Welcome!

We commend you for the important work you are doing to create safer schools for all regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or intersex status.

If you have any queries or need further assistance, please contact one of the following:

**Twenty10 inc. GLCS NSW**
- info@twenty10.org.au
- twenty10.org.au

**NSW Teachers Federation**
- mail@nswtf.org.au
- nswtf.org.au

**Wear it Purple**
- contact@wearitpurple.org
- wearitpurple.org

**GSA Connect**
- gsaconnect.org.au

**Advisory Panel:**

**School Link**
South Western Sydney Local Health District
icamhs.com.au

**The Independent Education Union**
NSW/ACT Branch
ieu.asn.au

“Some same-sex attracted or gender diverse young people need extra support due to bullying and harassment”
There are a number of schools across NSW and Australia that have established gender and sexuality groups to create safe and inclusive environments for everyone including same-sex attracted and gender diverse students.

These groups may be called Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs, previously known as Gay Straight Alliances or Rainbow, or Diversity Groups). Other names include Standout, Rainbow Alliance, Pride Group or students may have come up with another name themselves to reflect the aim and purpose of the group within their specific setting.

The groups aim to create a safe and supportive environment that is welcoming of all students — those who are same-sex attracted, bisexual, transgender or gender diverse, intersex, questioning, heterosexual/straight and cisgender allies, students with LGBTQIA+ families, and students who don’t have a need for a label for their sexual orientations or gender identities.

Students in GSAs support each other and work together to create safer and more inclusive educational environments, holding regular meetings like other student groups, usually with the assistance of a teacher or other staff member. This staff member may act as a mentor to students as well as a supervisor to ensure school policy and procedures are followed.

The group's main focus includes:
- a social space to meet other students that is safe and inclusive
- social support to discuss issues they face
- working with the school on policy and cultural changes to address issues such as homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, and intersexism in school.

Group projects may include putting educational posters or resources around the school; hosting an educational, social and/or inclusive event at their school such as Wear It Purple Day; assisting with or instigating teacher training on inclusive practices.

The types of activities undertaken by the GSA will change over time, depending on the group’s mission and goals, and the evolution of the group’s membership.

Establishing a GSA is a step that schools can take to create inclusive spaces for LGBTQIA+ students in order to make them feel safer, valued and welcome. Some same-sex attracted or gender diverse young people need extra support as a result of bullying and harassment based on their gender identity or sexuality. Schools can create a sense of community and connection that is inclusive of LGBTQIA+ students by supporting the formation of a GSA.
There have been a number of Australian and international research projects that have studied young LGBTQA+ people and their experiences at school. From the research we know that many LGBTQA+ students experience bullying due to their gender identity and/or sexuality, which leads to negative outcomes for these young people in a range of areas. We also know that a lot of this bullying occurs in educational settings and there are things that schools can do to address such behaviour.

According to findings in *Writing Themselves in 3, Growing Up Queer*, *Freedom2Be* and *Trans Pathways*, students’ experience of homophobia and LGBTQA+ biased-based bullying can cause students to:

- Not concentrate in class
- Miss or skip class and/or days at school
- Experience inequity or a lower quality of their educational experiences
- Have lower academic outcomes, not reaching their potential
- Leave school (change schools or drop out entirely)
- Experience an impact to their health and wellbeing, including development of mental health issues.

Most of the homophobia experienced by young people happens at school (80%), which is mainly verbal in nature.\(^1\) In terms of curriculum areas, research\(^2\) indicates that most homophobic behaviour occurs during PDHPE and includes casual homophobic remarks, deliberate homophobic comments as well as physical assault.

Many trans young people have experienced negative situations that affect their mental health such as peer rejection, bullying, and other issues with school\(^3\).

