



Teaching & Learning about LGBT issues at Sir Thomas Abney:

Including and valuing all children – what do we teach about LGBT at Sir Thomas Abney?

We have prepared this leaflet to provide parents with information about how LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) issues are covered in Relationships and Health Education, delivered through our PSHE curriculum.

Why include LGBT in Relationships and Health Education?

- To ensure all children feel included. There are many different family types in British society and we want to ensure that no child feels that their family is less accepted.
- We have a safeguarding duty towards children to protect them from bullying, including homophobic bullying and the inappropriate use of words like 'gay' to insult and upset others.
- Children may already be aware that some people are LGBT and have questions or misunderstandings, or be using words such as 'gay' to insult others. We want children to have an accurate and age appropriate understanding of what these mean, and to know that using any word as an insult is hurtful and unkind.
- As part of our inclusive ethos, we teach children to accept difference and foster good relationships with others. LGBT is included in lessons about similarity and difference along with a range of other characteristics such as personality, physical appearance, opinions, beliefs, culture, ethnicity, ability and special needs. We teach children to respect and celebrate differences.
- The Equality Act requires all schools to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. Part of the Equality 'duty' is to teach children about acceptance, empathy and understanding of others.

So, what do we actually teach?

We have set out below the lesson coverage of LGBT in each year group's PSHE lessons.

Year 3: In "Celebrating Difference", the anti-bullying unit, children are taught not to use the word 'gay' as an insult. The meaning of "gay" is clarified in an age-appropriate, non- sexual way.

Year 4: LGBT issues are not specifically covered in the Year 4 PSHE curriculum.

Year 5: In "Celebrating Difference", the anti-bullying unit, children discuss a scenario involving homophobic bullying, thinking about how to solve the scenario or make it better. In "Changing Me", the growing up unit, it is explained that for some people, when they get older they are attracted to their own gender and that this is normal.

Year 6: In “Celebrating Difference”, the anti-bullying unit, a true/false quiz mentions laws around gay marriage. Scenarios used for discussion in this unit include using gay as an insult; a girl who is teased because she lives with her gay dads; and using transgender insults.

What resources do we use?

Throughout all year groups, images of families will include a range of family types including some with adult members of the same gender. Images of adult couples will include some same sex pairings. These are not captioned or explained but the relationships involved will be discussed.

What about answering questions from children?

Our PSHE curriculum also provides notes for teachers about how to treat LGBT issues should questions arise from children or should there be issues about which children might feel sensitive.

Year 3: In “Changing Me”, the growing up unit, the notes advise teachers to be sensitive of transgender issues but this is not mentioned in teaching or in any lesson resources.

Year 4: In “Relationships”, the teachers notes advise being sensitive to the possibility that some children may have same-sex couples within their family groups and recognising in an unsensational way that boyfriend or girlfriend pairings can be same gender as well as opposite.

Year 5: In “Changing Me”, the growing up unit, the notes advise teachers how to explain the words gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender in simple non-sexual terms, if not already known by children.

Year 6: In “Changing Me”, the growing up unit, the lessons include anonymous question and answer sessions where children can submit questions in writing. The teacher then evaluates each question before answering it or setting it aside if it is unsuitable for discussion. The notes provide guidance on how to answer questions about being gay – that it is natural and nothing to be ashamed of; and that we shouldn’t make fun or discriminate against gay people because it’s against the law (under the Equality Act). Questions about gay sexual relationships would not be read out but would be set aside as not age-appropriate.

We hope that the information provided here is useful. It is important to note that Relationships Education is statutory in Primary schools and that there is no parental right of withdrawal from these lessons, with the exception of lessons focusing specifically on how human conception and reproduction occurs.

If you have any further questions please contact the Deputy Headteacher Maxine Apcher, who oversees the Teaching & Learning of PSHE and RSE.

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