, and their perception of identity and belonging. For a young person who is discovering their sexuality or gender identity, hearing role models such as teachers and school leaders using terms related to LGBT+ lives sensitively can be hugely powerful.

Not everyone is familiar with LGBT+ terminology – and it is evolving. A glossary developed by KeshetUK can be found in Appendix 4 and includes some of the most common terms in current use in the UK:

- People use a range of terms to describe their sexuality or gender identity. This can make it challenging for those who are new to the complexities of sexuality and gender identity to find the right words.
- It can be unclear which terms are acceptable or correct. To add to the complexity, new terms emerge and the old terms sometimes lose traction or acceptability over time.
- People should be allowed to self-determine; it is unhelpful to impose a term as a label. Hurt can be avoided by listening to and noting the terms a young person uses to self-determine, describe the feelings they are having, or indeed the terms they do not use.
- Each LGBT+ person relates differently to this vocabulary, and may self-determine differently. The terms people use about themselves may change over time.

Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying is defined as bullying that is based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about LGBT+ people. It may be targeted at students who are LGBT+ or who are perceived to be LGBT+. It can also be targeted at people who have LGBT+ family members, and at students who may be unsure of their sexuality or gender identity, students who do not conform to gender stereotypes or are seen to be ‘different’ in some way.

Examples of homophobic bullying:

- A boy who is being called “gay” for holding hands with another boy.
- A girl who reports that she keeps repeatedly being called a “lesbian” and “not a real girl” by other pupils because she has short hair.
- A boy who is picked on for being gay at break-times because he doesn’t want to play football – “He must be gay if he doesn’t like football”.
- A girl who reports that since she came out as a lesbian, other girls in her class keep moving away from her and giggling every time they’re in the changing rooms.
- A child who is told by their peers, “Come on, you’re definitely gay. If you’d just admit it, we’d leave you alone. Just come out with it already!”.
- Someone calling another pupil an abusive homophobic name, like ‘dyke’, ‘faggot’, ‘faigele’, and if challenged the bully says, “But it’s true!” or “But they don’t mind; it’s only a joke!”.

Examples of biphobic bullying:

- A pupil receiving ongoing name-calling and jokes about being ‘greedy’ because they are attracted to boys and girls.
- A bisexual pupil repeatedly being asked probing or intimidating questions such as “Can’t you make your mind up – do you fancy boys or girls?” or “Why can’t you be normal and just fancy people of the opposite sex?”.
- A bisexual pupil being told to “stop sitting on the fence and come out as gay already”.
- Shouting “bi-bi”.

Using language responsibly continued

Examples of transphobic bullying:

- A pupil who comes out as transgender being told that “God made a mistake with you” and that they are “sick and wrong”.
- Pupils pestering a young person who is transgender or does not confirm to gender norms with questions about their gender such as “Are you a real boy?” or “Are you a boy, or are you a girl?” or asking invasive questions relating to underwear or “What body parts do you have?”.
- A girl being teased and called names referring to her as “a boy” or “trans” because she wears trousers or “boys” clothes.
- A boy who tells his friends that his dad is now his mum suffers other pupils laughing and repeatedly telling him “That can’t happen – your dad’s a freak!”.
- Referring to someone as a “tranny”.
- “That long hair makes you look like a right gender-bender!”.

Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language is harmful, even when used without malicious intent. For example, young people often use the word ‘gay’ to describe a person, event or object they don’t like or is, in their minds, ‘un-cool’ or ‘weird’. In the same way that the casual use of the word ‘Jew’ to mean stingy offends many Jewish people, this homophobic language can be deeply hurtful to LGBT+ people, and needs challenging. This could be the casual derogatory use of the word ‘gay’ to mean something negative or the use of explicit homophobic terms. For example: “That’s so gay”, “You’re so gay” and “That hat is so gay”.

For an approach to addressing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, please see Appendix 5.

DISCUSSION EXERCISE

Practical intervention strategies against bullying

What can you do when you find yourself on the spot as a bystander to behaviour which victimises LGBT+ people, or stigmatises LGBT+ identities? It’s often hard to think of the right thing to say in the moment – but once you start speaking up regularly, it gets easier with practice.

Take a look at the examples given over the last two pages and think about your responses.

- How might you intervene ‘in the moment’?
- What might you do later, to prevent further damage and address the issue more thoroughly?
- What steps could be taken to prevent this kind of behaviour arising in future?

When you have had a go at developing your own responses, see Appendix 5 for some suggestions of different ‘good practice’ approaches you could take.



Middot

Living a Jewish ethos

“If we pretend it doesn’t affect us, then it is not real.

Fifteen years as a community Rabbi, educator and school Rabbinic advisor and governor has taught me that this is an unhelpful approach.”



Jewish school Rabbi

Orthodox Jewish schools can and must be a safe haven for all children and teens, a place where every pupil can feel nurtured and protected.

Within our Jewish communities, it is our responsibility to make everyone feel valued, with all the challenges that go with that. This is of relevance to LGBT+ young people who may be particularly vulnerable to harm from others.

There are many Jewish values, expressed through good *middot* (character traits) which apply equally to our conduct regarding each and every one of us, such as *ahavat Yisrael* (love of a fellow Jew), the *pintele yid* (the spark of holiness in all of us) and the *tzelem Elokim* (the image of God in which we are all created). No-one should be hurt by breaches of *shmirat halashon* (careless speech) or excluded through lack of *kavod habriyot* (respect for other people). These are all concepts that can be promoted as part of a wider culture of care for every individual in our schools.

