



Ending rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination

A workbook for schools creating inclusive and caring learning environments for all students

InsideOUT

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**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
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Introducing InsideOUT

Development of this resource was led by InsideOUT Kōaro, a national charity that works to give rainbow young people in Aotearoa New Zealand a sense of safety and belonging in their schools and communities.

Our mission

To work with young people, whānau, schools, community groups, youth services, government agencies, and other relevant organisations to provide safer schools and communities for rainbow young people.

To foster the development of resources, education, information, hui, and tools that work to improve the health, wellbeing, and safety of rainbow young people.

Our kaupapa

The statements listed below underpin all of the resources we create and inform all that we do in our work with schools.

- Being trans, gender diverse, intersex, or having a diverse sexuality is a natural, positive expression of human diversity. A person's sexuality, gender, or body is not up for debate.
- Gender or sex may be an important part of who a person is, but it is not the only part; our identities are also shaped by factors such as our culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, religion, or disability.
- The adults within a school community have obligations to respect students' rights to safety, privacy, and inclusion within their whānau, school, and wider community.
- Respecting students' rights upholds their mana motuhake (self-determination) and mauri (energy, life force).
- Being proactive about creating inclusive learning environments benefits all members of a school community.

Introduction

Nau mai, haere mai!

InsideOUT has created *Ending rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination* for schools that are working to create inclusive learning environments for all students. This workbook has been developed in collaboration with school staff and with support from the Ministry of Education. In this introduction, we explain its purpose, why it is needed, and how you might use it.

The purpose of this workbook

This workbook provides practical advice and frameworks that schools can use to create environments free from rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination. It can be used to inform a collaborative, whole-school approach to ending rainbow-focused bullying and creating inclusive school communities. In a whole-school approach, we encourage staff and school community members to work through the suggested activities together, in syndicate, pastoral, leadership team, or board meetings. The workbook can also be used by individual teachers or a small group of committed staff wanting to make a difference for rainbow students.

The context: Bullying in Aotearoa New Zealand schools

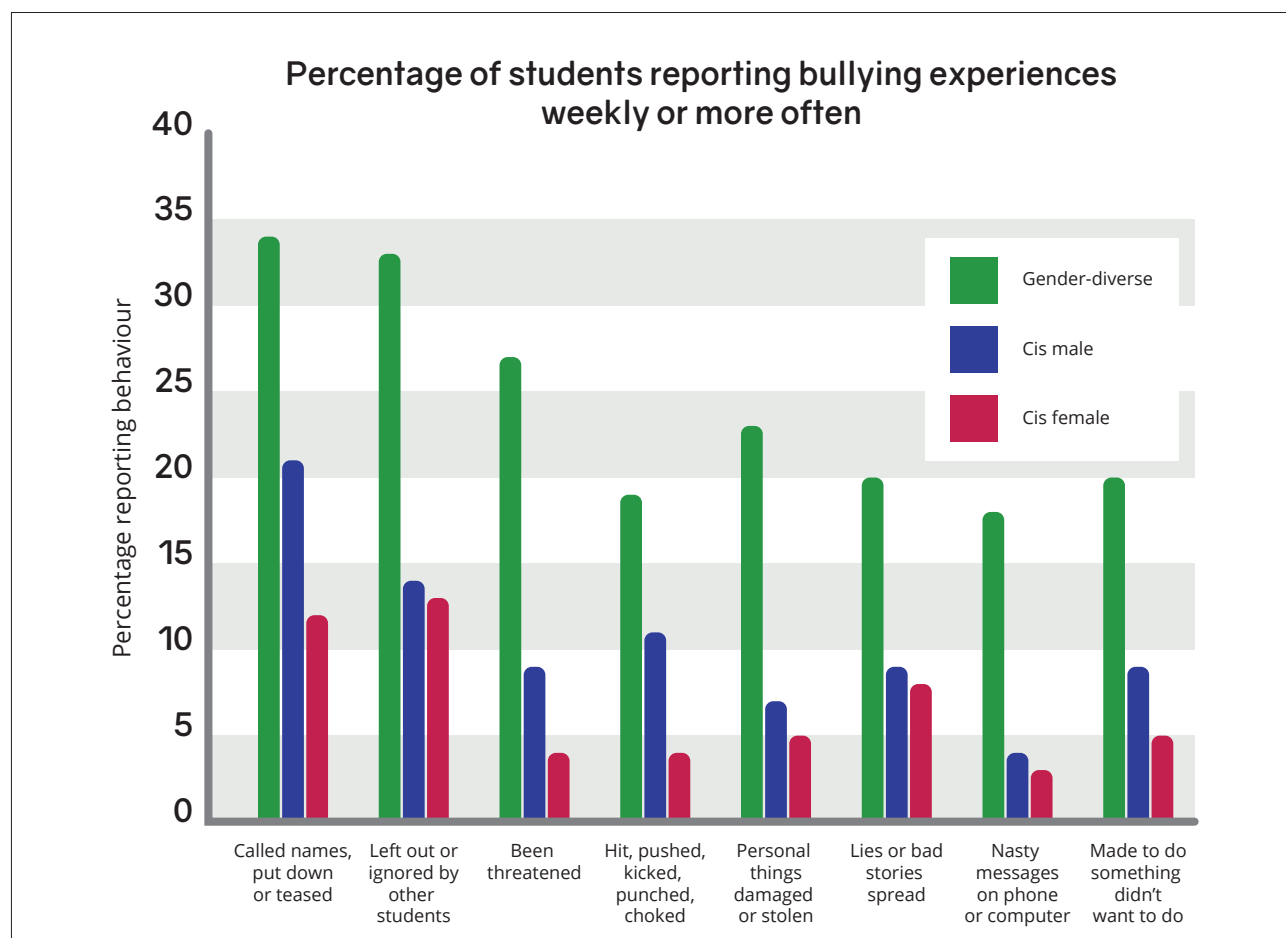


Due to the widespread nature of bullying in New Zealand schools, and the negative impact it can have on all aspects of wellbeing, it may not be an exaggeration to say that bullying is the most important issue facing children and young people in New Zealand. (Mhuru, 2020, p. 10)

Young people in Aotearoa New Zealand experience bullying at higher rates than in most OECD countries (Education Counts, 2019), and trans and gender diverse students in Aotearoa New Zealand are bullied at school at a much higher rate than their cisgender (not trans or non-binary) peers.

The [Identify Survey](#), a nationwide survey for rainbow young people conducted in 2021, found that 37% of rainbow secondary school students had experienced bullying at school at least once in the past 12 months. Among these participants, trans students (46%) were more likely than cisgender students (27%) to have been bullied (Fenaughty et al., 2022). According to [Counting Ourselves](#), one in five trans secondary school students are bullied at least weekly (Veale, et al., 2019). Over half of these students report that this bullying is based on their gender identity or expression. Additionally, [Youth19](#) research suggests that Māori and Pacific rainbow students have a lower sense of safety at school compared to both Pākehā rainbow students, and Māori and Pacific non-rainbow students (Roy, et al., 2021).

The graph below shows a breakdown of frequently-reported bullying behaviours, broken down by gender. It is adapted from a table in *Bullying prevention and response in New Zealand schools* (ERO, 2019a, p. 13).



Bullying and discrimination can have a direct impact on students' sense of belonging and enjoyment of school, and often their attainment. They can also have serious and ongoing impacts on physical and mental wellbeing, with trans or gender diverse students significantly over-represented in statistics related to depression and self harm (Robson, 2021).

The drivers of bullying

The drivers of bullying are deep-rooted and complex, going far beyond the immediate school environment. So, too, are the discriminatory attitudes and beliefs that sit beneath the bullying of rainbow students and other minoritised groups.

In their report, *Bullying prevention and response in New Zealand schools*, ERO (2019a) suggests that while there is no "silver bullet" for bullying prevention, it may be that **"...a focus on generic bullying prevention can only go so far, and further improvements can only come from more targeted actions focused on specific issues like racism and homophobia"** (p. 7). In other words, a targeted focus on inclusivity and safety for rainbow students can help make schools a better place for everyone. For rainbow students, it offers security, affirmation, and a sense of belonging. For cisgender heterosexual students, an inclusive environment opens up diverse ways of being and relating to the world.

The Bullying-Free NZ School Framework

The resource draws from the nine core elements of an effective whole-school approach to bullying, as set out in the *Bullying-Free NZ Framework*. Research shows the positive impact of these elements when implemented with consistency and coherence. The Framework is represented in the diagram below.



Starter questions

- In what ways is your school currently supporting and celebrating rainbow students and/or whānau?
- What are some challenges of fostering rainbow-inclusive environments in your particular school?
- What role do you see yourself playing in this process?

The structure of this workbook

The resource has three sections and a set of appendices:

- **Section 1** focuses on building understanding of rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination. You'll read about the experiences of school from some rainbow children and young people, and about their hopes for the future. This section is for everyone embarking on the journey of creating inclusive schools. We hope that you will supplement what you read by listening to the voices of people within your own school community.
- **Section 2** suggests actions school staff can take to create inclusive learning environments for rainbow students. It includes discussion starters and activities that school staff can use to develop their understanding of rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination and how to prevent them. We have also included some critical questions designed to prompt you to examine the wider beliefs and structures that enable rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination, and how these might influence your practice.
- **Section 3** describes how you can use the five steps of the roadmap developed by Bullying-Free NZ to take a whole-school approach to preventing and responding to rainbow-focused bullying. Doing so effectively and in a sustainable way relies on a strong commitment from school leaders and an on-going, evidence-based process of planning, implementation and review. It is an investment that can offer huge dividends in enabling the development of a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone.
- There is a **glossary** of key terms.
- There is a substantial collection of **resources and references** that supported us in the creation of this resource and that we hope will support you.

Language in this workbook

We recognise that people use different words to describe themselves, and these may differ from the words we use throughout this resource.

InsideOUT uses *rainbow* as an umbrella term to encompass people with diverse genders, sex characteristics, and sexualities. The acronym *LGBTQIA+* is another umbrella term that's often used. It stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other genders and sexualities. We use *transgender (trans)* and *gender diverse* as umbrella terms for people whose gender is different from that which they were assigned at birth. This includes *non-binary* people, who don't exclusively identify within the gender binary. The term *cisgender* refers to people who are not trans or non-binary. We use *intersex* and *variations of sex characteristics (VSC)* as umbrella terms for a range of sex characteristics that don't fit binary notions of female or male bodies.

The term *takatāpui* is culturally specific to Māori and cannot be constrained by Pākehā definitions of sex, gender, or sexuality. The term was originally used to mean 'intimate companion of the same sex'. Over the past few decades, its meaning has broadened to include trans, gender diverse, and intersex people. It describes how a person's tikanga and wairua are interwoven with their diverse gender, sexuality, or sex characteristics. Takatāpuitanga is a gift given from ngā atua (deities) me ngā tupuna (ancestors) and should be treated as such. The term is multifaceted and can mean different things to different people.

The acronym *MVPFAFF+* encompasses diverse gender and sexuality expressions and roles across Pacific cultures. The acronym stands for mahu, vakasalewa, palopa, fa'afafine, akavai'ne, fakaleiti (leiti), fakafifine, and more. Like takatāpui, these terms represent distinctive cultural frameworks and need to be understood entirely in their own terms. InsideOUT's resource *Making schools safer* explores the intersections of gender, sex, identity, and culture, and the importance of recognising and respecting each of these dimensions so that all students know that they are accepted and valued members of their learning community.

