

Equality in Education for Lesbian and Gay Parents / Pink Parenting

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LGBT Schools Advisor

UK LGBT Schools Advisor and former Independent Newspaper's Pink List No.1, Elly Barnes advises Pink Parents on finding prospective LGBT friendly schools. Elly focuses here on schools in England.

([Newswire.net](#) -- September 25, 2013) London, UK -- All parents regardless of their sexual orientation want assurances that their child will be safe in school. an LGBT parent this job can be even more distressing when we read tragic stories of alleged homophobia and transphobia. Here, UK LGBT Schools Advisor and former Independent Newspaper's Pink List No.1, Elly Barnes advises [Pink Parents](#) on finding prospective LGBT friendly schools. While Elly focuses here on schools in England, at Pink Parenting they believe

that you can apply many of these same lessons to most schools in the western world. Just this year we learnt of the suicide of trans teacher Lucy Meadows, the suicide of Essex, UK schoolboy Ayden Olson and the murder of Steven Simpson a gay young man with Asperger's syndrome. It's not surprising then that school corridors, classrooms and playgrounds all over the world are perceived to be breeding grounds for discrimination. Echoed by data I collected from Birmingham teachers, where 72% of teachers said they would welcome specific training to better address homophobia in their own classrooms. As a United Kingdom [LGBT Schools Advisor](#) Elly Barnes trains teachers nationally in how to make their own schools LGBT friendly by giving them the confidence and resources to create institutional change resulting in everyone being who they want to be without fear of discrimination. Teachers want the tools to confidently and effectively address ingrained homophobic attitudes. Below are some areas to look out for when researching various primary and secondary schools:

CURRICULUM: DO TEACHERS EVER SAY THE WORDS 'LESBIAN', 'GAY', 'BISEXUAL', 'TRANS' IN A POSITIVE CONTEXT IN LESSONS?

The teaching method is to 'Utilise' LGBT people within the curriculum by highlighting the achievements of LGBT people past and present in all subject areas. An ideal vehicle in which to do this is during LGBT History Month. When Elly asked LGBT parents about their experiences of an inclusive LGBT curriculum, they said, "We went to see the classroom teacher to ask them to make the lessons inclusive so our children wouldn't feel excluded, and get away from the 'what does your Mommy and Daddy do?' conversations". "In primary school they sent home some homework to draw your family, the example was a Mum and Dad and traditional stuff, so I went into school to speak to them about that"

ELLY'S ADVICE:

One parent went as far as taking the books 'And Tango Makes Three' and 'The Family Book' with the inclusive lesson plans to the teacher and asked them to use in the classroom "None of the teachers took it on board! Not one single teacher, it drove me mad" There are numerous inclusive LGBT resources available for teachers to download that underpin curriculum requirements. Books for primary schools along with free lesson plans can be found here www.ellybarnes.com/primary and LGBT lesson plans in all subjects in all key stages with PowerPoint worksheets can be downloaded at www.the-classroom.org.uk. Primary schools are generally very good at display with all the walls covered with photographs and posters about respecting and caring for each other; this could be expanded to include LGBT. In secondary schools LGBT heroes, projects, films, posters, key rings, rainbow flags from subject areas should be displayed. There are some wonderful posters from Barnardos that are highly effective showing different types of modern families with phrases such as 'This is my Trans foster daughter – I am so proud of her' or 'I love my two mums" You can download print quality posters here for free. www.ellybarnes.com/my-services/lgbt-inclusive-lessons-and-assemblies. Never underestimate the power of display, a parent said, "I would like to see my family

recognised, just like every other type of family on all the walls to show that you are just as important as the person sitting next to you”

THE FUTURE:

We can create a safe inclusive environment for staff, students and parents. Many schools Elly works with have proved it can be done by taking a whole school approach resulting in happy ‘out’ teachers, parents and staff. A parent comment sums it up “We told our child that one of the teachers was gay in the school and she was overjoyed with having someone to identify with and would look after her, it was comforting for her to know that everything was going to be alright”

For more information, help and advice visit the Premier Parenting Magazine for the LGBT Community, www.pink-parenting.com or to get involved with the ‘Educate and Celebrate - How to make your school LGBT friendly’ program then please contact Elly Barnes at elly@ellybarnes.com You can also download other great [gay parenting articles](#) in our free APP.

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