We can foster a joined-up approach where *Kodesh*/Jewish Studies teachers, Rabbis and Rebbetzins work together with other departments to deliver a sensitive, balanced approach to those who are discovering their identity. All young people, regardless of sexuality or gender, should know that if they approach their Rabbi, Rebbetzen or *Kodesh*/Jewish Studies teacher they will find a listening ear, understanding and pastoral support within a Torah framework.

“I wish the school had thought in advance about how they would respond if a trans pupil says:

Actually I want to sit on this side of the mechitza or I’m going to start wearing a kippah.

The school should have a position in advance of any individual pupil coming forward so that trans pupils know where they stand.”



Former Jewish day school pupil

Living a Jewish Ethos continued

“I have children at an Orthodox Jewish school, and even though people there know I’m lesbian, I’ve never experienced anything but respect from all the staff at the school. I know it’s a good school for my girls and I’m glad I didn’t have to move and unsettle them when my marriage ended.”



LGBT+ parent of children in a Jewish school

A school’s ethos influences every aspect of school life. For Orthodox Jewish schools, our sensitivity to LGBT+ pupils can be clearly reflected in the schools’ ethos. Many Jewish schools produce a framework of *middot* (Jewish values and character traits). *Middot* are designed to be embedded in all aspects of curriculum and pastoral work, to cultivate pupils’ character traits as an everyday part of school.

Middot can be an excellent platform through which sensitivity to the wellbeing and safety of LGBT+ young people can be encouraged. For example, a discussion about the *middah* of *derech erez* – the idea of showing kindness and respect for peers, elders and teachers – could lead to consideration of how homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is not compatible with having a strong Jewish character.

The school’s written ethos commitment to the welfare of LGBT+ pupils needs to be explicit. *The Stonewall School Report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain’s schools in 2017* found that in schools that explicitly say homophobic and biphobic bullying is wrong, lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils are less likely to be bullied because of their sexual orientation than in schools that don’t say it is wrong (42% compared to 51%). They are also less likely to worry about being bullied (38% compared to 52%) and more likely to tell someone if they are being bullied (60% compared to 48%).

Being explicit about sensitivity to the welfare of LGBT+ pupils avoids the risk of young people receiving mixed messages, or finding some parts of school life safe and welcoming, but others hurtful and harmful. For example, a clear ethos communicated to all staff can prevent pupils receiving conflicting messages from Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and *Kodesh*/Jewish Studies departments. A whole school approach allows staff, governors, pupils and parents to be in agreement with the school’s agreed approach on this matter.

There also needs to be a strategy for communicating the school’s approach to the whole school community and investing time and effort in preventing harm being caused to LGBT+ pupils. This will encourage a whole-school commitment to being sensitive to the wellbeing of LGBT+ young people.

V'ahavta lerei'acha kamocho

Providing pastoral support

“In its description of mankind, the Torah teaches that all people are created in the image of God. To me as an educator, this existential principle drives the way I relate to all my pupils. Respect, dignity, love, empathy and understanding are values that result from understanding the image of God concept.”



Jewish school Rabbi

דַּעְלָךְ סֵינִי לְחִבְרָךְ לֹא תַעֲבִיד זֶה הִיא כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כּוּלָּהּ וְאִידָךְ פִּירוּשָׁהּ הוּא. גַּמ' שֶׁבֶת לֹא.

Do not do to others that which you would not wish them to do to you.

This is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary *Gemara Shabbat 31a*

This famous teaching of Hillel highlights for us the critical importance of empathy in Jewish tradition and that sensitivity to the feelings of everyone, including LGBT+ people, is a core element of our Torah way of life.

Young LGBT+ people in the Jewish community often express feelings of deep isolation and loneliness and a sense that they can never be themselves. Many are living with the fear that if they share their struggles with anyone they will be expelled, ridiculed and even rejected by family and friends. They may even be struggling with a loss of *emunah* (faith, trust in God) and the fear of losing their place of acceptance and belonging in the Jewish community.

The struggle to understand one's sexual identity is particularly challenging at secondary school. Pupils who are LGBT+ have particular struggles, and more so within faith schools. Gender roles are assumed, heterosexual relationships are talked about, and those whose sexual orientation is different can begin to question their place within their school community and their faith community.

We recognise the need for compassion and sensitivity when encountering the internal and external challenges faced by young LGBT+ Jews, and those struggling to understand their sexuality or gender identity.

Schools have a duty of care and effective schools are those which succeed in creating an environment where pupils feel cared for. Support within a Torah framework should be offered to those who are feeling confused, isolated and conflicted.

Providing pastoral support continued

“I’d be so happy if teachers could just be there for their pupils.”

“I wish my teachers had thought a bit more about what things would have been like from my perspective.”

“One of the things I really appreciated was when a Rabbi spoke to me and just said: *I’m here, I’m going to listen. I don’t have all the answers on this, so I just want to listen and understand how this is for you.* That meant a lot to me. It felt like he showed a lot of humility, was being honest and cared about me. There are a lot of knotty areas and sometimes just acknowledging that and showing that you are aware of the impact makes a huge difference.”