Terms that are italicised are discussed in the glossary on pages 53-56. You can find an extended version of the glossary on our website.

Takatāpui resource hub

For information on takatāpui and gender diversity in te ao Māori, see the *Takatāpui Resource Hub*. The hub grew out of Dr. Elizabeth Kerekere's doctoral thesis, the first major research in Aotearoa on tangata takatāpui and their whānau.

Dr. Kerekere (Ngāti Oneone, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Te Whānau a Kai, Rongowhakaata, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri) is a politician, activist, artist, and community scholar whose involvement in rainbow communities spans over 30 years.

How you might you use this workbook

Despite its separate parts, the resource is intended to be used in an integrated and iterative way. For example, 'establishing a safe-telling culture' (pages 37-38) is an essential element in schools being able to gather reliable data that can guide the action planning and review processes outlined in the Bullying-Free NZ roadmap. 'Supporting the establishment of a rainbow diversity group' (pages 32-33) creates avenues for rainbow students and their allies to be actively involved in identifying the level and types of bullying that are occurring, and in developing solutions and monitoring their impact.



A whole-school approach brings everyone together — the Board, school staff, students, parents/caregivers and whānau, and the broader community — to work on creating a safe, inclusive, and accepting school environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

— Bullying-Free NZ

A printable PDF copy of this resource can be downloaded from our website, along with other useful resources including:

- a list of resources and rainbow support groups across Aotearoa New Zealand
- information for whānau and community members
- practical tips on how to make your local curriculum more rainbow-inclusive.

Key messages

These are some of the key messages we would like you to take from this resource:

- Targeted approaches to bullying prevention and response ensure that the experiences and rights of rainbow students and other minoritised¹ groups of students are visible in school policies and procedures, and are communicated with the school community.
- Everyone in a school community has a role to play in ending rainbow-focused bullying. We encourage you to consider your role in this mahi, whether as a teacher, principal, a pastoral team member, support staff, or member of the school board.
- Ongoing self-review is central to preventing rainbow-focused bullying. It is a process that brings to life the values and principles to which most schools aspire, such as manaakitanga, kotahitanga, and whanaungatanga. It involves connecting your values and aspirations with the evidence about 'what works' to achieve those aspirations, and to evidence about what is actually happening in your classrooms and across your community.
- The process of addressing rainbow-focused bullying is not just about challenging behaviours. It requires school communities to actively challenge belief systems, such as homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia. Such a challenge can create uncertainty and discomfort for all involved. We invite you to embrace this challenge — with a whole-school effort, school communities can be places of safety and inclusion where everyone can feel free to be who they are.

Ngā mihi maioha!

InsideOUT knows how highly students speak of the teachers, guidance counsellors, school leaders and other school staff who reach out and support them. Your support makes a very real, positive difference to rainbow young people. It is noticed, appreciated, and remembered.

¹ A *minoritised* group is a culturally, ethnically, or racially distinct group of people who are treated as inferior to another dominant group, even when the group may be larger in terms of numbers. Another term is marginalised.

Section 1: Understanding the experiences of rainbow students

In this first section of the workbook, you'll learn about the challenges rainbow students experience and their hopes and suggestions for schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. We provide a working definition of rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination and invite you to consider the relationship between bullying, wellbeing, and belonging.



Starter questions

- What might an ideal school look like and feel like for rainbow students?
- What challenges might rainbow students experience at our school?

Every rainbow student has their own, unique experience of schools. For some, school is a place where they can genuinely be themselves, actively engaging in learning and co-curricular activities. For others, school may be the first place where they feel safe to explore being open about their gender or sexuality.

However, for a significant proportion of rainbow students, school is a place where being themselves is neither encouraged or welcomed, and where they experience discrimination, harassment, and bullying from peers and, sometimes, from teachers. These negative experiences can be compounded when students belonging to multiple minoritised groups are subject to additional discrimination based on their ethnicity, ability, or socioeconomic status.



Te Whare Tapa Whā

Te Whare Tapa Whā² is a well-known model of hauora developed by Tā Mason Durie. It comprises four interconnected aspects:

- taha tinana (physical wellbeing)
- taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing)
- taha whānau (family and social wellbeing)
- taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing).

The foundation of the whare is its connection to the whenua (land) – to a person's tūrangawaewae, whakapapa, and identity.

Working as a group, **identify factors that enhance the mana and hauora of rainbow students at your school in relation to each dimension of hauora.** Brainstorm additional ways that students could be supported in each of these areas.

2 There's lots of online information and discussion about Te Whare Tapa Whā. See, for example: [Health Navigator: Te Whare Tapa Whā and wellbeing](#); [Mental Health Foundation: Te Whare Tapa Whā](#); and [Ministry of Health: Māori health models – Te Whare Tapa Whā](#).



Listening to rainbow students

As part of InsideOUT's work in schools throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, we hear many stories about rainbow students' experiences at school. Some common themes are reflected in the videos presented below.

Watch the following InsideOUT videos:

- *Rainbow tamariki and whānau at primary and intermediate schools in Aotearoa*
- *Rainbow rangatahi at secondary schools in Aotearoa.*

Then, consider the questions for reflection or discussion:

- One of the students says that "an insult to a gender diverse student about them being a boy or a girl, or gay or lesbian ... cuts a lot deeper for them than just a normal insult in the playground." Why do you think this is the case?
- What suggestions do the students have for teachers and schools to create safer school environments for rainbow young people?
- What do you think 'visible allyship' might involve?
- What are some practical ways you can put what you have heard into action?

If your school has a rainbow diversity group or queer straight alliance, you may like to invite them to discuss and answer the same questions as the ones in the videos. Provide the materials the group needs to present their ideas in a creative way, and consider providing kai, or offering your support in other ways. Thank them for their time and input and be specific about what you have learned from them. Use their responses, with their permission, as the basis for small group or staff discussion.



Critical questions

- What are some wider messages, worldviews, and beliefs about gender and sexuality that have influenced my own understanding of rainbow communities?
- How has my understanding or awareness of rainbow communities changed over time? What has enabled this understanding to change or stay the same?

Understanding rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination

Bullying-Free NZ outlines four widely-accepted factors that can be used to identify and define bullying:

- Bullying is deliberate – it involves harming another person intentionally
- Bullying involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- Bullying is usually not a one-off – it is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time
- Bullying involves behaviour that can cause harm – it is not a normal part of growing up.

Discrimination involves a person or group being treated unfairly or differently from others on the basis of actual or perceived personal characteristics.



Starter questions

- How would you define rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination?
- How might bullying and discrimination be compounded for rainbow students belonging to multiple minoritised groups?

What is rainbow-focused bullying?

In this resource, rainbow-focused bullying is defined as:

- any bullying of rainbow students (regardless of whether there is specific reference to their gender or sexuality); and
- bullying of any kind that is based on gender stereotypes, homophobic, biphobic, interphobic, or transphobic beliefs or attitudes (for example, a cisgender heterosexual student being teased because their parents are gay).

Homophobia refers to behaviours, actions and attitudes against gay or lesbian people, based on a fear or hostility towards sexuality diversity. Biphobia refers to stigma, prejudice, and discrimination targeted at people who are bisexual, and can be evident both within and outside of rainbow communities.

Transphobia describes hostility against transgender and non-binary people based on a fear of gender diversity, and of people who do not conform to traditional binary genders.

Interphobia describes stigma or prejudice against those who are intersex (people with variations in sex characteristics, or differences in sexual development). For example, interphobia is evident in teasing or rude remarks about parts of a person's body (such as body hair) that are not perceived as 'male' or 'female' enough.

What is rainbow-focused discrimination?

Rainbow-focused discrimination involves treating a student or students differently or unfairly on the basis of their diverse gender, sexuality or sex characteristics, compared to cisgender heterosexual students. For example:

- not allowing a student to play on a sports team that aligns with their gender
- not allowing a student to use a toilet that aligns with their gender
- disclosing someone's gender or sexuality diversity without their permission.

Rainbow-focused discrimination can include microaggressions, which are indirect or subtle comments or actions that typically concern members of marginalised groups such as ethnically, gender, or sexuality diverse communities. Microaggressions are usually unintentional but can still cause harm or reinforce hurtful stereotypes and power imbalances. Misgendering someone, or excluding them through the use of gendered language, are examples of microaggressions towards trans or gender diverse people. Microaggressions can be a form of bullying when these actions are done repeatedly and deliberately.



Rainbow students' experiences

As part of InsideOUT's work in schools throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, we hear many stories about rainbow students' experiences at school. Watch the RainbowYOUTH video [*Bullying and homophobia/transphobia*](#) to learn how rainbow-focused bullying can look and feel. Keep in mind that although the video focuses on homophobia and transphobia, students who are bisexual or intersex can have similar experiences.

Questions for reflection or discussion:

- What most stood out to you in this video?
- How do the experiences expressed in the video confirm, extend, or challenge your understanding of the importance of addressing homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, and interphobia?
- What social factors might drive or enable rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination?
- What are some strategies and actions that would make these experiences less likely to occur?

Understanding the types and impacts of rainbow-focused bullying

Rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination can take many forms. Findings from a series of Creating rainbow inclusive schools workshops held by InsideOUT in 2020–2021 illustrate that rainbow-focused bullying in schools across Aotearoa can involve:

- derogatory slurs, mockery and negative remarks about rainbow communities
- deliberately using someone's wrong name or pronouns
- ripping down rainbow diversity group posters
- disclosing a student's rainbow identity without their permission
- over-sexualising or fetishising rainbow identities (e.g., making comments based on stereotypical thinking about promiscuity)
- physical harassment or threats to physical safety
- cyberbullying targeted at a person's gender or sexuality.

Rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination can have far-reaching impacts on a young person's life. It can compromise physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing, as well as putting a strain on people's relationships with friends and family. Rainbow-focused bullying can result in rainbow students feeling isolated, hiding their gender or sexuality, avoiding extracurricular activities, or dropping out of or moving schools. This bullying can prevent students from seeking the support they need out of fear of being 'outed' or having to disclose their rainbow identity in potentially unsafe environments.

Given the frequency with which rainbow students are subject to such bullying, and how often there is an element of intimidation, it is clear that gender- and sexuality-based put downs and name calling can have a far more significant impact upon rainbow students than on their peers. These actions carry with them the weight of harmful messages that are pervasive in our society.

Such bullying can have cumulative effects on a rainbow young person's life over time, too. When viewed from a minority stress model (Meyer & Frost, 2013), bullying may be one of many stressors in a rainbow young person's life among other things such as coming out, maintaining relationships with whānau, family and friends, experiencing gender dysphoria, or dealing with mental health challenges.

The Bullying Prevention Advisory Group, which developed the Bullying-Free NZ guidance,³ emphasises the complexity of bullying and that it can take many forms within both the physical and the social environment, including online. It explains that bullying can be either covert or overt and that because so much of it is covert, it's very important to take allegations seriously and follow them up. The group developed the diagram⁴ at the centre of template on pages 18-19 below to demonstrate distinctions between covert and overt bullying in both physical and digital environments.

