



DEFINING LGBTQ TERMS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

- When children ask questions about LGBTQ words, it is sometimes best to offer simple and direct answers.
- You might choose to answer a student's question with another question to figure out what they are really asking -- is it about name-calling, a classmate's two dads or something they saw on the internet. Listening first helps you respond.
- Using examples helps students understand definitions.
- Questions about LGBTQ words can provide teachable moments on topics like understanding difference and treating people with respect.
- If a student uses an LGBTQ term in a derogatory way, ask them if they know what it means. If they don't, give a short definition and explain how that term is hurtful and mean. Let them know they should not use it in that way.
- This list can serve as a starting place for educators to respond to questions about LGBTQ words. These suggested definitions can help to ensure that you feel confident in your own knowledge and ability to communicate these ideas to students.

Ally: A student who speaks up in the moment for someone else, comforts someone privately, or who gets help from a caring adult.

Bisexual: People can love other people of both genders. People get to love who they love.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth (anatomy/biology).

Gay: Two people of the same gender who love each other. Two men or two women.

Gender: It's how you feel. She, he, neither or both.

Gender Binary: The idea that there are two distinct and opposite genders—male and female / boy and girl. This idea is limiting and doesn't allow for the many ways that children and adults express themselves.

Gender Expansive: This means that here at our school children get to "like what they like." Toys are toys, hair is hair, clothes are clothes. Children can express themselves fully – to be who they are without being teased or bullied.

Gender Expression: One of the many forms of expression where we share who we are with items such as our clothes and hair.

Gender Identity: How you feel—male, female, neither or both. This can be different from the anatomy that you were born with (sex assigned at birth).

Genderqueer: A person whose gender identity is neither, both or a combination of male and female.

Heterosexual: Two people of different genders who love each other. A man and a woman.

Intersex: Just as our hair, eyes and noses are different. There is variation in all of our anatomy.

Lesbian: Two people of the same gender who love each other—two women.

LGBTQ: Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning.

Non-binary: A person whose gender is both, neither, or a unique mixture of male and female that may change over time based on how the person feels.

Queer: This word can mean different or peculiar. It can also mean someone who is gay. When used in a mean way, it is a word that hurts. Many people now use it in a positive way to identify with and celebrate people of all gender identities and all the ways people choose to love each other.

Sex Assigned at Birth: When a baby is born, a doctor or midwife looks at their body/anatomy and says they are a boy or a girl.

Babies can't talk yet, so they can't tell us how they feel. When they start to talk, they may say they feel like a girl or a boy or neither.

Sexual Orientation: Who you love.

Transgender or Trans: When your gender identity (how you feel) is different than how your body is (your anatomy). When a person with a boy body feels like a girl inside their heart and brain. Or, when a person with a girl body feels like a boy inside their heart and brain.