Former Jewish day school pupils

When a young person comes out at school, staff should feel able and supported to respond with the same empathy and confidence they would show in any pastoral conversation, working within a Torah framework.

Different schools take different approaches to developing staff expertise. Many identify a school lead or small working group to develop and implement the school’s approach. For this to be successful, this individual or group needs the full and explicit backing of the school’s leadership.

Because pupils will choose to speak to whichever staff member they feel most comfortable with. All staff (whether general, pastoral and *Kodesh*/Jewish Studies) need a basic awareness and understanding of the school’s approach to supporting LGBT+ pupils. Not all staff will feel equally confident about how to respond to a pupil coming out and how to support young LGBT+ Jewish people. Many LGBT+ young people find it helpful to have specific named teachers who are publicly identified as school leads for supporting LGBT+ pupils. This cohort would complete appropriate training and can support other staff members to develop their knowledge and skills with appropriate Rabbinic input.

When a pupil comes out at school

The first response, verbal and non-verbal, that a pupil receives after they come out can have a long-lasting impact on how they see themselves in the school and Jewish community. All staff require training and support on how to respond, in case they are that first person. Declining to have any conversation and signposting to another staff member can create the impression of rejection.

At some point, pupils may share with staff their plans to discuss their sexuality or gender identity with their parents or family. Young LGBT+ people need to know that the school will help with these conversations, either in preparation for or after they come out to their parents. Parents may wish to come into the school to discuss this, and may themselves want support. For some suggestions on how to have these conversations well, please see Appendix 6.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

All staff should be clear that a pupil coming out is not a safeguarding issue. They have simply shared an aspect of their identity. Like any other personal information, any information about staff or pupil sexuality or gender identity should be treated as confidential. Unless there is a risk of harm, this should not be disclosed to anyone, including their parents. Making a pupil's parents aware of their child's sexuality and gender identity can itself be a safeguarding risk, particularly as the school cannot know how parents or carers might react.

However, if the young person has shared that they have been threatened or are at risk of harm because of other people's reactions to their sexuality or gender identity, this should be discussed with the school's designated safeguarding lead, and advice can be sought from local children's services.

Working with parents

When a pupil comes out as LGBT+ to a staff member, sometimes their parents may want to discuss their child's sexuality or gender identity with both welfare and *Kodesh*/Jewish Studies staff members, as well as the school Principal/Rabbi. It may also be helpful to signpost Jewish community support that is available for parents of LGBT+ children¹.

There may well be children with LGBT+ parents in the school, whose needs must also be met. Stonewall's research *Different Families: The experience of children with lesbian and gay parents* (2010) reported that the children of same-sex parents found that in this context the use of homophobic language often goes unchallenged. It is important that we do not forget students with LGBT+ parents, who also require the support of the school.

¹ <http://parentsofjewishgaysandlesbians.co.uk/>

A personal experience

When teaching important elements of Jewish tradition, we must be mindful of what our students may be thinking and feeling, so that we can empathise with them. We have included this piece to help educators understand what may be going through the minds of some of their students.

If only things had been different...

I didn't come out at school. I was painfully scared of standing out. As soon as you start school you're categorised – boy, or girl, and everything else follows from that. On the first day of secondary school, I noticed that all students were sealed with a set identity. We were categorized as boy or girl, religious or secular, set 1 or set 2, and we were then treated according to the label we were given.

As a girl, my curriculum was fitted around my identity. The purpose being to guide me through the life stages of reaching womanhood. Had I been straight, this process would have been a huge advantage to my development, however, because I was not straight, the result was a feeling of total isolation and a lack of guidance that I desperately needed for my future.

In Religious Studies I was taught about visiting the *mikveh*, my soul meeting my future husband's soul, and the process of marrying a man. In PSHE I was guided on heterosexual relationships and intercourse, in Biology I studied heterosexual contraception and the process of making a baby, in English I read literature on straight couple's love stories and in Drama we acted out straight relationships. It was all practice for adulthood.

Yet this one dimensional education perpetuated the idea that I was on my own, the only gay person in the school. I had no path to follow, and no guidance. I could not envision my own future. The future I desperately wanted, could not be mine.

My whole being became a tick-box exercise on how to fit in. I thought that by fitting in and acting straight, then I would eventually become straight. I had acting as straight down to a science. I knew I had to mention boy crushes, I had to get rid of my swaggering walk, I had to frequently use homophobic slurs, and I couldn't wear my football shirt on Israel tour. In hindsight it's sad that I had to spend all day acting. The detrimental impact of this remains with me today. I am still playing catch-up with romantic relationships, still feeling a sense of injustice that I can't have the future that was drawn out for me, and I have had to educate myself (via Google, Rabbis and LGBT+ groups) on how to navigate through the next steps of my life as I never received that education.

The combination of proactively supportive teachers and a decent education would have solved a lot of issues. However, LGBT+ teachers remaining closeted, and straight teachers either referring to LGBT+ people in a derogatory way, or remaining silent prevented this from happening.

After I left school, I met one of my old teachers at a Jewish event and came out to her. As I told her who I really was, I could feel my cheeks flush, and noticed that I was visibly shaking. I felt a deep sense of shame at having to reveal something so intimate and personal to someone I held in such high regard. Yet her reaction was fantastic. She stood out to be the true life guide I had needed all those years back. She told me that she didn't see me any differently, that she was proud to have taught a student who had such courage, and she implored me to always be true to myself as that is what leads to happiness. Whilst her heart-warming reaction is exactly what I needed in order to feel a sense of inner peace, the sad thing is that the atmosphere in the school meant I could never have approached her to receive the support that I needed.