Bullying and belonging

Data from the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results suggests that Aotearoa New Zealand's high rates of school-based bullying may be related to the fact that New Zealand students have a relatively low overall sense of belonging compared to young people in most other OECD nations (Jang-Jones & McGregor, 2019). Initial findings from the *Identify survey*, a nationwide survey for rainbow young people conducted in 2021, also found that the rate of rainbow students reporting that they felt 'part of their school' was significantly higher for those who had not been bullied in the past 12 months, compared to those who had been bullied (56.8 percent vs. 29.8 percent).⁵

It's obvious that being the target of bullying can have a negative impact on a student's sense of belonging, but there is evidence that the interaction can also work in reverse, with students who feel they don't belong being more likely to bully. For example, findings from research by the University of Missouri's College of Education suggest that environments where young people who feel a greater sense of belonging at school, family, and community are associated with lower levels of engagement in bullying behaviour (Slaten, Rose, & Ferguson, 2019).

3 The first iteration of this guidance was published in book form in 2015, and later, in the form of the current website.

4 This version of the diagram is created by the Bullying Prevention Advisory Group (2015, p. 10). You may prefer the online version from the website.

5 (Fenaughty et al., 2022)



Explore connections between bullying and belonging

In May 2019, ERO surveyed 11,000 students across years 4 to 13, seeking to hear their thoughts about and experiences of bullying in New Zealand. ERO's subsequent report, *Bullying Prevention and Response: Student Voice* outlines a range of important findings. Some of these are summarised in *ERO Insights* (ERO, 2019c). Take a look at the summary, and consider these questions:

- How might fostering a sense of belonging amongst all students reduce the likelihood that rainbow students are bullied?
- How can we ensure that students feel confident in our school's systems and teachers' responses to rainbow-focused bullying?

Ask a group of students to create a visual response to these questions:

- What does belonging look like in our school community?
- What could it look like if everyone felt valued, wanted, and included?
- What does the school do to show that rainbow students belong and are valued in our school community?

Encourage the group to annotate their pictures, then use their insights as a platform for discussion and planning by staff and the board of trustees.

Bullying and wellbeing

Bullying-Free NZ makes the point that bullying behaviour impacts everyone in a school community:

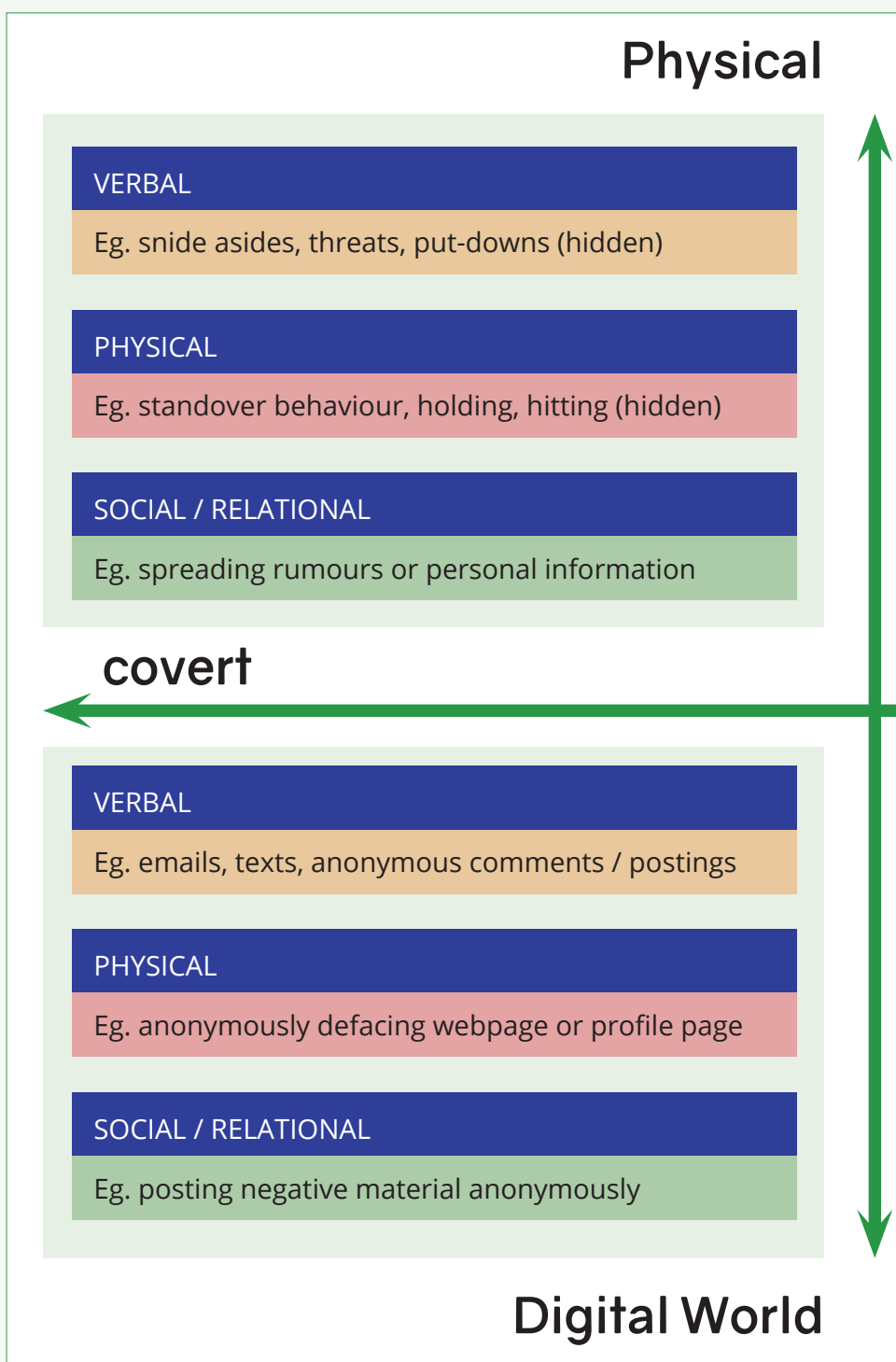


Bullying has detrimental effects on students' health, wellbeing and learning. It can make students feel lonely, unhappy and frightened. It's not just the students being bullied who are affected. Most students say they don't like seeing bullying in their school – it makes them feel worried and uncomfortable. Students who bully others are also more likely to have problems and be unhappy.

Different types of bullying

This diagram has been adapted from the Bullying Prevention Advisory Group's framework.

Potential impact:



World

VERBAL

Eg. discriminatory remarks, threats, name-calling (in view)

PHYSICAL

Eg. standover behaviour, holding, hitting (in view)

SOCIAL / RELATIONAL

Eg. openly excluding from peer group, ostracising

overt

VERBAL

Eg. posting negative photos/comments on website

PHYSICAL

Eg. defacing webpage or profile page

SOCIAL / RELATIONAL

Eg. exclusion from activities or ostracising

(cyberbullying)

For trans and gender diverse people, being discriminated against or experiencing transphobia can heighten *gender dysphoria*. Gender dysphoria describes the distress experienced as a result of the mismatch between a person's gender and the gender associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Dysphoria can manifest as anxiety, depression, or trauma. It can be so intense that it interferes with a person's ability to function in normal life, such as at school, work, or during social activities.



Listening to a parent explain their child's experiences of gender dysphoria really brought home to me the impact that misgendering a student can have on a student's wellbeing. As a result, I've become far more careful with my use of pronouns and more proactive in terms of responding to instances where students are misgendered. That might involve a quiet conversation with a staff member, or following up when school systems have fallen short, for example, when rolls printed out for relievers show the wrong name.

– Secondary school teacher

In contrast, *gender euphoria* is a sense of fulfilment or joy that comes from feeling socially, physically, spiritually, and cognitively grounded in your own gender. Correctly using a student's correct name and pronoun can be a catalyst for this experience.



Focus on wellbeing

Read the Child and Youth Wellbeing strategy outcomes; in particular, the outcome related to children and young people being “accepted, respected, and connected”. Use the explanation of this outcome to discuss how it might apply to rainbow students in your school. (The indicators for this outcome can be used as the basis of gathering information related to rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination. See pages 44-47 for more information.)

You may like to repeat this process using the other strategy outcomes, for example, the Involved and empowered outcome. We'll be returning to this outcome when we look at ways to enable student leadership, agency, and voice (see page 45).

Section 2: Preventing and responding to rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination

This section of this resource focuses on actions schools can take to prevent and respond to rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination. Many of these actions can be undertaken by individual teachers and school leaders — we can all play a part in creating safe and inclusive environments.

There are also, of course, changes that are more effective when made by a bigger group, such as a faculty, a committed group of staff and students, or the school leadership team. And some actions, such as the review and implementation of policies around bullying are best made as a whole-school effort, with leadership from school leaders and boards of trustees and the investment of time and other resources. All change will be more effective when the knowledge, experiences, thoughts, and perspectives of rainbow students are placed at the centre.

We suggest that you skim read this section at first — you may be doing many of these things already. If not, think about ways you can start to put some of these suggestions in place straightaway, and which might require a higher level of commitment, effort, and time. If you're approaching this mahi as an individual teacher, now might also be a good time to see whether there are others who want to be part of this journey with you.

The Bullying-Free NZ framework for preventing bullying

Before delving into specific actions that your school might take to prevent rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination, let's take a closer look at the bigger picture of effective school-based approaches. Bullying-Free NZ provides an overview of the nine, interlinking core elements to effective bullying prevention programmes as shown in the diagram below on page 22.



Brainstorm your school's current actions and areas for improvement

The framework above can be used as the basis of a whole-staff planning session on preventing rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination.

One option is to use a round-robin brainstorming approach (see [Visual Paradigm Online](#)) or provide sticky notes to groups of teachers and ask them to identify examples of what the school is already doing to prevent rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination and areas that the school may need to work on. We've provided a table to support this below (see Table 1).

This process can be valuable in multiple ways. For example, your school may already have supportive policies in place related to rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination,



Source: *Bullying-Free NZ*

but if staff are not aware of these policies, they are unlikely to be effective. The process also provides opportunities for individual teachers to share ways they are currently working to create inclusive environments and get teachers thinking about where additional support or professional learning would be useful.

Another approach is to use the evaluative rubric on page 24 of *Bullying prevention and response in New Zealand schools* (ERO, 2019) as a tool for evaluating how well your school is doing in relation to each element. Then, for each element, identify whether there are specific actions that your school can take, what the action could be, who it might involve, and when it could be implemented.

Table 1. First thoughts: Current and future actions to prevent rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination

	What we're already doing to prevent rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination	Areas we may need to work on
Strong leadership support		
A positive school and classroom climate and culture		
Gathering and analysing data		
Student leadership, agency, and voice		

Table 1 cont.

	What we're already doing to prevent rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination	Areas we may need to work on
Effective and supportive policies		
Involvement of parents/ caregivers and whānau		
Whole-school professional learning and development (PLD)		
A universal approach to teaching and learning		
Targeted approach (early response and targeted support)		



Starter questions

- What changes do we need to make to ensure our values and beliefs are reflected in the way we do things?
- What are our top priorities in terms of our aspirations? Are there some changes that don't seem as significant, but might be achieved reasonably quickly?
- How will the changes be embedded in our school? What policies, planning documents, and other tools do we have for making our expectations clear?
- Which areas can we work on as individuals? Which elements require a team approach? Which elements are the responsibility of senior leadership and/or the board of trustees?
- How will we engage with whānau, and others across the community?
- How will we sustain change across the nine core elements of the Bullying-Free NZ Framework?

