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Christophe Locatelli · Oct 13, 2021 · 2 min read



Mandatory LGBT+ Education in Scotland: What Does It Actually Mean?

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Until the year 2000, the promotion of homosexuality in Scottish schools was banned, which meant that teachers could not even acknowledge the lives of LGBT+ people, and students bullied for being gay were rarely helped.

Now, Scotland has become the first country in the world to make LGBT+ education in schools mandatory. This change in the school curriculum means that LGBT+ identities, history and issues will have to be taught, with a focus on promoting equality, tackling bullying and improving the school experience of young LGBT+ people.



Why has Scotland introduced this law?

In 2017 Scotland announced the LGBT+ Inclusive Education Working Group. This group, made up of various LGBT+ organisations, worked on making Scottish education inclusive of LGBT+ identities. By 2018, the working group made 33 recommendations to the Scottish government, which Ministers accepted in full. As of September 2021, all the recommendations will be implemented into schools across Scotland, with the most critical aspect being schools are obligated by law to teach LGBT+ education.

The Scottish government believes making LGBT+ education mandatory will reduce bullying and help children of all identities [“reach their full potential and flourish in a diverse and inclusive society.”](#) Stonewall reported in 2017 [that nearly all LGBT+ pupils are bullied](#). The hope for inclusive education is that it will support teachers in taking a proactive but educational approach to tackling prejudice.

What will LGBT+ education involve?

Scottish schools will be required to teach students about LGBT+ people, from something simple such as including an example of a family with two dads in a maths problem or mentioning a role model who is LGBT+.

The government has additionally launched a suite of resources to support schools in creating inclusive lessons. The website <https://lgbteducation.scot/> is where staff, parents, carers and children can access resources, such as lesson plans and information to support LGBT+ young people. Teachers and staff will also be given an e-learning course to implement the LGBT+ inclusive education correctly.

Is there public support for LGBT+ inclusive education?

Campaign groups welcomed the move to mandatory LGBT+ inclusive education, believing that it will empower young people to feel valued and proud of who they are, in ways that LGBT+ students have not in the past. This feeling extends to the general public, with a Stonewall study finding that [60% of British people believe kids should be taught about diverse families](#), such as same-sex parents, including in primary schools. Support for inclusive education is even higher amongst those aged 16-24.

This support amongst the general public perhaps hints at a future where the whole of the UK introduces mandatory LGBT+ inclusive education. Chief executive of Stonewall, Paul Twocock, stated, “LGBT-inclusive education is life-changing teaching for so many young people, which is why it’s so powerful to see so much of the British public support the new legislation,”. Hopefully, if positive effects are shown in Scotland, it will encourage other governments to follow suit.

For more news on this topic, head to our dedicated [LGBTQ+ Rights & Issues](#) section.

Edited by Abbie Harby



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