Looking at Jewish schools today, I wonder to myself whether I would have the courage to come out if I was a student. I'm comfortable speaking about my identity in the public arena, and have spent years making myself vulnerable in order to move the conversation forwards, yet school is a completely different kettle of fish. And I think that if I am being brutally honest with myself, I would probably pretend to be straight all over again.

Shulli

Appendix 1 Meeting regulatory requirements

It is important for our schools to be aware of relevant regulatory requirements. Below are some key requirements to be mindful of. Please note this is not an exhaustive list. When inspecting a school, LGBT+ inclusion is one of the lenses that inspectors may use to evaluate whether the areas below have been met. As you will see, LGBT+ related matters span the full breadth of inspection areas from leadership and ethos, to welfare and behaviour.

Ofsted requirements for maintained schools

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2018 contains multiple requirements that are LGBT+ related under the following headings:

- Notification and introduction [of the inspection] (pp18-21).
- Overall effectiveness (pp39-42).
- Effectiveness of leadership and management (pp42-43).
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment (p49).
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare (pp56-58).

Recording bullying, discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour. At the start of the inspection inspectors will ask for a list of information including ‘Records and analysis of bullying, discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, sexist, disability and homophobic bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents’ (p20).

Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education. To be rated outstanding, a school must demonstrate ‘thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical well-being [which] enables pupils to thrive’ (p41).

Promoting Fundamental British Values. ‘Acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; [pupils] develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain’ (p41) and ‘how well the school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith’ (p43).

Vision and ambition. ‘The leaders’ and governors’ vision and ambition for the school and how the vision and ambition are communicated to staff, parents and pupils’ (p42).

Promoting high expectations of social behaviour. ‘Whether leaders have the highest expectations for social behaviour among pupils and staff, so that respect and courtesy are the norm’ (p42).

Designing a curriculum with impact on personal development, behaviour & welfare. ‘The design, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum, ensuring breadth and balance and its impact on pupils’ outcomes and their personal development, promoting behaviour and welfare’ (p42).

Complying with the Equality Act (2010). ‘How well leaders and governors promote all forms of equality and foster greater understanding of and respect for people of all faiths (and those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations (and other groups with protected characteristics), through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community’ (p43).

Ensuring equal opportunities and tackling underachievement. ‘How effectively leaders monitor the progress of pupils to ensure that none falls behind and underachieves and how effectively governors hold them to account for this’ (p43).

Engaging with parents and other stakeholders and agencies to support all pupils. ‘How well leaders and governors engage with parents and other stakeholders and agencies to support all pupils’ (p43) – this could include working with KeshetUK.

Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity. Ensuring equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity is ‘promoted through teaching and learning’ (p49).

Personal development, behaviour and welfare. Criteria for a school to qualify as outstanding include:

- ‘Pupils’ impeccable conduct reflects the school’s effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour’ (p57).
- ‘Pupils work hard with the school to prevent all forms of bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying’ (p57).
- ‘Staff and pupils deal effectively with the very rare instances of bullying behaviour and/or use of derogatory or aggressive language’ (p57).
- ‘The school’s open culture actively promotes all aspects of pupils’ welfare. Pupils are safe and feel safe at all times. They understand how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations and settings. They trust leaders to take rapid and appropriate action to resolve any concerns they have’ (p57).
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and in wider society (p57).

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) requirements for independent schools

The following requirements from the ISI Inspection Handbook 2017 are relevant:

- Pt. 2. Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural development of pupils (SMSC Education).
- Pt. 3 Welfare, Health & Safety of Pupils.
- Pt. 6 Provision of information to parents/prospective parents.
- Pt. 7 Manner in which complaints are handled.
- Pt. 8 Quality of leadership in and management of schools.

In reviewing the pupils' personal development, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which pupils, as relevant to their age and ability (p10):

- Develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience, including an understanding of how to improve their own learning and performance, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Develop spiritual understanding and an appreciation of non-material aspects of life, whether religious, philosophical or other.
- Distinguish right from wrong, understand and respect systems of rules and laws, and accept responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others.
- Are socially aware and so are able to work effectively with others, including to solve problems and achieve common goals.
- Fulfil responsibilities and contribute positively to the lives of others within the school, including in boarding, the local community and wider society.
- Respect and value diversity within society, show respect for and appreciation of their own and other cultures, and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions.

Inspectors will explain the most significant strengths and areas for development within these outcomes with reference to relevant aspects of (p10):

- The curriculum provided, including personal, social, health and economic education.
- The role models provided by teachers and other adults in the school and the learning environment created.
- The effective promotion of positive behaviour within a wider culture of welfare that has regard to identifying and responding to individuals' needs and views.
- Resource provision, particularly in terms of suitably qualified and effectively trained staff and the availability of appropriate accommodation and facilities; and
- Processes of monitoring, evaluation, planning and implementation that ensure that good personal development is assured for all pupils.

With regard to Overall Effectiveness, Inspectors should take account of all the judgements made across the evaluation schedule. In particular, they should consider (p11):

- Children's personal and emotional development, including whether they feel safe and are secure and happy.
- Whether the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met and there is a shared understanding of and responsibility for protecting children.

