



Safe schools do better.

Supporting sexual diversity and
gender diversity in schools.



Proud to create
change in schools





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Safe Schools Do Better was originally created by Safe Schools Coalition Victoria in 2013. Safe Schools Coalition Australia is federally funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. In Victoria it is also funded by the Victorian Government.

The logo for the Safe Schools Coalition AUS is a white circle with a dark green border. Inside the circle, the words "Safe Schools Coalition" are written in a dark green, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. Below this, the letters "AUS" are written in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

**Safe
Schools
Coalition**

AUS

**Safe Schools Coalition Australia
is proud to create change in schools.**

**Together we can create safer and more inclusive
schools for students, families and teachers.**

Be counted. safeschoolscoalition.org.au



Nationally convened by:

fya

FOUNDATION FOR
Young Australians



Proud to create change in schools.

It's happening in schools. It's happening to classrooms. It's happening in school yards. And with your help, it will have a lasting effect in our community.

As the first national coalition dedicated to making schools safer and more inclusive for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people, we are creating change to ensure that every student, every family and every teacher in every school has access to a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Membership is free – but being part of the coalition is a statement, a commitment. By joining us, you are committing to building a school that is free from homophobic and transphobic bullying, that is safe and inclusive for all students and staff. In exchange, we'll provide expert training, resources and advice to schools to help build connective and supportive spaces for students now and in the future.

Safe Schools Coalition Australia builds on the highly successful Safe Schools Coalition Victoria model founded by *Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria* at *La Trobe University* and funded by the Victorian Government. Since 2010, the program has been building the confidence and capacity of principals, teachers and students to support gender and sexual diversity in schools.

Now, nationally convened by the Foundation for Young Australians and federally funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, the coalition is going national – and it is being built with and for young people.

You are taking the first step in making your school safer and more inclusive. You are creating history.

The national coalition was established to deliver on the vision of the Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework which aims to build safe school communities where diversity is valued, the risk from all types of harm is minimised and all members of the community feel respected, included and supported. Building on the original 2003 Framework, the revised Framework was endorsed by all ministers for education in December 2010.

The Australian Government collaborates with state and territory governments to support the Framework as part of a national approach to make sure our school communities are safe and supportive.

The research



Every school in Australia has same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students.

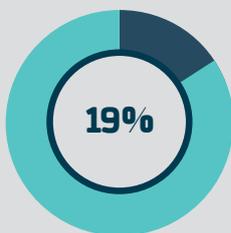
From Australian young people, around:

10%
are same sex attracted

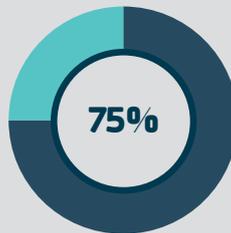
1.7%
are intersex

5%
are transgender

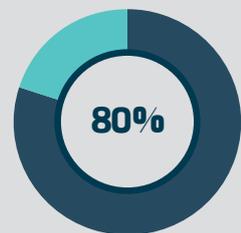
in 2010



19% of same sex attracted and gender diverse young people in Australia attended a school that they thought was supportive of their sexuality.



75% of same sex attracted and gender diverse young people experienced abuse and discrimination on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity

