



Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Policy

POLICY LEAD (SMT Member)	Mrs. Julie Ritson
REVISION STATUS (Annual)	2 nd August 2021
VERSION STATUS (V)	<i>We reserve the right to update this policy if any changes in legislation or ESFA update deems it necessary, a numbered 'Version' would be used to ensure the up to date copy is issued.</i>
ANNUAL REVIEW DATE	1 st August 2022
APPROVED BY COMPANY DIRECTORS	Mrs. Julie Ritson and Mrs. Gail Dalton-Ayres 

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DEFINITION OF HOMOPHOBIC/BIPHOBIC/TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING

Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic incidents are motivated by the perpetrator's irrational fear, dislike or hatred of gay men, lesbians and bisexual or transgender people.

Examples of such incidents include:

- Physical assault
- Verbal Abuse
- Hostility
- Isolation
- Malicious text messages
- Graffiti
- Offensive Jokes
- Innuendo
- Mockery
- Insulting and abusive behaviour and gestures
- A threat to property
- Refusal to co-operate because of a person's sexual orientation
- Deliberate exclusion from conversation and professional and social activity
- HIV/Aids related discrimination

It does not matter if the perpetrator targets someone who does not identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender it is also considered an offence.

WIDESPREAD PROBLEM

There is a great deal of research which has identified and demonstrated that homophobic abuse is a serious issue for schools, colleges and society. Given the nature of the bullying, it is likely that many people who experience homophobic abuse will be unwilling to report it as they may fear further stigmatisation and isolation.

THE EFFECTS OF HOMOPHOBIA ON STAFF MEMBERS AND LEARNERS

Homophobic bullying may lead to:

- Low self esteem
- A culture of fear
- Learner indiscipline
- Learner or staff absenteeism
- Poor teaching performance
- Reduced learning outcomes
- Stress
- Loss of health
- Self harm
- 1 in 5 young lesbian and gay people attempted suicide because they were lesbian or gay

CREATING A POSITIVE CULTURE WITHIN BL TRAINING

It is the intention of BL Training to enforce the following BL policies

- COMP 051 Prevention of Bullying & Harassment Policy and Procedures
- COMP 088 Safeguarding Policy
- COMP 002 Equality & Diversity for Learners
- COMP 009 BL Equality & Diversity Policy
- Complaints Procedure

Which are in place to help eliminate the emotional distress caused by bullying whatever form including sexual orientation and gender identity. Bullying is usually part of a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident. All staff and learners are encouraged to report any incidents. (See reporting incidents section below). We strive to promote a safe and healthy environment for all learners and staff and present a zero tolerance to all forms of bullying.

BL in addition to fulfilling their legal requirements to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation seeks to create a positive learning and working environment based on professional and good working relations between learners and staff regardless of sexual orientation. The aim is to create an inclusive ethos with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing stereo typing, prejudice and discrimination.

Where personal information is divulged in confidence this will be respected unless there is a conflict with statutory obligations.

LEARNER/STAFF RECRUITMENT

BL will not discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation in the way that we recruit and select learners and staff.

STAFF TRAINING

Teaching / appointed safeguarding staff will receive training on how to deal with homophobic abuse and the reporting mechanisms for this and how to help change the perpetrators behaviour.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Learners

Anyone with experience of homophobic abuse concerning learners should follow the safeguarding reporting procedure. All incidents are to be recorded and passed to the Safeguarding Manager who monitors satisfactory conclusions to safeguarding issues.

Staff

Any member of staff who has experience of homophobic abuse concerning them or any other member of staff will request a confidential meeting with the Safeguarding Director using the formal complaints procedure.

ENSURING EQUALITY

BL Training values all its staff and learners equally and endeavours to create an environment in which everyone, whatever their sexual orientation, feel equally valued and welcomed and where discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated.

We are committed to creating an environment in which everyone is treated equally and with respect. We aim to eliminate sexual discrimination within all practices as well as encouraging change in individual behaviour and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all staff and learners regardless of their sexual orientation. The holding of religious beliefs which regard homosexuality as a sin will not be justification for non-observation of this policy.

The training centre environments, in terms of pictures, images, publicity materials, literature, use of language etc, should aim to present images that promote diversity, including diverse sexual orientations.

Homophobic abuse, harassment or bullying (e.g., name calling, derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) are serious disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the appropriate learner/staff disciplinary procedure.

Homophobic propaganda, in the form of written materials, graffiti, music, emails, text messages and social networking websites will not be tolerated. BL will undertake to remove immediately any such propaganda from their premises.

We aim to provide a supportive environment for staff and learners who wish it to be known that they are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexual orientation within BL. To 'out' someone, whether staff or learner, without their permission, is a form of harassment and will be treated as such.

Assumptions will not be made that partner of staff or learners are always of the opposite sex.

Sexual orientation issues are included in staff and learner equality training.

BL recognises that gay, lesbian, and bisexual staff/learners come from diverse backgrounds and will strive to ensure that they do not face discrimination either on the grounds of their sexual orientation or about other aspects of their identity (e.g., race, gender, age, religion, disability).

MONITORING

An annual report is raised to evaluate equality in staff recruitment.

An annual report is raised to monitor learner safeguarding incidents including homophobic incidents.

An annual review of this policy is carried out by the Quality Team.