Inspectors make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating the extent to which leaders, managers and governors (p11):

- Improve staff practice, teaching and learning through effective systems for supervision, rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development.
- Actively promote equality and diversity, tackle poor behaviour towards others, including bullying and discrimination, and narrow any gaps in outcomes between different groups of children.
- Make sure that arrangements to protect children meet all statutory and other government requirements, promote their welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism.

Inspectors make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating the extent to which (pp11-12):

- Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning.

Inspectors make a judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children by evaluating the extent to which the provision is successfully promoting and supporting children's (p12):

- Self-confidence, self-awareness and understanding of how to be a successful learner.
- Emotional security, through emotional attachments with practitioners and carers, and their physical and emotional health.
- Following of any guidelines for behaviour and conduct, including management of their own feelings and behaviour, and how they relate to others.
- Understanding of how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks, including when using the internet and social media.
- Personal development, so that they are well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain.

Appendix 2 Equalities law

This is an introduction to aspects of the law that our schools should be aware of. If there are any questions about specific situations in the school, the Local Educational Authority should be able to provide further guidance.

The frameworks and practice around including young LGBT+ people at school are emergent and not yet fixed. As the law currently stands, schools are expected to ensure at a minimum that children are aware of the existence of LGBT+ people and that LGBT+ people should be accorded dignity and respect. This is part of the duty to promote equality in relation to all the protected characteristics in the Equality Act of 2010.

LGBT+ people are protected by the Equality Act 2010	Under the Equality Act, it is illegal to discriminate against someone because they have any of the nine listed characteristics. These include sexual orientation and ‘gender reassignment’ – that is, being transgender.
Children are legally protected from discrimination from the school and its employees	<p>Children cannot be discriminated against in school admissions, or in their access to any aspect of school life.</p> <p>Children who may be perceived as LGBT+, whether or not they are, are also legally protected from homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination and harassment from any school employee or representative.</p> <p>Children who have some connection to LGBT+ people, for instance, having a parent who is transgender or by having two parents of the same gender, are also protected.</p>
Children have the right to make a complaint in case of discrimination	<p>If a child, or someone they are connected to such as a sibling or carer, makes a complaint about discrimination or harassment, the child is also protected from unfavourable treatment as a result of the complaint.</p> <p>Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying should be taken as seriously by the school as any other form of bullying – i.e. no pupil should feel that they will be disadvantaged in any way by reporting this kind of bullying to the school.</p>
There are specific considerations to prevent discrimination against transgender young people	<p>To exclude a transgender young person from participation in any aspect of school life because of perceived logistical difficulties would be illegal discrimination, unless there are issues of fairness or safety. In the case of competitive secondary sports, schools may need to seek advice from the relevant sporting body.</p> <p>Disclosing a transgender person’s gender identity without their consent is specifically prohibited by the Data Protection Act, article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights and confidentiality case law. This applies whether they intend to, have undergone or are undergoing any form of transition.</p>

<p>Addressing transgender pupils' needs is not 'special or favourable treatment'</p>	<p>In some cases (for instance, a transgender child being given individual accommodation during an overnight stay) the changes made by the school to accommodate a transgender young person may be seen as unfairly favouring them. There would be no legal grounds for complaint in this situation.</p>
<p>Single-sex schools retain their status when a pupil comes out as transgender</p>	<p>Single-sex schools do not lose their status as single-sex if some of their pupils come out as transgender and begin to transition while at school. Although a pupil may prefer to change school, they should not be under any pressure to do so.</p>
<p>LGBT+ staff are also protected by the Equality Act</p>	<p>LGBT+ staff must not be discriminated against because they are LGBT+ for instance by denying them promotion, training opportunities or employment. This includes discrimination motivated by welfare considerations, such as because a particular role would bring them into contact with homophobic, biphobic or transphobic parents or children.</p> <p>Not all staff may choose to disclose their sexuality or transgender status, but if they do, schools should have a considered and consistent policy to address this public acknowledgement.</p>
<p>There are specific considerations to prevent discrimination against transgender staff</p>	<p>Transgender employees are protected from discrimination at every stage of transition, beginning from telling school management that they intend to undergo transition or that they are undergoing transition. This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any time off work in relation to transition (for instance, to attend counselling or doctor's appointments) should/must be treated in the same way as any other medical time off work; ● Transgender employees are entitled to make their own decisions about when and whether to 'come out' as trans and; trans employees should never be 'outed' against their will or without their permission in any context; ● Records of people's transgender status are sensitive data under the Data Protection Act

Applying the law

The application of these legal issues in a school needs to be considered and agreed by senior leadership and governors and communicated clearly to the staff, parents and pupils. Ensuring this is done in a planned way and involving LGBT+ people can reduce the likelihood of problems and crises later on. Sometimes a standard policy will not be sufficient, but a person-specific approach will be needed, after offering a discussion with the person concerned.

There are other policy changes which schools could consider when planning compliance with equalities law. Amendments to Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) Education are being planned and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is expected to become compulsory, though it is not clear how prescriptive the requirements might be. Schools should be aware that there may soon be amendments to the Gender Recognition Act.

Generic inclusion policies and statements leave room for uncertainty, doubt and inconsistency. Explicit mention of LGBT+ people and the issues that affect them will help the entire school community to be clear on how to act in responsible ways that reflect our Torah tradition.