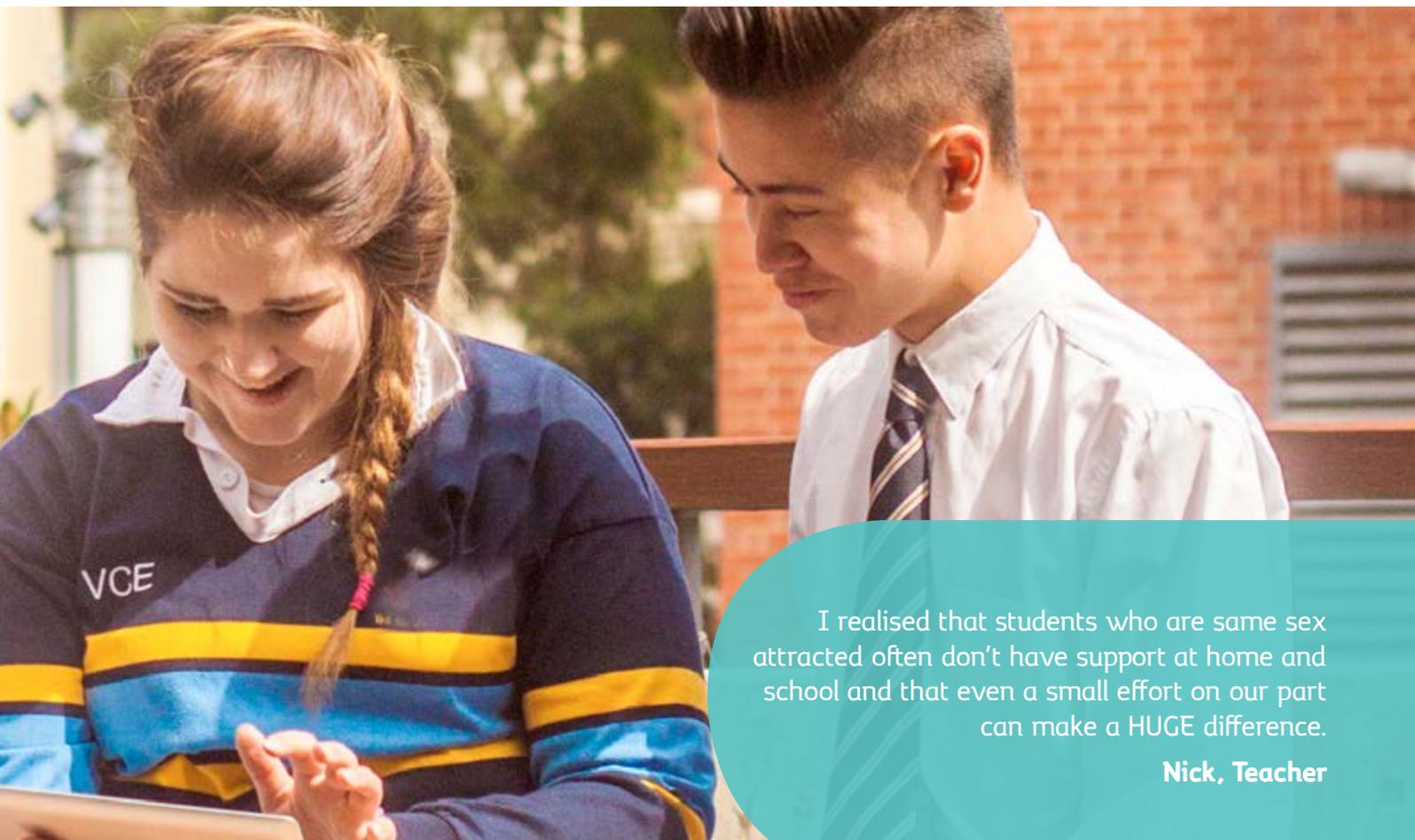


80% of this homophobic and transphobic abuse took place in Australian schools

Experiencing homophobic and transphobic harassment can result in:

LOW SELF-ESTEEM
ABSENTEEISM
POOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

POOR MENTAL HEALTH
DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE
HIGHER RATES OF SUICIDE



I realised that students who are same sex attracted often don't have support at home and school and that even a small effort on our part can make a HUGE difference.

Nick, Teacher

The research

While the data shows that young people are experiencing high levels of homophobia and transphobia, schools in the coalition can make significant and positive differences. There are simple ways to proactively support sexual and gender diversity, and in doing so we can start to turn those stats around. Schools that have joined Safe Schools Coalition Victoria are already creating real change and having a positive impact on learning environments across the state.

Safe schools really do better!

What we're doing works

Safe Schools Coalition Victoria has more than 120 member schools across all education sectors and right across the state.

They have trained thousands of teachers and distributed tens of thousands of resources to give young people and staff the skills and confidence they need to achieve real change in their schools for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students and their friends, their teachers and their families.

Tens of thousands of students have been engaged by teachers and whole school policies and practices that prohibit abuse and discrimination and actively support sexual and gender diversity have been implemented.

How do we create change in schools?

Once your school has become a member of SSCA we have a range of resources and support tools to choose from to suit the unique needs, concerns and capacity of your school community.

These include:

Staff and Student Audits

Our audits of staff and student perceptions, knowledge and experience are a great tool to help you get a clearer picture of what is really happening in your school. These short online surveys can be accessed at the click of a button and will provide your school with the data it needs for developing a targeted and evidence based approach to supporting sexual and gender diversity across the whole school community. We can provide you with personalised audits and compile your results.

1

Professional Learning

From whole staff presentations to specialised training modules, our workshops draw on current national and international research and best practice knowledge to give teachers insight, ideas and confidence. Get in touch today to organise a professional learning package that works for you.

2

Resources

We have a range of high quality electronic and print-based best practice resources for both teachers and students that provide a comprehensive guide for responding to homophobia and transphobia and supporting and celebrating diversity. All of our resources are free!