Critical questions

- What beliefs or actions do I need to unlearn or undo, to ensure that I am supporting rainbow students to feel valued, respected, included, and safe?
- What are some things (personal, cultural, environmental, etc.) that will help me to make these changes? What (if anything) is making these changes more difficult for me?

Understand the importance of language

Language plays a powerful role in shaping and communicating our perceptions of others. Precise use of sexuality- and gender-related terms shows that we are aware of and respect diverse sexualities, genders, and sex characteristics.

Bear in mind that the language people use to describe themselves, their sexuality and gender, and their bodies is constantly evolving. This means that rainbow youth might use different words than those that were common ten or twenty years ago.



Grow your understanding of key terms

Discuss and record your understanding of the following terms:

- intersex
- cisgender
- takatāpui
- heteronormativity
- non-binary
- queer
- biphobia.

You can find definitions for each of these terms in the glossary at the back of this workbook. How do these definitions compare to your own? You may also like to take a moment to scan the glossary in full, noting any terms that are unfamiliar or have a definition that is different to your own understanding. At first, it is likely to take a conscious effort to integrate new terms into your vocabulary but over time, they will start to come naturally. Putting in small efforts to adjust our use of language can mean a lot to the people with whom we are communicating.



Critical questions

- What do I notice about my own use of language in relation to sexuality, gender, and sex characteristics diversity? Is there a difference between the language in my head and the language I use to communicate? What about the other ways in which I communicate, such as my body language or facial expressions?
- How inclusive would I say my current use of rainbow-specific language is? Thinking about the impacts of my language use on other people, how might the words I use and how I frame things be perceived by students? Colleagues? Parents and caregivers?

Affirm gender diversity

Teachers play a powerful role in establishing social and cultural norms. When the words or actions of teachers reinforce gender segregation and stereotypes, it communicates to students that gender is binary and unchangeable. In contrast, gender-neutral and gender-inclusive practices communicate that gender is personal and expansive, and can be fluid. Ways to affirm and include gender diversity in class include:

- using a student's self-determined name and pronouns
- addressing students in a gender-inclusive way, for example, using "everyone", "whānau", or "tamariki" rather than "boys and girls"
- avoiding grouping students by gender
- avoiding assumptions about the gender of students' parents
- taking an active stand against any negative comments or jokes about rainbow communities.

Using a student's self-determined name and pronouns shows respect for their self-knowledge. Importantly, research indicates that using a trans or gender diverse young person's self-determined name and pronouns can reduce depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation⁶.



For me, using ia² pronouns acknowledges my Self, as in my tinana, as well as my wairua, my whakapapa and my tūpuna. Gender isn't binary, and neither am I.

— Takatāpui young adult

Some students choose to use a name and/or pronoun at school that is different from those that they use at home. The reasons for this can be varied and complex, and their whānau may or may not be aware or supportive of their decision.

There are various ways to make the process of sharing pronouns easier for students who want to do so. For example, at the start of a school year, when introducing yourself to your

6 Russell, S. T., Pollitt, A. M., Li, G., & Grossman, A. H. (2018). Chosen name use is linked to reduced depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior among transgender youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63(4), 503–505.

7 In te reo Māori, people are referred to in the third person as 'ia', which is a gender-neutral pronoun.

class, you can tell the class your pronouns and let students know that they are welcome to share theirs too, if they wish. You could also add a pronouns question to a 'getting to know you' questionnaire. At various times throughout the year, provide opportunities for students to update their details on a class list or in your student management system.

Invite student feedback

Another way to affirm gender identity is to explain to your students that you are working on your use of language related to gender, and explain why. Involve students by asking them to provide feedback on your use of language to help you improve. Over the course of the next week, ask them to notice and point out to you times when you use gender in a binary way that you might not have been aware of.

What should I do if I misgender someone?

Making occasional mistakes when one of your students has changed their name or pronouns is understandable. When this happens:

- apologise
- correct yourself
- don't make it a big deal
- make an effort to gender the person correctly next time. You may find it helpful to mentally rehearse using the correct gender before heading to class.

How should I respond if I hear someone misgendering another person?

If you hear a student or teacher use the wrong pronoun for someone, correct them in a discreet way, for example, by responding with a statement using the correct pronoun. If the person continues the misgendering, follow up with them later in a quiet conversation about using correct pronouns. Teachers, in particular, have a professional responsibility to respect and affirm the genders of everyone they work with.

In some instances (for example, when a student being misgendered is not open about their gender to everyone), it may be more appropriate to check in with the student first, to see whether they would like you to follow up with the person. For example, you might say something like: "I noticed that you were referred to by the wrong pronoun earlier, and I know that that can be really hurtful. Would you like me to have a chat with the person to remind them about your pronouns?". Take your cues from the comfort level of your student.



It makes me feel happy. Like when [the teachers] get my pronouns correct, I feel like they are starting to catch on.

— Primary school student



More ways to encourage affirming use of pronouns

- Go to the [*InsideOUT pronouns page*](#) to read more about pronouns. Identify one or two tips that you could use to adjust to using pronouns in ways that may be unfamiliar to you or to help you check your assumptions about the pronouns people use.
- Update your email signature to include your pronouns. This is an increasingly common practice that sends a message that pronouns matter.
- Consider adding a poster of gender pronouns to your classroom wall. You can find free downloadable posters on the websites [*Gender Minorities Aotearoa*](#) and [*Supporting Aotearoa's Rainbow People*](#).

Take a whole-school approach to eliminating derogatory language

One area where a consistent, whole-school approach is needed is eliminating the use of homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic language. In some instances, the use of this language is not intentionally harmful. A common example is the use of “that’s so gay!” to describe something as bad. (You’ll find specific tips for responding to this comment below).

In other cases, students use gender-based language to deliberately insult or bully others. Rainbow students aren’t the only targets here: non-rainbow students can also be targeted, particularly if they don’t conform to binary gender norms and roles. Challenging this type of language and behaviour at school, regardless of whether it’s intended to cause harm, can send a strong message to students and other staff that rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination are not acceptable.

Every teacher can and should address inappropriate gender or sexuality-based comments when they hear them. However, whole-school effort and consistency is central to ensuring that any gender- or sexuality-related language students hear and use is inclusive and respectful. The use of homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic language should be challenged in the same way that racist or sexist language ought to be challenged.



We knew that we’d achieved a culture shift at our school when a staff member overheard students pulling up a new student for making a homophobic comment, “We don’t use language like that here.”

— Secondary school teacher

While few teachers would ignore the use of blatantly derogatory terms, some teachers dismiss the use of comments such as “that’s so gay” as harmless banter because they are unaware of the impact such comments can have. Hearing the term “gay” used as an insult, put down, or to describe something negative, can cause gay students to feel embarrassed and isolated. The same is true of other put-downs, such as “homo”, “fag”, and “sissy”. The

long-term effects of such experiences on the mental health of many rainbow young people are sobering. Such comments also place people with gay or queer friends or whānau in an uncomfortable position.

The following case study from ERO's (2018, p. 16) report, *Promoting wellbeing through sexuality education*, illustrates the role students can play in addressing homophobic language.

A senior health class looked at the use of homophobic language, such as 'that's gay' for a health promotion assessment.

They thought students using that language did not know or understand that it could be offensive, and a change was needed in the whole school. Senior students told ERO that respecting diversity should be a conversation from Year 9, built into conversations about how we do things here. They thought it was important to be explicit.

Students noticed there had been greater awareness of diversity and the way people speak in the school in recent years. They appreciated teachers calling out students for using homophobic language, and saw that students also monitored each other's language. Senior students were confident that overall culture change would happen.

They said we're really lucky to have such a supportive school. We have the means to change.



Challenge homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic language

For school leaders:

- Work with students and whānau to create a school policy that states that no homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic language or comments are tolerated or acceptable at school. Share this policy at assemblies, on the school website, and on walls of classrooms and thoroughfares.
- Provide training for staff and students on ways to challenge homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic language and comments.
- Ensure that there are systems in place for staff to record instances of homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic language or comments and that staff are aware of and use these systems.

For teachers:

- With another staff member, role play ways to respond to homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic language in ways that maintain the mana of everyone involved.
- Use the guides developed by UK group [Stonewall](#) to help you plan how you will tackle homophobic, biphobic, interphobic and transphobic language.

Partner with parents, whānau, and the community

Students do not come to schools as isolated individuals, but as members of whānau and communities. As Bullying-Free NZ states:

Parents, carers and whānau need to be fully informed, consulted often, and recognised as equal partners in the bullying prevention process. Communicating with parents, carers and whānau helps life at home to reinforce the actions of the school, and helps parents and carers develop their own skills and attitudes.

Bullying-Free NZ provides information on Working with parents, whānau and the community, including *Tackling bullying: A guide for parents and whānau* (Bullying Prevention Advisory Group, nd). You will also find links to information there on how boards of trustees should handle conflicts and complaints.

Of course, the situation for rainbow students is not necessarily the same as for their peers – their parents and whānau may not be understanding and accepting of their child's gender or sexuality. They may not even know about it, and their tamariki may not wish them to know. It is critical to take the student's lead, and to respect their privacy.

For information about what to consider when working with the whānau of rainbow students, see:

- [*Making schools safer*](#)
- [*Staff supporting rainbow diversity groups*](#)
- [*Creating rainbow-including school policies and procedures*](#)
- *Be There*, a website and campaign to support and affirm family and whānau supporting their rainbow children and young people.

Take action on microaggressions

Microaggressions are indirect or subtle comments or actions that typically concern members of marginalised groups, such as those that are ethnically, gender, or sexuality diverse. Many of the examples used above, such as “that’s so gay”, are examples of microaggressions.

Opening the front door (OTFD) is a ‘microresistance’ technique proposed by Ganote, Cheung, and Souza (2016) as a way to challenge microaggressions. It provides a framework for responding to and/or challenging microaggressions, either in the moment or in a follow up discussion. This does not require a whole-school approach; anyone could work through the following steps:

- Observe: describe clearly and succinctly what you see happening.
- Think: state what you think about it.
- Feel: express your feelings about the situation.
- Desire: assert what you would like to happen.

For example, if you observe a teacher making a comment that shows they have made an assumption about a student's gender or sexuality, you could work through the following statements:

Observe: "I noticed that you used 'he' pronouns when you asked Ngaio about her school ball partner. Her partner may not be a boy."

Think: "I think it's important not to make assumptions about another person's sexuality."

Feel: "As teachers, we need to model inclusive language. Otherwise, we can hurt people without realising it."

Desire: "With a bit of practice, it soon becomes natural to use gender-neutral pronouns when you don't know someone's gender."



Practise the OTFD approach to microaggressions

Identify a microaggression that rainbow students might experience on a regular basis, for example, "I would have never guessed you were trans!" Use the OTFD approach outlined above to devise and practice a way you could respond. It would be helpful to try this with a partner.

Let students know that you're an ally

An ally is someone who speaks up for or acts for the benefit of others, particularly when an individual or group is being targeted and discriminated against. Being an ally to rainbow young people involves both supporting their wellbeing and standing up for their right to be welcome, visible, and valued members of their school community.



Do not be afraid to be an advocate or ally. Every voice matters, and if we do not have the courage to support our students, then who will?

— Teacher, co-ed school

As an ally of rainbow young people, you can have a significant impact on how they feel about themselves, their capabilities, and their safety at school.