These suggestions will help update school policies to explicitly address sensitivity to the welfare of LGBT+ young people, where every young person is valued as they are. They will also help address Ofsted areas including Spiritual, Moral & Cultural (SMSC) education and Fundamental British Values (FBV). Developing these policies is most likely to achieve an appropriately sensitive tone when Rabbinic leadership, pastoral leadership, parents and people with lived experience of growing up as LGBT+ in the Jewish community work together to safeguard LGBT+ students, working within a committed Torah framework.

Behaviour/bullying policy	<p>Include a positive behaviour statement. For example, ‘All pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, regardless of sexuality and gender identity, therefore everyone will act with courtesy and respect for each other at all times’.</p> <p>Be clear that systems, such as sanctions and rewards, apply to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language.</p> <p>Choose between either a separate homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying policy, or explicitly including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in generic policy.</p>
E-safety and acceptable internet use policies	<p>Make it clear that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and online bullying both on school computers and outside of school will not be tolerated and that the same sanctions apply to online homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying as in the classroom.</p> <p>Include details of online and anonymous reporting mechanisms so that LGBT+ young people can feel safe to report any abuse they experience.</p>
Relationships and Sex policies	<p>At the time of writing, national policy on the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is being formulated. Schools with policies on healthy relationships and RSE should ensure those policies recognise the existence of LGBT+ people and meet their welfare needs.</p>
Single equality policy	<p>Include in the policy aims and objectives a statement on promoting respect across all protected characteristics, including sexuality and gender identity, in preparing pupils for life in 21st century Britain</p> <p>The policy should commit to challenging discrimination and aim to provide information about different groups of people, including LGBT+ people, which is non-stereotyping.</p>

Appendix 3 Updating school policies

Staff code of conduct policy	<p>Incorporate the expectation that staff will act as role models and display school values and behaviours, for example by never using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language.</p> <p>Reinforce the role of staff in promoting the wellbeing and safety of all pupils including LGBT+ pupils, taking a zero-tolerance approach to LGBT+ bullying and being supportive of LGBT+ pupils.</p>
Safeguarding policies	<p>A good safeguarding policy includes an equality statement that explicitly references LGBT+ people.</p> <p>Generally, it is not a safeguarding issue if an LGBT+ young person comes out, unless they are at risk from negative reaction from their family or community.</p>
Prejudice-based incidents	<p>A prejudice-based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group, such as LGBT+ people. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and may not meet the criteria of bullying.</p> <p>All incidents that may be motivated by prejudice should be recorded and monitored to prevent bullying as it enables a school to target anti-bullying interventions.</p>
Ensuring inclusive pastoral care	<p>All pupils, whether or not they identify as LGBT+, should be made aware of the school's pastoral provision for people who want to discuss any aspect of sexuality or gender identity.</p> <p>All school services, including Rabbis, school nurses, counsellors and psychologists should be trained in LGBT+ wellbeing and safety principles and vocabulary and where relevant have information and resources on LGBT+ mental and sexual health.</p> <p>Pastoral leads and heads of year should make all pupils aware that they can access the above services, while recognising that being LGBT+ in itself is not a welfare concern.</p>

Appendix 4 Sex, gender and sexuality – a glossary

The glossary here has been developed by KeshetUK specifically to support Jewish organisations and educators to build their LGBT+ related vocabulary. This list is not exhaustive, but includes some of the most common terms in current use in the UK. These are provided with the caveat that language is always evolving and changing.

Distinguishing Sex, Gender and Sexuality

A word about distinguishing 'sex' and 'gender'	Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are used interchangeably to mean 'male' or 'female', but understanding these concepts distinctly is helpful.
Sex...	This comprises four main biological identifiers – external anatomy, internal organs (e.g. uterus), chromosomes and hormones. Sex assigned at birth is usually based on external anatomy and sometimes more generally by reproductive functions. This is distinct from 'Sexual orientation' (see below).
Gender...	Is a person's internal sense of their own gender identity, whether male, female, or something else such as 'Non-binary' (see glossary below). Gender is also an external expression or performance of the norms and behaviours that society associates with particular genders.
When using these terms, it is important to remember that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexuality/Sexual orientation and gender identity are not the same thing• Not everyone identifies with the sex that they were assigned at birth• Not everyone thinks of themselves as 'male' or 'female' in the ways that society/culture defines them

Glossary of commonly used terms

Ally	A person who actively supports and advocates for people who belong to marginalised, silenced, or less privileged groups without actually being a member of those groups.
Asexual	A person who is not sexually attracted to people of any gender. Unlike celibacy, which is a choice, asexuality is a sexual orientation. Asexual people have emotional needs and can form intimate relationships.
Bisexual or Bi	Refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.
Biphobia	The fear or dislike of, or prejudice against, bisexual people, bisexuality, or people who are perceived to be bisexual whether or not they are.
Cisgender or Cis	Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. 'Non-trans' is also used by some people.
Coming out	A person telling someone/others about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Coming out is a process of disclosure over which people maintain some choice and control, as opposed to having others reveal their gender identity or sexuality without their consent (see 'Outing, to out' below).
Gay	Refers to a man who has a primary or exclusive emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also, a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality. Some women use the term 'gay' rather than lesbian.
Gender fluid	Refers to someone whose gender identity is a dynamic mix of male and female, which can vary over time. Being gender fluid has nothing to do with genitalia or sexual orientation. See also non-binary.
Gender variant	Someone who does not conform to the gender roles and behaviours assigned to them at birth. This is often used in relation to children or young people.