3

Consultation

We provide tailored support and guidance to schools around specific issues and concerns. Whether you want advice to support an individual student, parents, or are looking for guidance around implementing whole school practices, our expert staff can provide free consultation to any member of your school community.

4

Getting Started.

What you can do today.

While it is important that you access our training and services as soon as possible, we understand that schools are busy places. There are many simple and easy actions you can take straight away to start building a safer and more inclusive school. Here are some practical steps for being proactive in creating change from day one:

Spread the word

Make sure everyone knows that your school is a member of Safe Schools Coalition Australia and why you have signed up. Newsletters are a good start, but assemblies, staff meetings and other forms of communication like school websites and social media tend to have a bigger impact. We can help you with communications material, including help with letters home to families introducing the program.

1

Be visible

Do you have clear signs of support for sexual and gender diversity around the school? If not, we have great free posters, postcards and stickers. Order some today and put them up where they are visible and protected. You can also display your membership certificate in a prominent place.

2

Check your policies

Does your school have anti-discrimination, bullying or diversity policies that explicitly name homophobia, transphobia and support for sexual and gender diversity? If not, it is important that your school update them. Research tells us that policy based protection in schools is one of the strongest protective factors for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people. We can provide advice and input for inclusive school policies.

3

Order resources

Make sure staff and students have access to resources that provide appropriate information about gender and sexual diversity. Ensure that relevant books, videos and other resources in the library are up-to-date, appropriately labelled and easy to access. We can provide advice about appropriate books and other resources you might like to provide access to. Also make sure that all reputable online information about sexual and gender diversity is not blocked on the school server - we can provide you with a list of recommended websites to assist both school staff and students.

4

Know where your local support is

We have strong partnerships with a range of metropolitan, rural and regional community, health and local council service providers across Australia. Get in touch today to find out what support is in your local area.

5



Glossary of Terms

Gender diverse

A broad term that can apply to many people who don't conform to, or identify with, traditional sex and gender norms. This term includes young people who may identify as trans (often written as trans*), transgender, genderqueer, gender questioning or who feel that their gender identity does not align with the sex assigned to them at birth and/or society's expectations. The person may identify as neither male nor female.

Same sex attracted

People who experience feelings of sexual and emotional attraction to others of the same sex. This term includes people who may identify in ways such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual or heterosexual, or who are questioning their sexuality. Some people prefer to use the term same-gender attracted.

Intersex

People are born with different kinds of bodies. Intersex is an umbrella term, often associated with a medical diagnosis of DSD, that describes people who have natural variations that differ from conventional ideas about 'female' or 'male' bodies, including genital, chromosomal and a range of other physical characteristics.

Although intersex people are often confused with transgender and gender diverse people, being intersex is not about gender identity and most intersex people identify as women or men. Like other young people however, intersex young people might be same sex attracted or gender diverse. Reserach tells us that around 1.7% of people are intersex.

Transphobia

The fear or intolerance of people who identify as trans* or transgender, or are gender diverse or gender nonconforming. Transphobia is usually linked with hostility, verbal and physical abuse, or discrimination.

Homophobia

The fear or intolerance of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or same sex attracted, usually linked with hostility, verbal and physical abuse, or discrimination.

Transphobia

The fear or intolerance of people who identify as trans* or transgender, or are gender diverse or gender nonconforming. Transphobia is usually linked with hostility, verbal and physical abuse, or discrimination.

Sex

'Sex' refers to the biological attributes that define people as either male, female, a combination of female and male, or neither female nor male. These biological attributes include chromosomes and physical anatomy.

Gender

'Gender' refers to a person's sense of being masculine or feminine, both or neither. A person's gender expression refers to the outward signs they present to the world around them. This could include their name, use of pronouns, their style of dress and outward appearance and/or their mannerisms. Gender identity is how a person identifies their own gender or body and is not necessarily related to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Sistergirls and Brotherboys

Terms used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to describe a person assigned male or female at birth and living partly or fully as the other gender. Use and spelling of the terms may vary across different groups and communities, and other cultures will use different terms to describe gender diversity.

Heterosexism

Views or behaviour that assume everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and that other types of sexuality or gender identity are unhealthy, unnatural or not as good as heterosexuality. Heterosexism can include homophobic and/or transphobic discrimination.



To join, or for more information
safeschoolscoalition.org.au

If you have any questions about anything covered in this resource or just want to chat, feel free to give us a call. We're readily available and keen to help. We can connect you with local support in your state or territory.

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