

Provide safe spaces, changing rooms and school trips

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Address immediate environmental, physical
and social needs' from the Guide: [LGBTQIA+
students](#)

Includes:

- Understand threats to wellbeing
- Ask about experiences in PE and sport
- Provide safe spaces and access to support
- Make changing rooms safe
- Inclusively design school trips
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting LGBTQIA+ students](#)

Strategy: [Address immediate environmental, physical and social needs](#)

Suggestion: [Provide safe spaces, changing rooms and school trips](#)

Date

10 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-lgbtqia-students/provide-safe-spaces-changing-rooms-and-school-trips

Understand threats to wellbeing

Many LGBTQIA+ students face challenging situations and have identified that they:

- have experienced verbal slurs relating to gender identity
- are worried about threats of physical harm or harassment
- feel uncomfortable getting changed in front of others
- are unable to access a space aligned to their gender identity
- “hold on” or have to travel longer distances to get to assigned safe spaces
- need to change in spaces with peers who have caused harassment.

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Ask about experiences in PE and sport

LGBTQIA+ students can find sports and physical education classes particularly stressful.

Document findings and discuss with students ways to create more inclusive environments.

Many students:

- have negative experiences in physical education classes
- identify physical education classes as likely locations for homophobia and transphobia to be expressed
- experience verbal slurs
- experience incidents of physical abuse
- experience feelings of rejection due to their sexuality and gender identity
- are worried about discrimination from coaches
- are unable to access gender-neutral shower, toilets, and changing areas
- feel uncomfortable with gender-specific uniforms
- feel uncomfortable playing in a gender-specific sports team.

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Provide safe spaces and access to support

Designate safe spaces within the school and ensure students know where they can immediately access support.

- ✓ library, staffroom, or identified classroom
- ✓ gender-neutral bathrooms and changing areas
- ✓ school medical centre
- ✓ peer support, such as queer-straight alliance groups or rainbow diversity groups
- ✓ supportive adults who are informed and knowledgeable
- ✓ school youth worker, counsellor, or nurse
- ✓ pastoral care staff
- ✓ supportive allies.

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Make changing rooms safe

A student should be able to change clothes safely in a changing room, no matter who they are.

All students should have the option of changing in:

- the facility that aligns with their gender,
- a single stall or cubicle within a larger changing room,
- a separate space or bathroom nearby.

Students may choose to use gender-neutral facilities for many reasons beyond gender. It can help to normalise these facilities, reducing the likelihood that students will be teased or singled out when using them.

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Inclusively design school trips



Source:

[Adrin1](#)

<https://pixabay.com/en/kid-swimming-pool-1401158/>

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Useful resources



Safe space kit: Guide to being an ally to LGBT students

Read time: 61 min

Resource kit designed to help schools become a safe space for LGBTQIA+ students. Developed by the US Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network.

Publisher: Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network

[Visit website](#)



Out on the fields

Read time: 6 min

Report on homophobia in sport based on data from the US, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Publisher: Out on the Fields 2015

[Visit website](#)

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