Protecting young people and maintaining student wellbeing are whole-school responsibilities and need to be reinforced throughout the school, in all classes as well as the wider school curriculum. Research\(^4\) indicates that where school environments are marginalising, LGBTQA+ students have higher levels of distress, as well as lower levels of morale, safety and connection to peers, teachers and the school more generally. However, in schools that are more inclusive, the opposite was found to be the case.

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LGBTQA+ young people exist in schools whether they are seen or “out” to the school community, and schools have a duty of care to all students, including their safety and wellbeing. Research indicates that ALL schools will have LGBTQA+ students (and/or families).

Statistics indicate that:

- around 11% of the population could be LGBTQA+\(^5\)
- 1.7% of people could be intersex\(^6\)

In the USA, where GSAs have been well established for some time, a growing body of research demonstrates the positive impact that school-based resources, such as clubs that address LGBTQA+ student issues may have on school climate.

**Students in schools with GSAs are:**

- less likely to hear homophobic remarks in school on a daily basis than students in schools without a GSA\(^7\)
- less likely to report feeling unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation or the way in which they express their gender\(^8\)
- less likely to miss school because they feel unsafe compared with other students\(^9\)

Additionally, students in schools with GSAs or similar student clubs are two times more likely than students without such clubs to say they hear teachers at their school make supportive or positive remarks about lesbian and gay people\(^10\).

> “The most important thing I did was being visibly and vocally queer and letting them know they had support from faculty”

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Relevant policies

The following NSW Department of Education documents provide information on supporting LGBTQA+ students in public schools.

**Anti-bullying**

Extensive research demonstrates that bullying can have serious short-term and long-term consequences, both for students who bully and for those who are bullied\(^\text{11}\). Negative consequences include feeling unsafe at school, psychological distress, lower levels of academic achievement and lower levels of school attendance.

The Department’s *Anti-Bullying Strategy* brings together evidence-based resources and information to support NSW schools to effectively prevent and respond to bullying.

The strategy acknowledges that people can be bullied about many different things, including their sexuality, gender identity and sex.

The strategy also identifies several evidence-based elements that help schools in implementing a planned whole-school approach to promote student safety and wellbeing and to prevent and respond to bullying when it happens.

One element of the strategy is a focus on student wellbeing and student ownership. This element recognises that wellbeing significantly contributes to the learning outcomes of students. Therefore student wellbeing should be part of the schools consideration in the provision of the whole-school activities and wellbeing policy. The strategy states that: “Encouraging student voice promotes the important role students play in developing a positive school culture”, which links directly with the purpose of student-led GSAs.

The *Bullying of Students – Prevention and Response Policy* provides guidance to schools on the requirements for preventing and responding to student bullying in NSW government schools. In accordance with this policy, Principals must ensure that the school implements an Anti-bullying Plan that is developed collaboratively with students, school staff, parents, caregivers and the community.

This policy is very relevant in addressing bias-based bullying experienced by LGBTQA+ young people in schools, and actions that can be taken to address such behaviour. Given much research indicates that LGBTQA+ students are exposed to disparaging remarks and behaviours, the Bullying of Students policy should be applied to address this concern.

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**Code of Conduct policy (NSW Department of Education)**

The *Code of Conduct* communicates that as employees of the NSW Department of Education, teachers have significant influence in developing an informed, dynamic and democratic society by providing experiences for students that inspire and facilitate personal development. Teachers can achieve this by creating inclusive and welcoming learning communities, and by promoting an organisational culture of continuous self-development.

In making professional judgements about the best teaching and learning activities/resources, teachers must take into account the characteristics of their students. They must also be aware that their role and responsibilities are outlined in the Code of Conduct, and behave accordingly.

The *Code of Conduct* also communicates the values that underpin the work in public schools which include fairness, respect, integrity and responsibility. Teachers must treat others with this in mind, regardless of differences that may exist. Teachers and schools have the obligation to adhere to legal requirements, including the obligation to maintain anti-discrimination and WHS requirements.