Rainbow young people participating in InsideOUT's workshops about rainbow-focused bullying often comment on how empowered they feel when staff:

- challenge biphobic, interphobic, homophobic, or transphobic language
- help them to solve problems, such as a lack of gender-neutral toilets or changing rooms
- advocate for rainbow communities, even in the face of disapproval or hostility
- give them the opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences (without expecting or demanding this).

Students also talk about the difference it can make knowing that there is even one classroom in the school where they will be safe from rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination.



Having an adult figure who is able to support us through something that not many people would have the courage to do, is just so reassuring. It gives members of the group that don't have that older strong support figure a person to look up to and lean on in times of need. Also just interacting and helping us answer any questions we may have.

— Secondary school student



Explore ways to be an ally

- Watch the [RainbowYOUTH video](#) on how to be a good ally. Reflect upon its messages, and discuss ways that you can advocate for rainbow young people without speaking “for” them.
- Read Section 3 of InsideOUT’s resource [Staff supporting rainbow diversity groups](#) and consider what it says about how both staff and students can offer support to rainbow students as allies or advocates.
- Identify ways that you can demonstrate that you are a safe person to talk to and that you take bullying seriously. This could include displaying visible signs of being an ally (for example, wearing badges or displaying a poster in your classroom or a rainbow sticker on your classroom door).
- Find out what issues are important to rainbow young people at your school and consider the role you could play to support them, for example, advocating for a gender-inclusive uniform policy that allows students to wear uniform items that affirm their gender.

Support the establishment of a rainbow diversity group

A rainbow diversity group, or queer straight alliance (QSA), is a school-based group that is open to all students. The primary purpose of a rainbow diversity group or QSA is to support rainbow students and create a space for them and their issues to be included. As groups gain confidence, they may also advocate for change within the wider school community and beyond, into the local community. Most groups are led by students and supported by staff.

The reason rainbow diversity groups are sometimes called ‘queer straight alliances’ is to emphasise that students do not have to belong to the rainbow community in order to join. This helps encourage non-rainbow students to come along with their friends and to show their support. It also means that rainbow students do not have to ‘out’ themselves by being a part of the group.

Rainbow diversity groups can be a significant source of peer-to-peer support for rainbow students who are being bullied. The group may be a particularly important space for

students who don't feel a strong sense of belonging in their wider school environment to find connection to other rainbow students and discuss any challenges. Some rainbow diversity groups can also act as an agent of change in a school community, and help to organise awareness and anti-bullying campaigns such as Pink Shirt Day or Out on the Shelves.

As part of her PhD research, Dr. Hayley McGlashan worked with the head of counselling at a co-educational secondary school in central Auckland to co-facilitate the school's rainbow diversity group. She found that the group provided "a space for students to explore their own uncertainties, express diverse identities and engage in health promotion, social justice and activism in the wider school" (2019, para. 16). McGlashan concludes:

These meetings, actions, discussions and initiatives were moments of resistance in the school, times when a greater diversity of gender and sexual identities were visible. For students, this resistance to heteronormative practices meant a more inclusive culture was possible.

If all schools in Aotearoa took steps in this direction by supporting their rainbow youth to be leaders of social change, then school would be a place of empowerment rather than a space of hostility and indifference for our rainbow rangatahi. (paras. 17-18)

If your school doesn't have a group for rainbow students, consider setting one up or supporting students to set one up. You can find detailed advice on how to do this in the following two resources, which you can download or order from InsideOUT's website:

- [Starting and strengthening rainbow diversity groups](#)
- [Staff supporting rainbow diversity groups](#)

Celebrate diversity

Supporting rainbow causes, groups, and events is one way that schools can show that they actively support inclusivity. Signs of support take many forms, and are most meaningful when they are responsive to the culture and specifics of the school. Some examples include:

- creating a student role with responsibilities related to diversity, including rainbow diversity
- acknowledging contributions made towards making the school community a more inclusive and welcoming place
- including rainbow or other pride flags among flags of other countries and cultures, or flying the rainbow flag during pride events
- providing the QSA or rainbow diversity group with an opportunity to be included in the school yearbook or other publications
- supporting and participating in events and campaigns such as Out on the Shelves, Schools' Pride Week, or the Day of Silence
- putting up posters that celebrate rainbow communities around the school.



Our school has introduced a Rainbow Award at the school prize giving that acknowledges a student for the time, effort, and care that they have put into supporting rainbow students at our school. As well as recognising this important contribution to our school community, we wanted to ensure that rainbow students are visible in our school celebrations.

— Secondary school teacher

While it's great for students to take the lead in organising and promoting one-off events, it's equally important that they know they have your support.



In the recent Out on the Shelves rainbow book week, I volunteered to read books from the library to kids in all the classes. I was happy to do this but it was a lot of work, and I had to organise it all myself with each teacher in the school. Then I was also asked to make a poster for the book display in the library. When I didn't have time, there was no display

— Primary school student

Design learning experiences that foster inclusion

Section 3 of InsideOUT's resource *[Making schools safer](#)* focuses on the creation of an inclusive learning environment. It includes information and ideas about how to design, implement, and review an inclusive curriculum. You can use the reflective prompts in *[Making schools safer](#)* to identify specific ways in which rainbow people can be made visible across your school curriculum. The Inclusive Education guide to supporting LGBTIQ+ students also offers ideas and support for Making LGBTIQ+ content and themes visible across the curriculum.

Relationships and sexuality education can be a particularly effective way of supporting students to learn to challenge gender norms and stereotypes, stand up for themselves and others, and respond to discriminatory attitudes, beliefs, and values. The Ministry of Education's (2020, p. 7) *[Relationship and sexuality education guidelines](#)* describe how you can co-create meaningful learning experiences that foster inclusion and support ākonga to develop the skills, knowledge, and understandings they need to care for their own and others' well-being:

Relationships and sexuality education cannot be left to chance in schools. When this education begins from early childhood and builds consistently, year after year, it prepares young people for navigating a range of relationships throughout their childhood, teen years, and adult life. All young people equally deserve an education that enables them to develop healthy relationships, to become positive in their own identities, and to develop competencies for promoting and sustaining their own wellbeing and that of others.

The guidelines uphold the human right to “have the same rights and freedoms, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics” (p. 8). For schools, this means:

- ensuring inclusive environments for all young people
- allowing their ākonga freedom of expression in relation to their gender identities and sexual orientation, including the right to determine their own identity and name
- including content on the diversity of sex characteristics, sexuality, and gender identities in their curriculum programmes.

The guidelines assert the importance of schools upholding the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in their relationships and sexuality education offerings. This includes:

- addressing the needs and aspirations of ākonga Māori
- affirming the strengths and contributions of ākonga Māori, whānau, hapū, iwi, and other Māori communities.

It’s likely that your school has already invested time and thought into how to implement key learnings outlined in the guides, including consulting with your school community. Now might be a useful time to reflect on the extent to which students at your school have opportunities to engage in critical inquiry about relationship, gender, and sexuality.



Relationships and sexuality education guidelines

Download the *Relationship and sexuality education guidelines* (Ministry of Education, 2020) for the relevant year level and read the section on relationships and sexuality education in the New Zealand Curriculum⁸. Explore the resource collection, which includes further guidance on inclusive relationships and sexuality education. As a group or school, discuss how you can:

- provide all students with access to non-judgmental and accurate information on diverse sexualities, genders, and sex characteristics
- identify and use appropriate entry points within the curriculum to address issues such as gender roles and stereotypes
- include education about discrimination and respect for all in the curriculum at all levels.

Take a targeted approach to rainbow-focused bullying

Like all any act of bullying, responding to an instance of rainbow-focused bullying should follow the processes and procedures outlined in your school’s bullying prevention and

⁸ See pages 24–33 of the years 1–8 guide and pages 28–39 of the years 9–13 guide.

response policy. A targeted approach requires explicit reference to what bullying of rainbow students and other minoritised⁹ groups of students includes and what responses should be. This needs to be communicated to enable shared understanding and expectations across your community.

Rainbow students face unique challenges regarding their privacy that need to be front of mind when responding to bullying, discrimination, and harassment. Disclosing a student's sexuality, sex, or gender to any other member of the school community can put students at risk of bullying and discrimination and breaches their right to privacy. Rainbow students may also need additional support from a guidance counsellor to discuss how they would like the school to interact with home and to check in with their mental wellbeing.

The [Bullying-Free NZ website](#) provides guidance on how to plan an appropriate response to different levels of bullying behaviour, using the [Bullying-Free NZ bullying assessment matrix tool](#). The matrix is designed to help schools decide on appropriate responses to bullying incidents by looking at the severity, impact, and frequency of bullying behaviours. Put downs, name calling, and occasional social exclusion are identified as examples of bullying behaviours with 'mild' severity¹⁰. However, where bullying contains sexual elements or intimidation, the matrix recognises that the level of severity is increased. While this is a valuable tool, it needs to be used with caution to avoid 'outing' students.



The first step when a student at our school is the target of rainbow-focused bullying is a session with a school counsellor so that the student can talk about their specific needs in terms of privacy and wellbeing. The counsellor helps the student decide whether a restorative justice approach feels safe to them and will help them to clarify what information can be shared with home.

— Secondary school dean



Rehearse responses to rainbow-focused bullying

Consider ways to respond to different rainbow-focused bullying scenarios. You could use specific examples you know about, or you could use a resource such as the [RainbowYOUTH video](#) on bullying and homophobia/transphobia. How would you respond if these were students at your school? What would an appropriate response look like 'in the moment', considering responses to both the initiators and student(s) being bullied? What are behaviours that signal the need for an approach that would take place over time, perhaps with phases?

⁹ A minoritised group is a culturally, ethnically, or racially distinct group of people who are treated as inferior to another, dominant group, even when the group may be larger in terms of numbers. Another term is marginalised.

¹⁰ In the Bullying Assessment Matrix provided on page 57 of the Ministry of Education resource *Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools* (2015), the use of sexual statements elevates the severity of a harm assessment from moderate to major.

Review and improve your policies and procedures

Effective bullying prevention and response policies and procedures include a fair, consistent, and well understood complaints process. This is both the ethical thing to do and a legal obligation — bullying that occurs on the grounds of unlawful discrimination¹¹ or an inadequate response to such bullying may be subject to a complaint to the Human Rights Commission.

Section 2.2 of InsideOUT's resource *[Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and procedures](#)* addresses rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination. It offers a checklist for examining your current policies and a sample policy that provides a good indication of what effective practice looks like. The data you gather to find out how your school is doing with regard to its current policies and their implementation could include:

- a 'desk review' of your current policies and procedures
- anonymous surveys to identify the extent to which current practice at your school matches the ideal.¹²

Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and procedures also addresses other school policies that impact upon the creation of a safe and inclusive environment including:

- Privacy and disclosure
- Access to safe toilets and changing facilities
- Physical education and school sports
- EOTC overnight trips and school camps
- Professional learning and development.

Sometimes, a particular incident of rainbow-focused bullying can be the catalyst for a school recognising the need for a whole-school approach to rainbow-focused bullying. See Section 3 of *[Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and procedures](#)* for advice on this.

Schools can contact InsideOUT directly at hello@insideout.org.nz for support in responding to instances of rainbow-focused bullying and in developing improved policies and procedures.

