

Safe Schools for Everyone Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Students

The National Education Association believes that a great public school is a fundamental right of every child—free from intimidation and harassment, and safe for all students, including those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender.

There is only one real issue for educators: We are responsible for our students' safety and education. We must ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to achieve and thrive.



Measurable Damage

We know that students are more likely to learn and succeed in safe, supportive environments. Unfortunately, safety can be an issue for children and teens who are seen as different because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. From the earliest grades, students routinely use homophobic language, and verbal taunts often escalate to physical confrontations.

The effects of bullying, harassment, and discrimination are clear. Students who are subjected to frequent harassment do less well academically, and are much more likely to be truant or drop out of school, be depressed or suicidal, consume drugs or alcohol, or carry a weapon to school.

Alarming Statistics

According to the 2005 National School Climate Survey, taken by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN):

- More than a third (37.8%) of students experienced physical harassment at school on the basis of sexual orientation;
- More than a quarter (26.1%) of students experienced physical harassment at school on the basis of their gender expression;
- Nearly one-fifth (17.6%) of students had been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation;
- Over one-tenth (11.8%) of students had been physically assaulted because of their gender expression.

NEA is committed to reversing these trends and addressing the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students. That's why we provide information and resources for educators to create great schools for *every* child.