**Controversial Issues in Schools policy**

The Department of Education’s *Controversial Issues in School Policy and Implementation Procedures* provide guidance for the management of controversial issues in schools. As some members of the community may consider aspects of sexuality and gender identity to be sensitive or controversial, this policy may apply in relation to curriculum content, school programs and/or activities.

Under this policy, teachers must ensure content is age appropriate, relevant to curriculum aims and objectives, and consistent with the values of public education and the school’s purpose.

The *Audiovisual Materials in Schools – Procedures for Use* provides advice for schools in relation to the use of audiovisual material including films, videos, DVDs, internet content and computer games. This document should also be applied, in conjunction with the *Controversial Issues in Schools Policy and Implementation Procedures*, when considering resources for teaching and learning programs.
The concept of GSAs fits well within the Department’s Strategic Plan. GSAs specifically link to Goal 2 – *Every child is known, valued and cared for in our schools in multiple ways*:

- student voice and ownership to address bullying in order to create safe and supportive learning environments
- implementing preventative approaches to student wellbeing
- implementing initiatives to support more vulnerable groups of students
- connection with the local (LGBTQA+) community and its support networks/organisations (coordinating wrap-around services)
- creative use of school structures and/or resources
- recognise, support and value the diversity of students (groups of students).

### Core Values in NSW Public Schools’ Values

The *Values in NSW Public Schools* policy sets out the approach to values and values education in public schools.

It recognises that values shape attitudes to changing circumstances, events and issues encountered in daily life and that schools share (with families and the community) the responsibility for teaching values. The policy indicates that while values are mainly learnt at home, the community has expectations about values also being taught in schools.

The policy indicates that public schools provide students with opportunities to explore the values that lie behind diverse community attitudes to political issues and social concerns, and that this is done explicitly in classrooms and through the activities and relationships of the school and its community.

A number of the values that are listed by the *Values in NSW Public Schools* policy are congruent with treating each other with dignity and respect regardless of differences that may exist (including gender and sexuality diversity). Additionally, the policy indicates the expectation that through the core values social outcomes to reject violence, harassment and negative forms of discrimination will be achieved and that we will value all people. These outcomes can specifically link to treating LGBTQIA+ people as valued members of the school community.

### Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022

The Strategic Plan 2018-2022 sets out the Department’s blueprint for the next five years. It seeks to “prepare young people for rewarding lives as engaged citizens in a complex and dynamic society and contains many strong links to student wellbeing”[^12].

In particular, Goal 2 states, “Every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools.” The Department has provided a framework for this strategic goal to support schools and “recognises the inextricable link between wellbeing and learning in the context of schooling”[^13]. It highlights the links between the School Excellence Framework as well as the Wellbeing Framework for Schools in achieving this strategic goal.

In the document, “Every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools” – an environmental scan, the Department identifies that a safe school is one that is free from physical and emotional harm, and that schools can promote positive mental health through promoting school initiatives. It also identifies LGBTQIA+ students as those that are more vulnerable to experiencing lower levels of connectedness (which results in lower educational and wellbeing outcomes). Schools are encouraged to connect with local community and creatively utilise school structures and resources in order to ensure that every student is known, valued and cared for.

[^12]: NSW DoE (2018) *Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022*

[^13]: NSW DoE (November 2018) *Every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools – an environmental scan Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE)*
**Homophobia in Schools Memo**

Government schools must address any form of discrimination or harassment against students or staff based on homophobia. This memo is explicit in stating that, “Secondary schools must address homophobia within their student welfare structures and through the curriculum in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education or other key learning areas”.

In applying this memo, schools can extend the intent of the message to include other LGBTQA+ students ensuring that their wellbeing and safety is also maintained.

