



Anti-Homophobia in Sport Exhibition 2012

celebrating Inclusiveness – combating Prejudice

Issues of responsibility of all at schools and colleges

"Dear Family... I'm so, so sorry for what I'm about to do. I have been bullied a lot recently and had a lot of shit made up about me that ain't true."

Those were the last words of 15-year-old school boy Dominic Crouch from Cheltenham. Shortly afterwards he jumped to his death off a block of flats.

A few days earlier Dominic and his year 9 class had been on a school trip where a game of spin the bottle resulted in him kissing another boy. It is believed that classmates took pictures of them on their mobile phones and a campaign of bullying was launched.

No one knows if Dominic was gay. Maybe he didn't even get the chance to find out. All we know is that accusations of being gay were enough to send him to his death.

Every day taunts Dominic heard are repeated in playgrounds and classrooms across the country. *Fag Poof Bender Queer Shirtlifter* Or if you're a girl *Rugmuncher*

Somehow it's seen as OK to taunt gay and lesbian kids whereas racism is stomped out. Dominic's sister Giulia says: "I don't see why if you call someone gay, that's funny - and if you use the N-word, you get in trouble."

While a lot of teachers care about their lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) pupils, too many turn a blind eye to bullying or insults. *"He was only joking" ... "Don't take it so seriously."*

One new teacher was speechless when asked by her head of year to coach girls' football because she'd be a good role model. *"Because you're straight – you're not one of those fxxxxx dykes."*

Schools need to be safe places that help pupils find their way through what can be the most challenging times of their life – teenage years. *"You cannot properly teach or learn in an environment that is not respectful and respecting of others,"* Simon Jones from the teaching union NUT says.

Questions

- How safe does your school feel?
- Why do people feel so threatened by gays or lesbians?

Article created by Kate O'Malley from exhibition project main articles material



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- What can you do when you hear homophobic abuse

Check this out ...

- **1 in 5** young lesbian and gay people **have attempted suicide** because of their sexuality.
- **Over half** of lesbian and gay pupils don't feel able to be themselves at school.

You can read more about the subject at: <http://ahsexhibition2012.co.uk/pdfs/Panel%20Two.pdf>

... Homophobic bullying can lead to:

- low self-esteem
- self-harm
- missing school
- pupils not learning

