

# Provide support systems for students and whānau

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Design inclusive school-wide systems and processes' from the Guide: [LGBTQIA+](#)

[students](#)

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## **Includes:**

Develop shared expectations

Consider the needs of students and whānau

Strategies to support students

Support peer-to-peer groups

Provide information on support agencies

Useful resources

## Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting LGBTQIA+ students](#)

Strategy: [Design inclusive school-wide systems and processes](#)

Suggestion: [Provide support systems for students and whānau](#)

Date

15 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-lgbtqia-students/provide-support-systems-for-students-and-whanau](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-lgbtqia-students/provide-support-systems-for-students-and-whanau)

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# Develop shared expectations

Define together with students and whānau the building blocks of an inclusive culture.

Ask, what would we expect to see, feel, have access to?

- ✓ Develop comprehensive, safe-school policies that include the voice of whānau who identify as LGBTQIA+.
- ✓ Engage in a collaborative process with students, parents, and whānau to develop school policies and systems.
- ✓ Consult with parents and whānau in ways appropriate to each school community, such as surveys, hui, fono, or parent meetings.
- ✓ Have clear processes in place to ensure families receive assistance should issues of harassment or bullying occur.
- ✓ Create safe spaces and access to an informed, knowledgeable, and supportive person.
- ✓ Provide easy access to relevant materials, resources, and support services.
- ✓ Provide whānau with reassurances of confidentiality and respect for their privacy.

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# Consider the needs of students and whānau

**One Mother's Experience**  
Where we least expected we found support, most of all as a family we have grown through this and have developed a stronger family and we continue to navigate the road together and we are all richer for the experience. I is our wonderful son so we could not compromise or change any part of who he is. We are very proud.

When he began transitioning he felt much better about himself and has gained in confidence and pride as he has settled into a more fluid gender. He is so much more comfortable and the whole family has become involved not only in his transition but meeting a range of his very diverse friends which has made our lives so much richer than before.

A parent talks about their daughter/son undergoing physical/ hormonal changes to match the gender they identify with.

**Note to my kid from a Dad**  
You will always be my son no matter what. I was surprised to hear you say you are gay and I have had to have some time to think about this but realise it changes nothing in how I feel about you as my son. I would like to meet your friends and learn about any problems you may have when people have a negative attitude towards you. You are a beautiful person so never forget that.  
Love from Dad

**Resources**  
**Support Group**  
Holding Our Own is a support group for parents of LGBTQ people.  
Please go to: [www.holdingourown.co.nz](http://www.holdingourown.co.nz)  
**Documentary**  
Lead with Love is a documentary directed by Jenny McKenzie that follows four families who have recently learnt their child is gay. It is available online at: [www.leadwithlovefilm.com/film](http://www.leadwithlovefilm.com/film)

**Need someone to talk to?**  
0800 OUTLINE  
0800 688 5463

**For families of young people who are queer, lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual or questioning.**

Source:

[Outline](#)

<http://www.outline.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Families-of-LGBTQ.pdf>

[View full image \(501 KB\)](#)

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# Strategies to support students

Adolescence is a time when identity, self-knowledge, social skills and independence are being developed.

It can be a challenging and painful time for students who lack access to information and support.

Key strategies to support students include:

- ✓ delivering school-wide, comprehensive sexuality education
- ✓ providing health education across all year levels
- ✓ integrating relevant content across curriculum areas
- ✓ providing easy access to appropriate and relevant information
- ✓ using supportive, gender-inclusive images in posters and advertising for school events
- ✓ providing access to adults who understand health and medical issues
- ✓ ensuring that all students are aware of key staff members they can approach for support
- ✓ reassuring students of confidentiality and respect for their privacy
- ✓ providing opportunities to ask questions anonymously
- ✓ working in partnership with transgender students to ensure their transition is supported, respected, and affirmed
- ✓ responding sensitively to time out of school for attending medical appointments
- ✓ developing supportive plans to ensure students are able catch up on assignments and learning missed due to outside-school appointments.

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## Support peer-to-peer groups



Source:

Inside Out – Resources for schools

<https://www.insideout.org.nz/resources/>

[View full image \(64 KB\)](#)

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# Provide information on support agencies

Introduce students and whānau to people and agencies that can provide support.

- ✓ [RainbowYOUTH](#) – provide support for friends and family of queer and gender-diverse youth.
- ✓ [InsideOUT](#) – an organisation that provides support for young people of minority sexualities and genders.
- ✓ [OUTLindeNZ](#) – a helpline staffed by self-accepting LGBTQIA+ people who have trained to help others over the phone with issues related to sexual identity.
- ✓ [Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa](#) (formerly Family Planning) – an organisation that provides sexual and reproductive health care to people of any gender or sexual orientation.
- ✓ [Village Collective](#) – an organisation that supports and equips Pacific youth, families, and communities with resources and information related to sexual health and wellbeing.
- ✓ [The I'm Local Project \(RainbowYOUTH\)](#) – a regional directory of queer and gender-diverse support groups throughout Aotearoa.
- ✓ [Intersex Aotearoa](#) – a New Zealand registered charitable trust that provides information, education and training for organisations and professionals who provide services to intersex people and their families.

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## Useful resources



## Rainbow families: School support guide

Read time: 59 min

Booklet for teachers, parents and caregivers and schools about how they can best support LGBTQIA+ families. Developed by the Australian group, Rainbow Families.

Publisher: Rainbow Families

[Visit website](#)



## For families of young people who are queer, lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual or questioning

Read time: 11 min

This brochure offers support for New Zealand families of gender- and sexuality-diverse young people. It includes parent voices, links to support groups, commonly asked questions, and tips for parents.

Publisher: Outline

[Download PDF](#)



## Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parents and their children: Support strategies for educators

Article outlining strategies for creating safe schools for children of LGBT parents. Published by the National Association of School Psychologists (US).

Publisher: National Association of School Psychologists

[Visit website](#)

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