Heterosexual/Straight	Refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards people of a different gender.
Homosexual	This is a more medicalised term used to describe someone with an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The terms 'gay' or 'lesbian' are now more generally used.
Homophobia	The fear or dislike of, or prejudice against, lesbian or gay people, homosexuality, or people who are perceived to be gay or lesbian whether or not they are.
Intersex	A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the normative definitions of female or male. The term hermaphrodite is archaic and generally considered to be offensive and inappropriate.
Lesbian	Refers to a woman who has a primary or exclusive emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.
LGBT+	LGBT refers to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender; the '+' denotes additional identities, such as those who are gender-fluid, non-binary or questioning their sexuality or gender identity.
Non-binary	An umbrella term for a person who does not identify as male or female. See also gender fluid.
Outing (to 'out')	Revealing confidential information about someone's sexuality or gender identity without their permission or against their will.
Pronoun	Words that refer to people's gender in conversation, for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may use gender neutral pronouns such as they/their.
Queer	A reclaimed term for those who don't identify with traditional categories of sexuality and gender identity. The term recognises sexuality and gender identity as fluid. Some people still find the word 'queer' derogatory.

Questioning	A person exploring their sexuality or gender identity.
Sexuality/Sexual orientation	A person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person.
Trans or transgender	An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including but not limited to trans, cross dresser, non-binary, genderqueer.
Trans man/Trans boy	A person who was assigned the gender of female at birth, but who identifies and lives as a man/boy.
Trans woman/Trans girl	A person who was assigned the gender of male at birth, but who identifies and lives as a woman/girl.
Transitioning	The steps a transgender person may take to live in the gender with which they identify which differs between people. Social transition can include telling friends and family, changing their name, dressing differently and changing official documents. Some people's transition includes medical interventions such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all transgender people want or are able to have this.
Transphobia	The fear or dislike of, or prejudice against, transgender people, or people who are perceived to be transgender, whether or not they are.
Transsexual	This is a more medicalised term referring to someone who has transitioned. The terms 'transgender' or 'trans' are now more generally used.

Appendix 5 Addressing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying

Whenever homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying behaviour is encountered, the first step should always be to clearly name the behaviour as homophobic, biphobic or transphobic. This includes so-called ‘casual’ homophobia, biphobic and transphobic language, such as the phrase: “That’s so gay.”

Approaches to addressing bullying behaviour from young people or colleagues

Initial responses:

- “That is unacceptable in this school, and you know it.”
- “Why are you saying that word?”
- “If you mean rubbish, you should use the word rubbish. That’s not the correct use of the word gay.”
- “What you just said is homophobic/biphobic/transphobic.
Why do you feel that it is acceptable to insult LGBT+ people?”
- “You know that that language is absolutely unacceptable in this school.
You know we will not tolerate homophobia any more than we would racism or sexism.”

Establishing understanding:

- “What do you mean by “That’s so gay!”?”
- “Do you know what that word actually means?”
- “What did you mean by saying he kicks like a girl?”
- “Do you understand why it is wrong/hurtful/offensive to use that word?”

Explaining meaning (Use the definitions in the glossary to help):

- “Gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender is a word we use to describe [...] not a nasty word to use as an insult.”

Using empathy:

- “How do you think you would feel if someone called you names like that?”
- “That language is really hurtful/offensive to me and others.”
- “It’s really disappointing to hear you using language that makes other people feel bad.”

Showing personal objection or disapproval as a role model:

- “I feel uncomfortable with jokes like that/that kind of labelling.”
- “I don’t care if you think it’s a joke – even if they don’t mind, I mind and the school minds if you call people names.”
- “As we well know, we are all entitled to more respect than that.”
- “I honestly thought you would know better than to speak like that.”
- “If that was aimed at me or my friends, I wouldn’t have it. So please stop.”

Communicating the school's position on this behaviour:

- "You know, there are/may well be LGBT+ people in our school, and we want to make them feel welcome and equal."
- "No-one at our school should have to endure that kind of abuse."
- "It's important that everyone can be themselves at this school."
- "We all deserve to be respected/valued/loved by others."
- "We don't pick on people here because of the way they look."
- "We have made it very clear in our policies that we respect everybody."
- "Those remarks breach our school's inclusion and anti-bullying policies. We are committed to ensuring that all young people, including LGBT+ young people are safe and welcome here. You know we will not tolerate that."

Making the argument a Jewish imperative:

- "In this school we don't use language like that. As people and as Jews we are kind, respectful and caring to everyone."
- "I'm shocked to hear views like that expressed in our school, where our Jewish values teach us to value every person, and not to be cruel."

Reminding the young person that their actions have consequences:

- "I'm worried that comments and attitudes like that can have a terrible impact on LGBT+ young people."
- "I'd really urge you to think twice before saying things like that, and to take responsibility for your behaviour."

Approaches to addressing bullying behaviour from managers or supervisors:

Showing personal objection or disapproval as a colleague:

- "I expected you would be a leader in the promotion of equality here. Please don't assume I feel OK with what you said or seem to believe."
- "I feel disappointed and unsafe when I hear you speak of a minority group like that."

