

# HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS



## The JAAHB project

...is a multi-agency partnership to develop practical resources with which young people, school staff, governors and parents can combat homophobic bullying. The project was set up and funded by The **intercom** Trust in April 1999, and is now funded by Comic Relief.

### Aims

- ✳ All bullying is unacceptable. Homophobic bullying should be addressed on a level of equality with other forms of bullying. Young people, parents, school staff and governors from many parts of the South West tell us that this is not happening. JAAHB can help schools to make it happen.

### The challenge...

- ✳ This kind of bullying feeds on social taboos. Young people are deeply vulnerable to these fears and prejudices. Many victims are more scared of encountering prejudice than they are of the bullies, and fear that if they ask for help against this kind of abuse they will only make things worse.
- ✳ Some victims of homophobic bullying are not, of course, lesbian gay or bisexual. Bullies are not clairvoyant. But the anxiety about prejudice and taboos is exactly the same. So are the consequences of the bullying for the young people and their families, friends and school.
- ✳ Schools have an equal duty of care for all young people whatever their sexual orientation (*Children Act 1989*).
- ✳ Parliament has also laid down that other agencies have a responsibility to offer schools effective support; that Head Teachers and schools must address homophobic bullying; that an absence of reported bullying does not give grounds to assume that there is no bullying; that schools should take care not to address bullying in a way that compounds it rather than combating it; and that all school staff, including lunchtime-supervisors, should be appropriately trained and alert for signs of bullying. (Section 28 did not apply to schools, but in any case it was repealed in November 2003.)
- ✳ The challenge is to protect all young people equally.

### The JAAHB response

- ✳ The JAAHB partnership provides Guidelines for Schools, Workshops for school staff, and a Helpline. With this support, school staff, governors and par-

ents in the South West can develop their school into a secure environment in which all young people can be confident that if they become the victims of this kind of bullying, they can safely ask for help.

- ✳ The Guidelines provide a model of good practice, and an information sheet of frequently-asked questions.
- ✳ The Workshops are open to all school staff (teaching and others), and to governors and parents. They aim to supply skills with which attenders can become a resource for their school, and help create an appropriate environment for the preventing of homophobic bullying, and for dealing with cases when they are identified.
- ✳ The Helpline is available to all affected by homophobic bullying in the region: school staff, parents, young people and others. The JAAHB team will listen and support, and suggest possible routes for dealing with the situation and achieving a positive outcome. The JAAHB team includes school counsellors, youth workers, parents and others, and has a close working liaison with police youth affairs and diversity officers.
- ✳ Head Teachers and others are welcome to approach the JAAHB team for discussions and consultancy.

**JAAHB** is a project of The **intercom** Trust, in partnership with:

- Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
- Devon County Council, Local Education Authority
- Devon Youth Association • Devon Youth Council
- Exeter University, Dept of Child Health: the APAUSE Project
- Exeter University Guild of Students
- FFLAG (Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)
- Gay & Lesbian Switchboard South West
- The HOPE Project for young people, Exeter
- In Touch Youth Counselling Service, Exeter
- JACAT (Joint Agencies' Child Abuse Team, N&E Devon)
- Life Skills Initiative (Young people's peer-education project)
- MDA Project (Young people's peer-education project)
- National Union of Teachers (Devon Equal Ops Officer)
- North & East Devon LGB Health Project
- Peer Potential (Young people's peer-education project)
- Plymouth University (Teacher Training) Students' Union
- PTA Devon • Advisory Centre for Education
- Anti-Bullying Campaign • ChildLine • Chrysalis • Kidscape
- National Association of Governors and Managers
- National Children's Bureau • NUT • School's Out!

The **intercom** Trust is a regional lesbian gay bisexual community group. Contact us on **01 392 67 87 44** (JAAHB project) or **01 392 20 10 15** (main office).

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