**Legal Issues Bulletin 20: Changing the way a student name is used and recorded by schools**

The document outlines general guidance for departmental schools to manage changes in the way a student’s name is used and recorded by schools. This includes scenarios where name changes occur due to a student transitioning. Circumstances are different depending on the age of the student (if they are over 18 years old students are entitled to be enrolled in whatever name they choose) and parental support. However, Principals will consider a range of information and need to make decisions about name use and recording that is in the child’s best interests.

**Legal Issues Bulletin 55: Transgender Students in Schools - Legal Rights and Responsibilities**

The document draws attention to resources available from the Department that support the rights of transgender students to be treated equitably and with dignity. The information in this bulletin promotes a proactive approach to the development of positive school environments in which all students are respected and valued. The document also advises that schools have a legal duty to protect students from foreseeable risk of harm and to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure their safety.

**Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy**

The Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy sets out the responsibilities of departmental employees under legislation. Staff have a duty to recognise safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns for children and young people that arise from, or during the course of, their work. The Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised procedures require that staff in schools are aware of the indicators of child abuse and neglect, and their obligations to report suspected risk of harm. Staff who have reasonable grounds to suspect risk of significant harm to a child or young person, are required to report this to their Principal or workplace manager.

These documents may have implications for LGBTQA+ students who are at risk of harm due to behaviours of others based on their gender or sexuality diversity. In such cases staff are required to report the risk of harm to their Principal or workplace manager.
School Excellence Framework

The Department's School Excellence Framework supports NSW public schools to provide excellence in education. It lists key elements of high-quality practice across three domains of learning, teaching and leading. The relationship between learning and wellbeing is well recognised and articulated in the NSW public school sector, and wellbeing is one of the 14 listed elements in the Framework.

The element of Wellbeing within the School Excellence Framework consists of four themes - caring for students, a planned approach to wellbeing, individual learning needs, and behaviour. The Framework states that: “In schools that excel, there is a strategic and planned approach to develop whole-school wellbeing processes that support the wellbeing of all students so they can connect, succeed, thrive and learn”\(^{14}\).

The descriptors highlight the interrelationship between wellbeing and learning, but this is also implicit in other framework elements.

The Department also recognises the need to focus on students, with its strategic goal (linked to the School Excellence Framework) that every student is known, valued and cared for.
Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy

The Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy states that all students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, victimisation and discrimination. To achieve this, all schools are expected to maintain high standards of discipline.

This is to be achieved in line with a range of other policies and documentation including (but not limited to) the Behaviour Code for Students, the Bullying of Students – Prevention and Response Policy, Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures as well as relevant legislation such as WHS and anti-discrimination laws.

The policy indicates that schools and their communities must work together to provide quality learning environments that are inclusive, safe and free from bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation. These are all issues that a GSA may aim to address within the school climate and may therefore be relevant to its operation and function.

Student Welfare Policy

The Student Welfare Policy provides guidance to schools to review student welfare, determine key issues for action and develop and implement student welfare actions and initiatives. This is supported by a range of related departmental documents including the Wellbeing Framework for Schools.

Schools are expected to be safe and happy places for students and their teachers so that effective teaching and learning can take place. The policy recognises that positive school climate and good discipline contributes to a safer and more productive learning environment.
**Wellbeing Framework for Schools**

The *Wellbeing Framework for Schools* recognises that the concept of wellbeing has close links with learning. The framework identifies three key themes that drive wellbeing in public schools: “Connect, Succeed and Thrive” and the supporting *Wellbeing Toolkit* brings together key wellbeing policies, legislation and resources under these headings.

The key concept linked to GSAs is that in order for students to do well at school, they need to feel safe and included in the school community, which needs to be addressed under wellbeing. While there is no explicit mention of LGBTQ+ students, research has indicated that additional support and effort should be applied to ensure the school climate is inclusive and welcoming so that LGBTQ+ students can achieve their potential.

The Department has recognised in the *Anti-Bullying Strategy* and the document “Every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools – an environmental scan” that LGBTQ+ students are vulnerable to lower wellbeing and educational outcomes. Therefore schools have an obligation to implement initiatives to address these concerns. In particular, schools need to provide safe and supportive educational settings, and must support these students to increase their connectedness to school in order to create positive wellbeing and educational experiences.