Appealing to school policy or codes of conduct for staff:

- "I'm disappointed to hear these views expressed at school, where we have committed to role modelling inclusion and empathy for our young people."
- "If someone said something like that about me, I would have expected you to stand up for me. I feel it is part of your job as a manager/supervisor."
- "That kind of statement encourages scapegoating and creates a negative working environment."
- "No matter what your views are, I'm pretty sure what you just said is not acceptable under our equality and inclusion policy."
- "I'm afraid I will have to report your comments/behaviour to the school leadership if you don't stop using expressions of that kind."

Appendix 6 Supportive conversations with LGBT+ young people in Jewish schools

When a young person comes out at school, the first response they receive can have a long-lasting impact. Staff should feel able and supported to respond with the same empathy and confidence they would show in any pastoral conversation. School staff have shared with KeshetUK that thinking about how to have this specific type of conversation in advance had helped them respond sensitively. Staff can prepare to have these important conversations supportively with LGBT+ young people using the suggestions below.

Your responsibility: To ensure that your actions and words do not cause harm to a young person looking to you for guidance and leadership. In preparation for these conversations, you should undergo relevant training on sensitivity to LGBT+ experiences, and follow suitable Rabbinic advice to ensure that your response will be Torah-based.

Treat every young person as an individual: Every story is different. Whether this is your first conversation like this or your fiftieth, respond to the person in front of you – their experiences, needs, personality etc. There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach.

Listen with empathy: Ensure you can give the young person your full attention, and make it clear that you are there for them with your words and body language.

Recognise that such feelings and questions can be confusing – and provide space to be confused: Reassure the young person that feelings can be complex and evolving, and if they don’t want to, they need not come to solid conclusions straight away. Hold the space for them to share their feelings and confusion.

Respect and relate: Try to find ways to relate to the young person’s experiences and feelings, even if what they are saying doesn’t fit with your beliefs, or those promoted by the school.

Use the language they use: If a young person describes themselves as trans, use that language too. Hearing you say the word ‘trans’ comfortably and without judgement could mean the world to a young person who is fearful of being rejected for who they are. If they don’t use that language, you can offer it to them for example, “Have you heard of the term ‘transgender’ before?” but avoid imposing it on them for example, “It sounds to me like you are transgender.” It’s important that the young person is allowed to define themselves, and sometimes not using LGBT+ terminology is a deliberate resistance of labels. Be aware that using words like ‘choice’ or ‘lifestyle’ when discussing sexuality and gender identity can be hurtful to LGBT+ young people as LGBT+ people generally don’t experience their sexuality or gender identity as a choice.

Answer the specific question that’s being asked: Listen to the language the young person is using, the questions they are asking, and whether they are asking you or telling you something. Try to answer the questions you are asked, and not to raise questions that are not being asked. Be careful not to jump ahead.

Feel free to say, “I don’t know, let’s find out”: If you are asked a question you don’t know the answer to, rather than make something up or default to a half-answer, feel free to say you aren’t sure. You could propose going away and speaking to people and finding out, without disclosing any details of the current conversation.

Do not presume to know how their family will react: Do not offer false reassurance that their family will necessarily react well when they come out to them. Offer to support the young person in preparing for conversations with their families, and provide an opportunity afterwards for a debrief conversation if they want it.

Thank them for opening up to you: Reassure them that they did the right thing to speak with you. You can tell them that you're proud of them for having the courage to come to you, or that you are honoured that they chose you to share their feelings with.

Offer a follow-up conversation at a specific time: This will reassure the young person that there is ongoing support for them, and that the school takes their wellbeing seriously. You might also ask them if there is anyone else they would like to bring to that next meeting for example, their form tutor. Be prepared to respect their wishes either way.

Treat their information sensitively: Do not disclose identifiable content about this conversation to anyone without the young person's permission, especially their family or teachers who they may not wish to tell. Outing can lead to embarrassment, social stigma, loss of friends, and/or other negative consequences as a result of the information revealed about them, and it is against the Equalities Act to 'out' a transgender person. If you are unsure if the child may be at risk, consult your school's designated safeguarding lead.

Responsible signposting: If the young person or parent seeking support would benefit from therapeutic intervention, be sure to signpost them to a registered and appropriate professional. You should be aware that certain practices that state they can change a person's sexuality or gender – sometimes called 'conversion', 'cure' or 'reparative' therapy – have been strongly condemned by all the major organisations representing doctors and psychotherapists in the UK. All the major UK counselling and psychotherapy bodies, as well as the NHS and the Royal College of General Practitioners, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding making it clear that "conversion therapy in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation is unethical, potentially harmful and is not supported by evidence". In the United States, controversial Jewish conversion therapy organisation Jonah was forced to close down in 2015 after a legal case involving damages to former patients. In light of this, and following testimony from LGBT+ people who had experienced harm from these practices, in July 2018, the UK government announced its plans to make these practices illegal.

If a person is struggling to understand their identity and reconcile it with their Judaism, non-directive, person-centred counselling or psychotherapy can provide an appropriate space within which individuals can be supported to understand themselves and develop into healthy adults. Sensitive Rabbinic support can also enable LGBT+ people questioning their place in Jewish communities to be safe and prevent them from feeling so rejected that they reject Judaism. Have a clear idea of which responsible Rabbi and/or professional you can recommend.