Establish a safe-telling culture

A safe-telling culture is an environment in which all students feel safe to report bullying, regardless of whether they are the target or a bystander. Students who report rainbow-focused bullying need to know that they will be listened to and that there are processes in place that ensure staff will respond in a safe, consistent and effective way. Confidentiality can be especially important for rainbow students because the consequences of being 'outed' can be far greater than the impact of a specific incident of bullying. They also need to feel confident that the teacher they tell won't react in homophobic, interphobic, transphobic, or biphobic ways or in ways that create a further backlash.

In its survey of over 11,000 students, ERO (2019b) found that "twenty-three percent of gender-diverse students said they would not tell anybody if they were experiencing bullying. This is double the percentage of male and female students who said they would tell nobody (12 percent and 9 percent respectively)" (p. 20).

¹¹ These are set out in the Human Rights Act 1983 and Bill of Rights 1990. See www.hrc.co.nz/your-rights/human-rights-legislation-new-zealand/

¹² Wellbeing@School data (collected through anonymous surveys) could be useful here.

When asked directly about challenges at school, rainbow students often don't identify their negative experiences as bullying specifically. However, when asked whether or not they have experienced particular acts of harassment or discrimination, a clearer picture starts to emerge. The reasons for this hesitancy vary. Some students feel unsure about sharing personal experiences; others are used to dismissing or minimising these experiences because they have internalised messages about their seriousness. Sharing the findings from InsideOUT's Creating Rainbow Inclusive Schools workshops with students can be a useful starting point for conversations, helping them to better recognise and understand what rainbow-focused bullying is.



Taking action on creating a safe-telling culture

We recommend that school leaders and school boards first read Bullying-Free NZ's *School "safe telling" and reporting policies/processes*. We then suggest that you consider the following questions:

- What mechanisms are available for students to confidentially report bullying?
- How is information about rainbow-focused bullying shared with home? What systems are in place to protect student privacy?
- How can parents/caregivers and whānau share information with the school if their child is being bullied?
- How do we let rainbow students (or other students who report rainbow-focused bullying) know that if they do speak up, they will be listened to?
- How are staff supported to respond consistently to reports of rainbow-focused bullying?
- How do we make sure that everyone in the school community knows the steps that will be taken to acknowledge, investigate and follow up on reported incidents?

If your school has a queer straight alliance (QSA) or rainbow diversity group, ask for feedback on how they report bullying using formal and informal channels, whether or not they currently report bullying, and any barriers to this. Questions might include:

- Do you report rainbow-focused bullying? If so, how?
- What barriers are there to reporting rainbow-focused bullying?
- What factors make you feel safe and supported (or not) when you report bullying?
- How are we doing in terms of responding to bullying?

Further reading

InsideOUT's resource *Staff supporting rainbow diversity groups* has advice on the kinds of questions that tend to be more effective, the ways in which conversations may go, and how to prepare for this.

Review your school's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion

As well as its curriculum advice, the Ministry of Education's (2020) *Relationships and sexuality education guidelines* describe a whole-of-school approach to inclusion that encompasses:

- school policies
- school culture
- leadership
- the school's physical environment
- management systems and procedures
- support systems
- evaluation.

While every member of the school community has a part to play in ensuring inclusion, this is primarily the responsibility of school leaders and boards of trustees. The suggestions below could be used in preparation for adopting the whole-school approach to inclusion described in Section 3 of this workbook.

Critical questions

- What role do I play in upholding and enacting our school's diversity, equity and inclusion policies and procedures?
- How do power dynamics shape interactions between students, and between school staff and students? Can I identify any unjust power imbalances that my colleagues and I can work towards reducing?



Take a whole-school approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Download the Ministry of Education's *Relationship and sexuality education guidelines* for the relevant year level and read the section on a whole-school approach to relationships and sexuality education in the New Zealand Curriculum¹³. Explore the [resource collection](#), which includes further guidance on inclusive relationships and sexuality education.

As you read, take note of specific references to gender and sexuality diversity. For example, the "Policies for inclusion and diversity" sections of the guidelines recommend:

- ensuring that policies that clearly describe the support systems in place for ākonga, teachers, and the wider school community, including support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer ākonga, and for those who are transgender, non-binary, intersex, or gender diverse
- all school forms allow for genders in addition to male or female (for example, gender diverse, non-binary, takatāpui)
- school uniform policies are reviewed so that all the school's uniforms are inclusive and don't reinforce outdated, Eurocentric, or exclusionary notions of gender
- procedures for sports are inclusive so that all ākonga can take part, whatever their sexuality, sex characteristics or gender.

Use the guidance to identify actions your school will in take in relation to:

- policies for inclusion, equity, and diversity
- school culture
- leadership
- the school's physical environment
- management systems and procedures
- support systems
- evaluation of the whole-school approach.

Further reading

For information and guidance on anti-bullying policies that reference rainbow students, see InsideOUT's resource *Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and procedures*. For information and guidance related to avoiding gender segregation and offering gender inclusive clothing options, see Section 3 of *Making schools safer*.

¹³ See pages 16–23 of the year 1–8 guide and pages 18–27 of the year 9–13 guide.

Section 3: Implementing a whole-school approach to ending rainbow-focused bullying

This part of the workbook describes a process for taking a whole-school approach to creating inclusive schools in which gender and sexuality diversity is recognised and valued. Consequently, many of the suggestions require leadership by school leaders and the board of trustees and input from students, whānau, and the wider community. Often, this will involve a senior leader working with a team to ensure that their school is a safe and welcoming environment for rainbow students.

A whole-school approach brings everyone together — the Board, school staff, students, parents/caregivers and whānau, and the broader community — to work on creating a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging. (Bullying-Free NZ: A whole-school approach to bullying prevention)



Why take a whole-school approach?

Read about a whole-school approach to bullying prevention on the [Bullying-Free NZ website](#). Discuss how the factors outlined in the 'what works' and 'what doesn't work' sections apply to preventing and addressing rainbow-focused bullying in your school.

Steps to tackling rainbow-focused bullying: a roadmap for schools

This section is structured around Bullying-Free NZ's descriptions of a roadmap to prevent bullying. You may have already used this roadmap to develop and implement a whole-school approach to bullying at your school. The focus here is on adapting the approach to ensure that the needs and rights of rainbow students are built into your preparation, evidence gathering, planning, actions, and review steps. The suggestions are intended to be used in conjunction with the information, guidance, and resources available on the Bullying-Free NZ website.



This diagram was created by Bullying-Free NZ, and can be downloaded from the overview page: [Steps to tackle bullying: a roadmap for schools](#).

Step 1. Prepare and plan

The first step on the road has you preparing and planning for the journey ahead. Tasks include establishing self-review and planning processes, forming a team, and thinking about how your group will work with students, staff, whānau, and the wider community.

(Roadmap for schools: Step 1)

Adapting this step to your focus on rainbow students

If you haven't already done so, now is a good time to read about the [The Bullying-Free NZ School Framework](#) and work with others to brainstorm points for particular consideration where the focus is on rainbow young people. This includes identifying what the school is already doing and areas of potential growth.

Your school likely already has a robust bullying prevention plan in place. If so, you can use this phase to check how well it meets the needs of, and provides agency for, rainbow students and their whānau.

The table below provides you with prompts to help you adapt Bullying-Free NZ's recommendations (in the left-hand column) to rainbow students and whānau (in the right-hand column).

Step 1: Prepare and plan		
1	Ensure school leaders commit to the vision and oversee planning, resourcing, implementation and review, communication, and relationship-building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the school's vision for rainbow students' experiences of school? • How do (or can) our school leaders model and communicate inclusivity for rainbow students and whānau, within and beyond the school community? • What resourcing is needed and available to support mahi in this area? • How will we respond to any discriminatory attitudes or beliefs that we may encounter?
2	Establish a rainbow-bullying prevention team or incorporate this work into an existing team focused on student behaviour and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we ensure that the perspectives, knowledge and experience of rainbow students and/or rainbow whānau are reflected in our team?
3	Take a strategic whole-school approach to bullying prevention that includes ongoing self-review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we know how we are doing in terms of preventing rainbow-focused bullying? What targets shall we set and how will we measure these? • How will we gather data to guide us? • How will we establish systems that make it easy and safe for students and whānau to keep us informed?
4	Identify, adapt, and use appropriate planning tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What baseline data do we have about the experiences of our rainbow students at school? • What targets shall we set for reducing rainbow-focused bullying? • What information about reporting rainbow-focused bullying will we share with whānau?
5	Work in partnership with students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we invite our rainbow students to be part of this partnership? • What involvement (if any) would our school rainbow diversity group like to have? • How can we ensure that being involved in this mahi does not create additional work or stress for students?

Step 1: Prepare and plan		
6	Make consultation with parents/caregivers, whānau, and the wider community part of the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we ensure that whānau of rainbow students and rainbow whānau form part of the expertise within our bullying prevention team? • How can we find out whether whānau feel like our school is a safe place for rainbow students?
7	Create a definition of bullying as a platform for developing shared understandings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is rainbow-focused bullying? How is it similar or different to other forms of bullying? • How can we use this definition to raise awareness amongst our school community?

Step 2. Gather evidence

This is the crucial step of gathering data from a range of sources and people to get a full picture of bullying behaviour at your school — identify the level and types of bullying, what's working well and areas for improvement.

(Roadmap for schools: Step 2)

The **Gather evidence** steps begins with schools evaluating the procedure and systems already in place for reporting and recording incidents of bullying, and whether they are safe for rainbow students. The evidence needs to be sufficiently robust to help you identify your priorities and use them to establish achievable goals that are consistent with your school's vision and values.

Adapting this step to your focus on rainbow students

The Gather evidence step of the bullying prevention roadmap has additional complexities when working with and for rainbow students. From a staff perspective, bullying, harassment and discrimination of rainbow students may be happening under the radar or in ways that don't immediately register as harmful. From a rainbow student perspective, these may already be an well-established and painful part of their everyday experiences at school that they have come to accept. Furthermore, many rainbow students choose not to be open about their gender or sexuality at school and may not feel safe sharing their experiences, even in surveys that they have been told are anonymous. As you embark on the process of gathering data, try to keep this group of students front of mind.

Gather qualitative and quantitative data

Ideally, the data you gather will be both quantitative and qualitative and gathered from a range of sources. Bullying-Free NZ cites a range of data sources that were originally listed in a report by the NZCER. These include surveys, discussion groups, and records of bullying incidents and the ways in which they were addressed. Anonymous surveys may allow you to collect a breadth of information from students, teachers, and/or whānau about the prevalence of rainbow-bullying in your community. Discussion groups with rainbow students, teachers, and whānau enable you to go into greater depth on specific ideas, issues, and

questions. It's smart to think of a range of strategies, including quick "check-ins" that enable you to monitor and respond to events in 'real time', and others that can be reused to enable monitoring over longer periods so that you can see patterns of progress.

There are various tools schools can use to gather relevant data, for example:

- the [Wellbeing@School Toolkit](#)
- the [Inclusive Practices Toolkit](#).

Appendix 3 of *Bullying prevention and response in New Zealand Schools* (ERO, 2019b) provides an example of a school survey you could adapt for your school.

If you are designing your own tool, you might like to adapt the [Child and Youth Wellbeing indicators](#) for the 'Accepted, respected, and connected' outcome of wellbeing as the basis of data gathering, for example:

- ability to 'be themselves'
- sense of belonging
- experience of discrimination
- experience of bullying
- social support
- support for cultural identity.

