

Today we published new guidance to Church schools on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying. We are equipping schools with support to ensure that they can create welcoming communities where human identity in all its forms is celebrated.

## Read the press release and view the report

One in ten pupils who are transgender have received death threats. Can you imagine how that can impact on a young life? More frequent is marginalizing through social exclusion, cyberbullying, verbal and physical abuse.

No parent, friend, teacher or governor would wish this on their own and it is incumbent on us as Christians to act to create welcoming schools where all pupils are honoured and respected members of their community. Without this fundamental element how can we enable all our children to flourish?

General Synod welcomed with great enthusiasm our vision for education back in July last year. Our vision speaks of dignity, community, hope and wisdom. It is a call for action based on the truth that every single one of us is made in the image of God and all are loved unconditionally by God.

We educate 1 million pupils. This is a huge responsibility. As Chief Education Officer I am committed to doing all I can with my team to bring our vision for education to reality in the lives of all our young people, their teachers, families and school staff.

Our guidance is practical. It says that children should be able to explore their identities as they grow up. For smaller children this may involve getting the dressing box out. For older pupils it might mean having informed conversations to grow in knowledge and respect for each other.

Of course, we shouldn't conflate the two.

Children should be allowed to be children. What a four-year-old might try on when they dress up may be rather different from what they would wear as a teenager.

Indeed that's the point of this guidance - children should be free to explore and play without adults making assumptions about them or being bullied by others. Nor is this about 'banning' school uniform.

I know we will not all agree on issues to do with human sexuality, marriage or gender identity. However, there needs to be a faithful and loving commitment to remain in relationship with the other and honour the dignity of their humanity without 'back turning', dismissing the other person, or claiming superiority.

As anti-bullying week begins, let's continue to live out our vision for creating flourishing schools and pupils at the heart of our communities.

**Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer at the Church of England**

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