“The best thing I did was share my personal story. Allow the student to see a member of the GLBTI community in a ‘professional’ sense. An active role model for the younger members of my community”
Students who are thinking of starting a GSA will often approach a teacher to seek support for the concept and to assist in starting up the group. If students have approached you, they see you as someone who is supportive of LGBTQ+ matters.

Agreeing to support a GSA is an important way that you can be an ally to LGBTQ+ students. Not only will it allow you to help the efforts of your students and their GSA but also make you more visible as an ally to all members of your school community, making it easier for LGBTQ+ students and families to identify supportive school staff.

To assist students in their goal to set up a GSA at school, you may need to advocate for the rights of students to establish the group and set/attend meetings with the students and school leadership. Be clear from the start about your role in the group. Wherever possible it is best for the students to lead the group and the process of establishing and running it for themselves with support from you where needed. A teacher’s primary role is to support and assist students in navigating their way to achieve the group’s aim.

GSAs are generally student-led, and work to address anti-LGBTQA+ name-calling, bullying and harassment in their schools and promote respect for all students. The existence of these clubs can make schools feel safer and more welcoming for LGBTQ+ students and assist schools in addressing their wellbeing obligations. See the “Relevant policies” section of this document for other helpful links to NSW Department documents.

When taking on the role of teacher supporting a GSA, it is important to map out with students their expectations, aims and links to Department documentation, so that a clear and concise case can be put to school leadership for the inclusion of a GSA as part of the school’s wider wellbeing curriculum.

The GSA Start-Up Guide for Teachers and School Staff will provide information about setting up a GSA in your school.
How to have the conversation with Principal/welfare team

Meet with students to have them outline their expectations, the aim of the GSA and assist them with linking these to Department documentation.

You could provide one of the following scaffolds for students to use to put their case:

**Message ➔ Evidence ➔ Strategy**

**What’s your message?**
- What’s the aim of the meeting? The message should be clear and concise.

**What’s your evidence?**
- What evidence is needed to persuade people of your message? This could be facts/research, laws, testimonies.

**What’s your strategy?**
- What is the solution to the problem raised in your evidence?
- How are you delivering your message?

**Problem ➔ Impact ➔ Solution**

**Problem:** (Eg) Too often, schools are not safe for LGBTQA+ students or straight students who are targets of anti-LGBTQA+ harassment.

**Impact:** (Eg) Bullying and harassment negatively affect academic achievement, student attendance and wellbeing. Schools are legally responsible to protect all students from harassment and bullying, and have an obligation to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

**Solution:** (Eg) Establishing a GSA for students to address anti-LGBTQA+ name-calling, bullying and harassment at school and promote respect for all students.

Attend the meeting with students to show your support, and to assist/guide them where needed. After the meeting, debrief with the students and work out what are the next steps.

Use the *GSA Start-Up Guide for Teachers and School Staff* to assist you to support students in the set up and continued operation of your school’s GSA.
These definitions are provided to assist your knowledge and understanding of currently utilised terms. However, the terms used at your school by LGBTQIA+ students may differ and change over time, so these terms may not necessarily reflect the language and identities of students at your school.

**Asexual / Ace**
A sexual orientation characterised by a persistent lack of sexual attraction to people of any gender. Many people who are asexual identify with two orientations, a sexual and romantic orientation. There are a range of words used to describe the varying degrees of asexuality on a spectrum.

**Aromantic / Aro**
An orientation characterised by a persistent lack of romantic attraction to people of any gender. There are a range of words used to describe the varying degrees of aromanticism on a spectrum.

**Ally**
An ally is an individual who speaks out and stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against. An ally works to end oppression by modeling inclusion, being supportive and advocating for people who are stigmatised, harassed, abused, discriminated against or treated unfairly.

