

Child-Friendly Explanations for LGBT Terms – Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

These child-friendly explanations might help you to explain some of the most commonly used terms to a young person. They can be used to support discussion around inclusive behaviour practices and anti-bullying.

Term	Definition
<u>Sex and Gender</u>	
Sex	Babies are assigned to a sex when they are born, for example 'male' or 'female', 'boy' or 'girl'.
Pronoun	These are words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation – for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as 'they / their'.
Gender identity	Everyone has a gender identity. This is the gender that someone feels they are. This might be the same as the sex they were assigned to as a baby. They might feel like they are a different gender, or they might not feel like a boy or a girl.
Gender dysphoria	This term is used when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth.
Trans	A word that describes people who feel the sex they were given as a baby doesn't match the gender they feel themselves to be. For example, someone who is assigned the sex 'boy' as a baby but feels like a girl.



Term	Definition
<u>Sexual Orientation</u>	
Straight or heterosexual	A straight or heterosexual person is someone who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship or partnership with, people who are the opposite gender to them. For example, a man who is in a relationship with a woman, or a girl who is in love with a boy.
Gay	The word 'gay' refers to someone who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship or partnership with, people who are the same gender as themselves. For example, a man who loves another man or a woman who loves another woman. This includes two dads or two mums.
Lesbian	'Lesbian' is word to describe a woman who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship or partnership with, other women. For example, a girl who is in love with another girl, or two mums who are in love with each other.
Bisexual	'Bisexual' is a word to describe someone who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship or partnership with someone of the same gender as themselves or with someone of a different gender to them. A bisexual person might say that the gender of the person they fall in love with doesn't matter to them. People might use words such as 'boyfriend', 'girlfriend', 'husband', 'wife' or 'partner' to describe the person they are in love with or in a relationship with.