InsideOUT's School Coordinators are happy to assist with collecting information on bullying in your school, for example, by facilitating a discussion with your rainbow diversity group or reviewing survey questions.

Facilitate student agency, leadership, and voice

Hearing from rainbow students is obviously an essential part of the gathering evidence phase. So, too, is creating opportunities for students to contribute to the planning process for how data is collected.

For information and ideas about student voice, see:

- [Student voice in action](#) (Ministry of Education)
- [Student voice: A guide for schools](#) (Bullying-Free NZ)
- [Listening to Kids](#) (Office of the Children's Commissioner).

Consider questions such as the following:

- What are the benefits of students playing an active role in creating inclusive communities, both for the students directly involved and for the wider school community?
- What does effective use of student voice require of staff?

Critique your collection and use of data

In its report on the effectiveness of schools' responses to bullying, ERO (2019a) found that while most schools were good at collecting and storing data on bullying incidents, few used their data well to evaluate their bullying prevention and response policies, programmes, and procedures. Less effective schools relied too heavily on anecdotal data to monitor the prevalence of bullying; a concern, as this is likely to lead to underreporting, particularly of covert forms of bullying, such as cyberbullying.

On a more positive note, when it is done well, the very process of collecting, analysing, and reflecting upon data can raise awareness about rainbow-focused bullying behaviours and can help all members of the school community better recognise and understand what rainbow-focused bullying is.

A useful start for critiquing your school's use of data would be to read *Bullying prevention and response in New Zealand schools* (ERO, 2019a), and especially the discussion on pages 21–22. Consider ERO's recommendations, and how they might inform a review of your own use of data. Note, also the suggested questions in the table below on gathering evidence. Capture what you learn and, if necessary, seek outside help.

The table below provides you with prompts to help you adapt Bullying-Free NZ's recommendations (in the left-hand column) to rainbow students and whānau (in the right-hand column).

Step 2: Gather evidence		
1	Use data to help prevent bullying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data do we already have about bullying in our school? Does it allow us to understand what is happening for different groups of students, including rainbow students? • How does the school gather evidence about where bullying is occurring, for example, at school, around the school, on the way to school, or online? How can we ensure that this data reflects the experiences of rainbow students? • How can we ensure that the voices of students and their whānau are included in our data? • What data will we share with the students, parents/caregivers, whānau and the wider community? How will the findings be presented? How will we ensure that individual students won't be able to be identified from the information we share?
2	Select appropriate data sources and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tools will we use and how can these be adapted (if necessary) so that they are relevant to the needs and experiences of our rainbow students? • How will we ensure that the voices and experiences of students, teachers, parents/caregivers and whānau are represented in our data?

Step 2: Gather evidence		
3	Gather data from students, parents/caregivers, whānau and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How clear are our procedures for enabling students, staff, parents/caregivers, and whānau to confidentially report safety and wellbeing issues and concerns? What else might we need to do in this area? • How can we ensure that there are a number of reporting mechanisms for students to voice concerns about rainbow-focused bullying? • How can we make it easy for students to identify and report on the types of bullying that occur, for example, homophobic or transphobic bullying?
4	Analyse and report upon your data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have we learned about the experiences of rainbow young people at our school? • How will we share this information (with staff, students, parents/caregivers and whānau)? • How will these findings inform our actions? • How will we store this information so that we can reflect on our progress?

Step 3. Plan action

Using the data gathered, plan your school's priorities for bullying prevention action plan. Review each of the nine elements of the Bullying-Free NZ School Framework to identify and establish appropriate goals that fit with your school's vision. Look at what you have in place, and what you could add or enhance.
(Roadmap for schools: Step 3)

The task now is to create an action plan focused on preventing rainbow-focused bullying. Your plan will necessarily be guided by your findings from the **Gather evidence** step of the journey.

Adapting this step to your focus on rainbow students

If your data reveals that rainbow-focused bullying is a significant issue at your school but you're not sure where to start, research by the Ministry of Youth Development (2015) shows that schools can make a difference for rainbow young people by:

- acknowledging and affirming rainbow young people
- having strong anti-bullying policies that specifically reference rainbow students
- educating students and teachers on sexuality and gender diversity
- establishing support networks and guidance channels for rainbow young people
- avoiding or minimising gender segregation
- offering clothing options and facilities that are gender neutral and/or gender inclusive.

You'll find suggestions for many of these in Section 2 of this resource. For information and guidance on bullying prevention and response policies that reference rainbow students, see InsideOUT's resource [Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and procedures](#). For information and guidance related to avoiding gender segregation and offering gender-inclusive clothing options, see Section Three of [Making schools safer](#).

The table below provides you with prompts to help you adapt Bullying-Free NZ's recommendations (in the left-hand column) to rainbow students and whānau (in the right-hand column).

Step 3: Plan action		
1	Develop an action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the data we have gathered, what are our priorities for action? How do these goals link to our school's vision and values? How can we create goals that are clear, easy to understand, and achievable? Which goals can we select that will impact positively on several areas of need?
2	Consult on the action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we co-design our action plan with rainbow students in ways that keep them safe and don't over burden them? How will we consult with staff, whānau, and others in the wider community?
3	Finalise and approve the action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will we refine our action plan based on feedback from the consultation process? What input do we need from rainbow students at our school before the plan is presented to school leaders and the board of trustees?

Step 4. Take action

Implement the action plan. Include steps that enable student voice and agency, build capability (professional learning and development), work with parents/ caregivers and whānau, and implement teaching and learning activities.
(Roadmap for schools: Step 4)

The Take action step is where all the mahi that has gone into creating an action plan begins to come to fruition. You may like to take a moment to reflect on the process so far, for example, what you have learned through gathering evidence and what your hopes are for the outcomes of taking action.

Adapting this step to your focus on rainbow students

Section 2 of this workbook is full of suggestions about actions you might take to address rainbow-focused bullying. As you implement your plan, it's important to keep monitoring what is happening and checking the impact of change. Try to maintain communication with rainbow students and, where possible, their whānau, to avert any unintended negative consequences and dial up what is working well!

The table below provides you with prompts to help you adapt Bullying-Free NZ's recommendations (in the left-hand column) to rainbow students and whānau (in the right-hand column).

Step 4: Take action		
1	Enable student voice and agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we harness the energy and insight of our students without placing them under too much pressure?
2	Build capability (professional learning and development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What support do staff need to understand the needs of rainbow students at our school? What support do staff need to work collaboratively to enhance the inclusivity of our school, particular in terms of rainbow students?
3	Implement teaching and learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will our social and emotional learning programmes be adapted to ensure that our students understand and know how to challenge rainbow-bullying and discrimination? How will we ensure that rainbow communities are visible in experiences across learning areas?
4	Work with parents/ caregivers and whānau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do we need to communicate to parents/caregivers and whānau about our action plan? How can we invite parents/caregivers and whānau to be part of this process? 5. Monitor and report on progress How will we monitor our progress in relation to our intended outcomes for our rainbow students? How and when will we report on progress to school leaders, board of trustees, and our wider school community?

Step 5. Review and sustain

Set up processes to regularly check and review actions and outcomes. Use data to monitor the impacts of your actions, determine what is working well and whether any changes are required.

(Roadmap for schools: Step 5)

Sustaining the bullying prevention initiatives you have set in motion requires a process of continuous improvement, with ongoing monitoring and review.

The table below provides you with prompts to help you adapt Bullying-Free NZ's recommendations (in the left-hand column) to rainbow students and whānau (in the right-hand column).

Step 5: Review and sustain		
1	Engage in continuous improvement, with ongoing monitoring and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact of our learning and change process? Have we achieved what we wanted to achieve? How do we know? • What worked well, and what did not work as well as we intended? What are some useful next steps for action? • What will we do to protect our learning so that it is not lost? • How will we share our progress with our school community? • How will we celebrate our successes? • What are our next goals? What changes do we need to make to our action plan?
2	Use data to evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do our survey results compare with previous surveys? • How can we gather qualitative data from rainbow students and whānau about what is working well, opportunities for change, and proposals for future changes?

Maintaining your action plan over time

Agree on a length of time before the action plan you have developed and implemented is reviewed. Be aware that raising awareness of rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination and establishing more robust mechanisms for reporting it, may result in more rainbow-bullying being reported, especially in the first year of the process. Bullying-Free NZ suggests conducting an annual focus group, which may provide insight into successes of the action plan not obvious or evident in survey data. Be careful to store and manage data over time, so that you can notice and respond to any patterns or trends.

Final thoughts

We hope that by this point in the workbook, you will be familiar with the common experiences and challenges that rainbow students face at school in Aotearoa, and have a sound understanding of what rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination is and looks like. This workbook has provided you with tools to identify, challenge and prevent these behaviours. However you have chosen to implement the content, this workbook emphasises the importance of taking a whole-school approach to ending rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination, as everyone has an ongoing role to play in achieving your school's aims to ensure that all students are valued, respected and safe. This includes making sure that students have their say, in a safe and appropriate way, on what positive change looks like.

This ongoing journey will not be without its challenges. When you experience roadblocks or bumps, we encourage you to get in touch with your colleagues and whānau for support and to work through these challenges. InsideOUT Kōaro is always here to support you in implementing your action plan, so feel free to get in touch with us if you have any questions or thoughts at any point.

Thank you again for your dedication to improving rainbow students' wellbeing within your school and wider communities. It really makes a difference.

Further support

InsideOUT resources are constantly being updated. Please check the InsideOUT website for the latest information: www.insideout.org.nz

InsideOUT offers a range of professional development options, as well as consulting support for areas such as policy and school culture. Please contact your local Schools Coordinator or hello@insideout.org.nz for more information.

If something difficult comes up and you need support and a chance to debrief, please feel free to contact InsideOUT. Alternatively, you could access PPTA's Rainbow Taskforce for Safe Schools, NZEI's Rainbow New Educators Network – Kaiko Takatāpui, EAP Counselling Services, or any other assistance that your school may offer.

Professional development that is not rainbow-specific but that could help you in this role, such as mental health first aid, may also be beneficial.

Working with an InsideOUT Schools Coordinator

InsideOUT Schools Coordinators work in all regions of Aotearoa New Zealand. No matter where you live, we'll be able to offer support. We prioritise 'new' schools – schools that are starting to think about trans, intersex and rainbow inclusivity and schools who are in the process of forming a new QSA. Schools Coordinators are often working a small number of hours in large regions, so it can be hard for them to keep on top of what is happening in every school. Please reach out to ask for whatever support your school may need.

Learning from each other

InsideOUT is always interested to hear from schools about what has worked in creating a safe environment, both general insights and in terms of the support we provide. It works two ways – InsideOUT offers advice on the basis of experiences schools have shared with us, and we use what we learn to inform future work with schools.

Glossary

Ally

A person belonging to a majority group who advocates for members of a minoritised group. For example, an ally to rainbow people is a straight and cisgender person who supports and advocates for rainbow people's rights.

Biphobia

Discrimination against bisexual people or bisexuality. This may include negative stereotyping or denying the existence of bisexual people. Biphobia can be perpetuated by people who identify either within or outside of rainbow communities.

Cisgender, Cis

Someone whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth (i.e. not trans or non-binary).

Cisnormativity

A framework of understanding gender that positions cisgender people and bodies as the 'norm', while marginalising people who aren't cisgender. This includes inferring that those who are trans, non-binary or gender diverse are not as normal or 'natural' as cisgender people.