**Bisexual**
People who have sexual and/or romantic attraction to more than one gender.

**Brotherboys**
“Brotherboys are Indigenous transgender people with a male spirit, whose bodies were considered female at birth. Brotherboys choose to live their lives as male, regardless of which stage/path medically they choose. Brotherboys have a strong sense of their cultural identity.”
— Sisters & Brothers NT, an advocacy and support group that celebrates gender, intersex and sexuality diversity.

**Coming out / Inviting in**
We live in a world where heterosexuality and rigid gender norms are not only expected, but also presumed. Coming Out usually refers to the process by which a person’s sexual identity is disclosed to others. The term also refers to people sharing their gender identity or gender history.

**Cisgender**
Cis is a Latin-derived prefix meaning “on the same side” (where “trans” means “across”). Cisgender is a term used by some for people whose gender identity is “on the same side” as the sex they were assigned at birth in the way our society expects. It is sometimes used to normalise gender identities (i.e. everyone has a gender identity including people who aren’t trans) but some also see trans and cis as another limiting binary.

**Gay**
People with the romantic and sexual capacity primarily for people of the same sex or gender, i.e. same-sex attracted. Historically gay has been used more for men in Australia but sometimes includes women.

**Gender binary**
Describes the way people are categorised into masculine and feminine gender roles, expressions, and identities based on the sex on their birth certificate which many people find limiting.
Gender non binary
(see Non-Binary)

Gender Diverse
An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not match the sex on their birth certificate in a socially expected way (not cisgender). Gender Diverse is an important addition to the umbrella term transgender, as it includes Non-Binary, Genderqueer and other identities that are not transgender or cisgender.

Gender Expression
The way a person expresses their gender ways that are masculine, feminine, both or neither through their clothing and appearance, mannerisms, voice.

Gender identity
A person’s deeply felt sense of who they are, a woman, a man, both, neither, or something else.

Gender questioning
Refers to the process whereby an individual comes to question the usefulness or validity of their current assigned sex and/or the gender expectations based on the gender binary. This includes people who see the binary categories of male and female/masculine and feminine as meaningless or unduly restrictive, and those who feel that their gender does not align with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Genderqueer
People who may identify as being between or beyond genders, or a combination of genders.

GSA
A Gender and Sexuality Alliance (sometimes called Gay-Straight Alliances) are student-led groups usually found in high schools for LGBTQA+ students and supportive students who may be Heterosexual and/or Cisgender.

Heteronormativity
A form of bias in favour of heterosexual and cisgender people and relationships. They are viewed as “normal” and therefore superior while people who are same-sex attracted, queer, trans, intersex, questioning etc. are seen as not normal and therefore inferior.

Heterosexism
The belief that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and that other types of sexualities or gender identities are unhealthy, unnatural and a threat to society.

Homophobia
A range of attitudes, feelings, and discriminatory treatment that are motivated by prejudice against a person’s actual or perceived sexual orientation. It’s not a “phobia” in the usual sense. Someone doesn’t have to identify as same-sex attracted to become a target of homophobia or homophobic harassment or abuse.

Intersex
Intersex people are born with physical sex characteristics that don’t fit medical norms for female or male bodies. They have many different kinds of bodies and life experiences. Learn more.
IDAHOBIT
The International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia held on 17 May each year. Learn more.

Lesbian
An identity label used by some women who are same-sex attracted.

LGBTQA+
An acronym used to represent individuals or communities of people include who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and pansexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, questioning, queer and asexual. The plus sign acknowledges that identities and identity language is complex and ever changing and the acronym will not include everyone who may identify with the community or acronym. It is useful to remember that people who are trans and gender diverse, and people with intersex variations may not identify with this acronym or community.

