



LGBTQ Safety and Schools

Because children spend more than a quarter of their day at school and find many of their role models within, schools have a unique opportunity to deliver effective prevention programs and positively impact the lives of young people. Students and families that identify as LGBTQ are members of our school community and their needs, safety, connectedness and academic success are paramount to our district and our department's vision and mission.

Historically, The School Board of Broward County has always been committed to the safety of students in our schools. In 2009 the Office of Prevention Programs collaborated with a team of community members, agencies and parents to craft a comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy that would provide schools the vehicle for delivering a foundation for administering anti-bullying procedures. The Broward County School Board approved the Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9 immediately following the passage of Florida Statute 1006.147 (2008), which prohibits bullying or harassment of any student or employee of a public K-12 educational institution. Furthermore, Broward's Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9 prohibits the bullying, harassment, cyberstalking and cyberbullying of any student or employee on the basis of any one of the following protected categories: sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, socioeconomic background, ancestry/ethnicity, linguistic preference, political belief, social/family background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

This website is provided for our staff, parents, students and community members who would like more information, tools and resources about LGBTQ topics in a school setting. It is also a conduit for providing culturally competent and culturally responsive information and guidelines for the school and community at large in addressing the unique needs of LGBTQ youth and their families. With continued efforts from the School Board of Broward County administrators, teachers, students and parents, our schools will be a place where everyone can call home.

The School Board of Broward County knows that harassment and bullying are serious problems in our nation's schools. Our district was the first in Florida to implement guidelines and procedures to ensure the safety of our youth through Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9. Students who identify as LGBTQ are the targets of disproportionate shares of these problems. Thirty-two per cent of students aged 12-18 experiences verbal and physical bullying nationwide during the 2008-2009 school year and according to a recent survey, more than 90 per cent of LGBT student in grades 6-12 reported being physically harassed during that school year. High levels of harassment and bullying correlate with poorer educational outcomes, lower future aspirations, frequent school absenteeism and lower grade point averages.

In the national landscape, school year 2010-2011 and 2011 -2012 brought to our attention a spate of tragedies involving LGBT students and students perceived to be LGBT. In the spring of 2011, President Barack Obama released a video underscoring the need to ensure the safety of LGBTQ or perceived to be LGBTQ students in our nation's schools and announced a 'call to action' to let youth know that they are not alone and can turn to trusted adults for support and connection.