Coming out

The process through which a person discloses their gender, sexuality, or sex characteristics. Most people first come out to themselves before sharing this information with others. Coming out is a lifelong process for many rainbow people, rather than a one-off event.

Endosex

A term describing a person who has sex characteristics (ie. genitals, gonads) that would have them classified as male or female at birth; a person who does not have variations of sex characteristics.

Gender

How we identify and describe ourselves based on the roles, expectations and assumptions we are socialised into. We are assigned a gender at birth based on our sex characteristics, but not everyone's gender aligns with the one they were assigned. Gender is understood differently across cultures and throughout history.

Gender affirmation (see Transitioning)

Gender dysphoria

The disconnect between a person's self-perceived gender and their sex assigned at birth. Everyone experiences dysphoria differently, but dysphoria can often cause distress, anxiety, depression, or trauma. These feelings are influenced by social factors too, such as the disconnect between how a person sees themselves and how others see their gender (e.g. being misgendered). The discomfort dysphoria can cause can be so intense that it can interfere with a person's ability to function in normal life, such as at school, work, or during social activities.

Gender euphoria

The positive feelings associated with the alignment of the way a trans or non-binary person sees their own gender and body, and how others see their gender; the opposite of gender dysphoria.

Gender expression

How a person expresses their sense of gender through their clothes, mannerisms, voice, and other forms of expression. Gender expression does not always align with a person's gender identity.

Heteronormativity

A framework of understanding sexuality that positions heterosexuality as the 'norm', while marginalising all other sexualities or forms of non-heterosexual behaviour and inferring that they are 'abnormal'. This can look like assuming that people are straight/heterosexual, or othering people of different sexualities through such things as referring to 'the gay lifestyle'.

Heterosexual, Straight

A person who is exclusively attracted to people of a different gender than their own.

Homophobia

Discrimination against gay or lesbian people, and people of other diverse sexualities. This may include negative stereotyping or denying the existence of gay and lesbian people, verbal or physical harassment, or microaggressions such as 'that's so gay'.

Interphobia

Discrimination against intersex people, or those with variations in sex characteristics. This may include making negative remarks about a person's sex characteristics such as body hair or chest. Interphobia also exists in medical institutions through performing non-consensual cosmetic 'normalising' surgeries on intersex infants and young people.

Intersex, variations of sex characteristics (VSC)

The term intersex is used to describe a person born with natural variations of sex characteristics such as chromosomes, reproductive anatomy, genitals, and hormones. People are sometimes born with these variations, or they may develop during puberty. There are up to 40 different intersex variations. Though the word intersex describes a range of natural body variations, many people will not identify with, or know, this term or related terms. In medical environments, variations in sex characteristics are known as 'differences in sex development' (DSD), though this terminology is widely critiqued by intersex activists for pathologising natural bodily development.

Irahuhua

The reo Māori word for gender diversity.

LGBTQIA+

An acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more diverse sexualities genders, and sex characteristics. It is used in a similar way to 'rainbow', but is often critiqued for centring Western understandings of gender, sex and sexuality.

Microaggression

An indirect or subtle form of discrimination, such as a comment or action, which typically concerns members of a marginalised group such as ethnic, gender, or sexuality minorities.

Microaggressions are usually unintentional but can still cause harm or reinforce hurtful stereotypes.

Misgendering

The act of referring to a person as a gender they are not, such as through using the person's birth name, pronouns, or gendered language such as 'ma'am' or 'sir'. Misgendering is sometimes accidental, but can also be done on purpose to 'out' a trans person or invalidate their gender. Prolonged misgendering is a form of abuse, especially if it is done by multiple people. It can be distressing, traumatic, and endanger a person's mental health.

MVPFAFF+

An acronym used to encompass the diverse gender and sexuality expressions and roles across Pacific cultures. The acronym stands for mahu, vakasalewa, palopa, fa'afafine, akava'i'ne, fakaleiti (leiti), fakafifine, and more. Their meanings are best understood within their cultural context and may mean something different to each person.

Non-binary

An umbrella term and identity used to describe people whose gender does not fit into a binary of man or woman. A non-binary person may or may not identify with the term transgender.

Outing

The process through which someone discloses a person's LGBTQIA+ identity without their permission. Outing someone can put the person's safety at risk and can have negative impacts on their employment, education, housing, and family situations.

Pronouns

Words referring to someone in the third person. Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs. In some languages, such as te reo Māori, pronouns are gender-neutral (e.g. ia). Some people use their name instead of pronouns, or neopronouns that are less commonly known such as ze/hir/hirs.

Rainbow

An umbrella term, like LGBTQIA+, describing people of diverse sexualities, genders, and variations of sex characteristics.

Sex

Refers to how a person's body is classified based on characteristics such as genitals, hormones, chromosomes, and gonads. People often conflate sex and gender, or assume that a person's sex always determines their gender (when this is not always the case).

Sexual orientation, Sexuality

A person's sexual identity, behaviour, and attraction in relation to the gender or genders they are attracted to. Sexual orientation and gender are different things. The term sexuality can also be used to describe a person's sexual orientation.

Taihemarua

The Māori word for intersex.

Takatāpui

A traditional Māori word that traditionally means ‘intimate friend of the same sex’. It has since been embraced to encompass all tangata Māori who identify with diverse genders, sexualities or variations of sex characteristics. Takatāpui denotes a spiritual and cultural connection to the past. It is best understood within its cultural context and may mean something different to each person.

Transgender, Trans

A term used to describe someone whose gender does not align with the sex or gender they were assigned at birth. The term transgender can apply both to those with a binary gender (man/woman) and those whose gender falls outside of the gender binary. However, not all non-binary or gender diverse people describe themselves as transgender.

Transitioning

Steps taken over time by trans and non-binary people to affirm their gender. Transitioning or gender affirmation may include social, medical, and legal processes such as using a different name and pronouns, dressing in affirming clothes, changing one’s name and/or sex marker on legal documents, hormone therapy, puberty blockers and a range of gender-affirming surgeries. Everybody’s transition or affirmation is unique to them.

Transphobia

Negative actions, attitudes, or feelings towards transgender people. This may include negative stereotyping, denying the existence of transgender and non-binary people, or verbal or physical harassment.

Resources and references

There are two parts to this section: a guide to some key resources we believe you will find helpful and a set of references, many of which also offer important insights and guidance.

Background reading

The following resources provide background information about bullying in Aotearoa New Zealand. You may like to team up with a group of staff to read and report back on relevant findings from a particular resource.

- *Bullying-Free NZ website*: This is your first port of call for information about preventing bullying in Aotearoa.
- *Bullying prevention and response in New Zealand schools* (ERO, 2019a). In this evaluation, ERO looked at the extent to which schools were effectively working towards an environment in which students feel safe and free from bullying.
- *Bullying prevention and response: Student voice* (ERO, 2019b). This is a companion report to the one above. It focuses on ERO's survey of students on their experience and understandings of bullying and effective bullying prevention and response.
- *Child and youth voices on bullying in Aotearoa: Engaging children and young people in matters that affect them: Mai World Child and Youth Voices Report* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2017). This report shares insights from children and young people on bullying. It explains how they feel when they see or are subject to bullying, what bullying looks like, and what they think should be done about it.
- *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* (Child Wellbeing and Poverty Reduction Group, 2019). Our national Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy arose out of consultation with over 10,000 New Zealanders, which included a special report into what young people say makes a good life.¹⁴ This includes ensuring children and young people are loved, safe, and nurtured. The Strategy sets out the plan for achieving and monitoring the outcomes. The *Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey - 'WhatAboutMe?'* will be an important part of finding out how well we are progressing towards achieving the outcomes. It is intended to be run annually.
- *Our Kind of School* (Office of the Children's Commissioner and the Ministry of Education, 2021). This report shares insights into what schools can do to reduce bullying and ensure all students feel accepted, respected, and connected. It draws insights from four primary schools and one kura kaupapa Māori, privileging the voice of students.
- *Wellbeing@School* (Ministry of Education). Survey tools, self-review resources and research to support schools in their efforts to develop safe, caring and inclusive environments that deter bullying.

Resources that focus on rainbow young people and inclusion

The following resources provide information specific to supporting rainbow students in Aotearoa.

- *Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and processes* (InsideOUT Kōaro, 2021). InsideOUT published this resource to help schools create and implement whole-school policies and processes that are inclusive of rainbow students.

¹⁴ <https://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/what-makes-a-good-life/>

- *Making schools safer: A practical resource for schools on supporting transgender, gender diverse, and intersex students in Aotearoa New Zealand* (InsideOUT Kōaro, 2021). This resource looks at what schools can do to ensure trans, gender diverse, and intersex students feel safe and know that they can express themselves free from discrimination.
- *Pink Shirt Day* is an annual event, specifically focused on combating rainbow-focused bullying by celebrating diversity and promoting kindness and inclusiveness. It offers information, stories and resources, and links to further reading.
- *Staff supporting rainbow diversity groups*. (InsideOUT Kōaro, 2021). InsideOUT published this resource to offer guidance to teachers, guidance counsellors, and other school staff who support rainbow diversity groups or Queer Straight Alliances in their school.
- *Supporting young LGBTI young people in New Zealand* (Ministry of Youth Development, 2015). The Ministry of Youth Development commissioned members of rainbow communities to consult upon what government agencies can do to better support young rainbow people.
- *TKI: Inclusive Education: Guide to LGBTIQ+ students* (Ministry of Education). This inclusive education guide offers information on how to support the inclusion and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+/rainbow students. It includes sections on creating safety and responding to bullying.

Stonewall

Stonewall was founded in 1989, as a response to legislation that banned the “promotion of homosexuality” by schools and councils across most of the United Kingdom. Its work includes developing best practice toolkits and resources for schools seeking to ensure rainbow children and young people are included and able to thrive in education. Resources include a guide on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and a toolkit on Preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

References

Here we present the bibliographic information for all the items we have referenced in this resource. We have separated them into print resources (mostly downloadable) and websites. While they are not all described in the section above, they were all useful to us in creating this resource and we commend them to you.

Guidance and practical resources

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<https://bullyingfree.nz/preventing-bullying/a-whole-school-approach-to-bullying-prevention/#Why>
- *Bullying assessment matrix tool.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/bullying-assessment-matrix/>
- *A whole-school approach to bullying prevention.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/preventing-bullying/a-whole-school-approach-to-bullying-prevention/>
- *Student voice: A guide for schools.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/schools/student-voice/student-voice-a-guide-for-schools/>
- *Different types of bullying.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/about-bullying/different-types-of-bullying/>
- *The Bullying-Free NZ School Framework.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/preventing-bullying/the-nine-elements-of-an-effective-whole-school-approach-to-preventing-and-responding-to-bullying/>
- *Responding to bullying.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/responding-to-bullying/>
- *School “safe telling” and reporting policies/processes.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/responding-to-bullying/school-safe-telling-and-reporting-policiesprocesses/>
- *Steps to tackle bullying: a roadmap for schools.*
<https://bullyingfree.nz/preventing-bullying/planning-to-prevent-bullying-within-a-whole-school-approach/>
- *The effects of bullying.*
www.bullyingfree.nz/about-bullying/the-effects-of-bullying/
- *The nine core elements of a successful bullying prevention whole-school approach.*
https://bullyingfree.nz/preventing-bullying/the-nine-elements-of-an-effective-whole-school-approach-to-preventing-and-responding-to-bullying/#nine_core_elements
- *What is bullying?*
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