

Research by Stonewall

The School Report 2012:

- The use of homophobic language across Britain's schools remains endemic.
- 99% of gay young people say that they hear phrases such as 'that's so gay' and 'you're so gay' in school and 96% hear homophobic remarks such as 'poof'.
- The use of homophobic language often goes unchallenged by teachers and students.

What is homophobic language?

- Homophobic language comes in many different forms. Most of the time it is used unconsciously and without hurtful intent.
- The most common form of homophobic language is 'that's so gay' and 'you're so gay'. These comments are sometimes directed towards people who are actually, or perceived to be, gay.
- However, they are most often used to mean that something is bad or rubbish, with no conscious link to sexual orientation at all.

What's the impact?

- The use of homophobic language has a negative impact on gay young people, making them feel less happy at school and less likely to reach their full potential.
- In the worst cases, homophobic language impacts on young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Where do people hear it?

- Homophobic language doesn't just take place face-to-face; it is also prevalent online:
- Young people tell Stonewall that homophobic language is endemic across social networking sites, such as Facebook.
- The website NoHomophobes.com looks at the use of homophobic language on Twitter and has found that:
 - **So gay**: used on average over 10,000 times daily
 - **Faggot**: used on average over 45,000 times daily

And in the media....

"I don't want that one, it's gay"

Radio 1 DJ, Chris Moyles referring to a ring
tone

This means that young people are inundated with homophobic language across all aspects of their life.

What's the impact?

- Homophobic language is often dismissed as 'harmless banter' that isn't intentionally hurtful.
- However when homophobic language goes unchallenged, this has a clear negative impact on young people's sense of belonging, self-esteem and attainment at school
- Homophobic language doesn't just reinforce negative perceptions of gay people but also leads to a general intolerance of being different.

Why challenge?

Tackling homophobic language isn't only an end in itself; it has a clear link to school improvement!

In schools where gay young people don't hear the use of homophobic language they not only feel happier but perform better too!

Barriers to tackling homophobic language

- Some teachers worry that the use of homophobic language is so prevalent in school that tackling every instance would take too much time and effort.
- One in six secondary school teachers say homophobic language is 'too common to intervene in every instance'.

What can YOU do?

Tackling homophobic language can be incorporated in lessons:

- In English lessons, you can discuss with pupils how homophobic language is used in the media.
- In History lessons, you can look at how the meaning of the word gay has changed over time.
- You can even use statistics on homophobic language in The School Report as part of a Maths lesson, or encourage pupils to monitor homophobic language for a statistics project.

Point out the obvious!

- **That's so gay - to mean something that is uncool**
We're inundated with cool gay people. You can use gay people including Jessie J and Derren Brown to show that gay is definitely not uncool.
- **That's so gay to mean that something is pointless.**
Use examples such as Alan Turing, who cracked the enigma code in WW2 to hand the allies the advantage.
- **That's so gay - to mean something feminine**
Examples such as former Welsh rugby captain Gareth Thomas, basketball player John Amaechi and boxer Orlando Cruz can challenge this assumption.

Most importantly....

- **Tell the student** that this is homophobic language and is unacceptable.
- **Explain why** homophobic language is hurtful and offensive, making sure that the pupil knows the actual meaning of the word 'gay'.
- **Don't stand by**.....

Please show your support - display in your tutor base and discuss with your form.

'YOUR SO GAY.'
CAN YOU SPOT TWO COMMON MISTAKES?



Gay. Let's get over it.
Facebook Twitter

'THAT'S SO GAY.'
LET'S BE HONEST, IT'S PROBABLY NOT.



Gay. Let's get over it.
Facebook Twitter

GAY.
LET'S GET THE
MEANING STRAIGHT.



Gay. Let's get over it.
Facebook Twitter