

Advice and guidance for parents/carers.

Although it's more likely to happen later, it's possible that your child may explore their sexual orientation and gender identity during their primary school years. Identifying as LGBT+ can add to the pressure and anxiety that young people may feel.

There is no 'one size fits all' for every family and every situation, but here are a few tips that may help you and your child if they come out to you:

Try these tips 😊

- Take it seriously. It's positive that they can place their trust in you and want to be honest with you.
- If possible, give yourself some time to think things through.
- Think about how you felt about them before you knew about their gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Think about their feelings.
- Be aware of your own values and judgements.
- Ask questions and find out what they need from you (if anything).
- Let them educate you: ask questions, be curious. It shows you're interested and this can really boost their confidence and self-esteem.
- Keep talking to them. They might not open-up fully at first but in time they may want to confide in you.

Try to avoid 😞

- Saying: "It's just a phase". While some children and young people may be exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity, phrases like this can dismiss or make light of how they feel.
- Saying: "I thought so". This could make them anxious that people have been talking about them or they may worry about what they have been doing to make it obvious to others.
- Overly questioning if they are "sure" that they are LGBT+. It's important to listen to and accept how they feel. Dismissing or disrespecting their feelings could push them away at a difficult time.
- Reacting with confrontation or anger.
- Try to be relaxed, it should become normal to be able to talk about this – and anything else.
- Don't make it all there is. Their identity isn't everything they are. They're still the same person you know and love.
- Thinking "where did I go wrong?" There is nothing you have done or failed to do. They are simply who they are.