

Dear staff at Nailsea School,

Thanks for giving us a legit education and being willing to listen to us today.

We'd like you to know that being a teen LGBTQ can be confusing and messy. Some of us felt alone for a while, and also scared. Before you tell someone else your identity you can feel self-loathing, which is an isolating feeling. It gets much better when you find people who are like you, and accept you. Putting a label on yourself is also great, and made us feel relieved. Now, instead of feeling 'oh no', most of us feel like 'yay?!'

School is sometimes difficult for us because other students notice our difference, and call us on it. They have called us tranny, faggot, gay, lezzo etc. It probably scares other students who are questioning their identity from contemplating their own sexuality or gender. When we hear those words being used in a negative way, it lowers our confidence and self-esteem, and it also makes us feel frustrated.

Our community is sometimes debated in your lessons, and we like that because it means that our opinions might count and be heard. But because we're a minority in the class, it can be difficult for us to be heard, or know if it's safe to speak up. Overall, there isn't much LGBTQ content or information in our lessons. We've learnt a lot from the Internet, and we'd like to share this more widely.

School is better for us when people show support for the community, and acknowledge us. More visibility is good. We really appreciate it when you've done that. We also really like it when teachers have shown that they understand the LGBTQ community, and have mentioned this in a positive way.

Some of you have noted that someone you talk about in the curriculum was or is LGBTQ, and that is great because it helps other students to know that we can be successful, and that it's OK to be gay. We also like it when you take us into consideration when you're delivering things like sex education, or if you split classes in a way that doesn't involve gender.

We know this last point isn't easy, but we'd really like it if you didn't always call us "ladies" "lads" "girls and boys". We know that you have to do this in some circumstances, but we'd find it very helpful if you could use gender neutral alternatives too.

We love this school because it's been a safe place for us. We know that other schools aren't always like that. We've felt confident enough to communicate with teachers about our identity, and we've also found our community and peers here. We really like it that you've allowed us to express ourselves and be increasingly visible.

Thanks for listening to us, and please ask us any questions you have about our community. We're in Room 146 every Monday lunchtime. You're welcome to join us.

Here and Queer,

The LGBTQ student group
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