



What Schools Are Doing: Eltham High School

Eltham High School philosophy promotes diversity, and for some years has had small numbers of students who are “out” about their sexual orientation. School harassment policies make explicit mention of the fact that harassment on the grounds of someone’s sexual orientation will not be tolerated, and the school is considering a specific homophobia policy, along the lines of their racism policy, which acknowledges the broader, systemic nature of these types of discrimination.

Eltham High is an active organisational participant in the local area same-sex attracted reference group, providing strategic direction for the social support group for **SSAY** that exists in the area, alongside a number of other schools and community agencies. Last year the school invited the facilitators of this group (from local government) and from the **Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society** and **Family Planning Victoria**, to address the whole staff regarding issues for same-sex attracted students.

Since beginning collaboration with the **SSAFE Project**, Eltham High has had key staff complete an audit regarding the school’s inclusion of same-sex attracted issues across curriculum, welfare and policy. They are planning a forum, facilitated by SSAFE, for a number of students to have their say as well, and will distribute a student version of the SSAFE audit to middle school health education classes.

Recently the school used a number of books that they had purchased for their library, as well as posters provided by SSAFE, to develop a display on sexuality, with a particular focus on same-sex attraction. The display was set up in the school library, and maintained through the period in which parent-teacher interviews for every year level took place in the library itself. Overwhelmingly, parents responded positively to this.

Existing health curriculum in the school is inclusive of same-sex attraction, but the school has identified that they would like further resourcing in this area.

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