Misgendering
An occurrence where a person is described or addressed using language that does not match their gender identity (National LGBT Health Alliance, 2013b). This can include the incorrect use of pronouns (she/he/they), familial titles (father, sister, uncle) and, at times, other words that traditionally have gendered applications (pretty, handsome, etc.). It is best to ask a person, at a relevant moment, what pronouns they like to use.

Non-Binary
A person who does not identify with the gender identities of man/woman or masculine or feminine.

Pansexual
People who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to people across all the spectrums of sex and gender, and where gender and sex are insignificant or irrelevant in the attraction. Pan means “all”, while poly means “many”, though not necessarily all.

Pride
Pride refers to the positive stance against discrimination and violence toward LGBTQ+ people to promote their self-affirmation, dignity, equality rights, build community, and celebrate diversity. Around the world people celebrate Pride month in June, and have Pride festivals, parades and events.

Queer
An umbrella term to include a range of alternative sexual and gender identities including gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, transgender and gender diverse, and intersex etc. It can be used as both a political statement as well as sexual orientation that advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing sexual orientation and gender identity as fluid. It is sometimes used as a gender-neutral term to mean same-sex attracted women and men.

Questioning
A term used usually for young people who are exploring their identities in areas of gender or sexual orientation and may not use or identify with particular labels.

Rainbow flag
The rainbow flag has become a symbol of LGBTQ+ pride and related human rights. Designed in 1978, its colours reflect the diversity within the LGBTQ+ communities. There have been numerous changes to the flag over time, but the most common shows six colours.
Rainbow youth
A term sometimes used to describe young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ or similar.

Same-sex attracted
A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to someone of the same or similar sex or gender.

Sistergirls
Sistergirls are Aboriginal transgender women (assigned male at birth) who have a distinct cultural identity and often take on female roles within the community, including looking after children and family. Many Sistergirls live a traditional lifestyle and have strong cultural backgrounds. Their cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs are pivotal to their lives and identities. – Sisters & Brothers NT, an advocacy and support group that celebrates gender, intersex and sexuality diversity.

Transgender / Trans
An umbrella term and, for some people, an identity term used to describe all kinds of people who sit outside the gender binary or whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to them at birth.

Transgender day of visibility
The International TDOV celebrates the accomplishments and victories of transgender and gender diverse people while raising awareness of the work that is still needed. Learn more.

Transgender day of remembrance
TDOV raises public awareness of violence against transgender people through celebrating and remembering the lives of transgender and gender-diverse people who were targets of hate crimes internationally. Learn more.

Transition / affirming gender
The personal process or processes a trans or gender diverse person undertakes in recognising, accepting and expressing their gender identity including social, legal and/or medical aspects. It might include changes to appearance (clothing, hairstyle etc), and/or asking people use a different name and pronoun (he/she/they, his/hers/their etc). It can often include the use of hormones and in some cases gender affirmation surgery.

Transphobia
A range of attitudes, feelings, and discriminatory treatment of people whose gender identity, gender presentation or perceived gender or gender identity does not “match”, in a socially accepted way, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Wear it Purple day
A youth-led annual day of celebration at the end of August each year. Started by two school students in Sydney Australia to show rainbow (LGBTQIA+) young people across the globe that there is hope, that there are people who support and accept them, and that they have the right to be proud of who they are. Learn more.
NSW Teachers Federation
Twenty10 inc. GLCS NSW
Wear It Purple

Other resources for GSAs
Standout
GLSEN (USA)

Safer online spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth
QLife
e-Headspace
ReachOut

Support services
QLife
Twenty10
The Gender Centre
Headspace

Supporting students with transitioning or affirming their gender
The Department of Education and Communities Legal Bulletin 55
Twenty10’s 8 Tips to Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Students in Schools
Guide to Supporting a Student to Affirm or Transition Gender Identity at School

Other services and resources
Student Wellbeing Hub
Minus18
Intersex Human Rights Australia
National LGBTI Health Alliance
Safe Schools Coalition