

Stonewall Home Learning Packs: Notes for Parents

Stonewall are a LGBTQ+ lobby group who now have a considerable focus on 'trans rights'. They have adopted an extreme position on this which has involved lobbying **for the removal of single sex exceptions from the Equality Act 2010**, and a slogan of 'no debate' which shuts down any attempt to discuss **aspects of transgender ideology which may be concerning to parents**.

Stonewall run a Stonewall School & College Champions programme, which includes access to resources, training and support, as well as the possibility of gaining a gold, silver or bronze Champion Award. In response to the school closures, in April 2020 Stonewall brought out 3 levels of Home Learning Packs aimed at 'Primary', 'Secondary' and 'SEND', 'for use 'by parents or carers looking to support their child's learning or by education staff looking to send work home for their students'. We've produced this guide to help parents make **an informed decision about the content of the Primary and SEND packs**.

According to the **Department of Education's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy**, children should be taught about the importance of boundaries and privacy, of having self-respect, being treated with respect and of respecting others, even when they are different, and about bullying and being safe. Schools are also instructed to 'be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes' and to ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met. Schools must comply with the relevant provisions of the **Equality Act 2010**, which includes guidance to ensure equality for those with protected characteristics of, amongst others, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion and belief. SSAUK wholeheartedly support these aims.

We have reviewed the Primary and SEND home learning packs and found that in some areas Stonewall's lesson plans introduce content which falls outside of or even actively works against the DfE RSE framework: content which is likely to cause worry and confusion in children, or reinforces sexism, or is not safeguarding compliant. We look specifically at this content below.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

The DfE resource 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' for September 2020 defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Some of the material in the Stonewall Primary and SEND home learning packs will not achieve the aim of enabling all children to have the best outcomes.

SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCERNS

BIOLOGICAL INACCURACY

Children from age 4 are being taught that everyone, including parents, can be wrong about something as fundamental as a child's sex: whether they are a boy or a girl. They are being taught that 'women' can become fathers and that males can be 'mistakenly' recognised as females at birth.

Children from age 4 are being taught to use a pronoun (he/she) for people which does not describe their sex and which is applied to a person's whole life, even before they 'transitioned'.

This will be confusing and potentially distressing and does not comply with safeguarding, which relies on the naming of biological reality.

Children need to have the confidence that they understand how to recognise and name body parts. This is **an established part of child safeguarding** and enables children to develop the language which may help them to **report abuse**. Children who are being abused must learn to **trust their own perception of reality** before they can start to question the story that their abuser is telling them. This should not be undermined by telling them that sometimes what they see as true is actually false in a special way that most people cannot see or understand.

Children need to understand the facts about male and female anatomy and their roles in reproduction at the appropriate time and should not be confused before most have even learnt the basics.

SEXIST STEREOTYPING

Children from age 4 are being taught that **a man can become a woman and vice versa** and that this transition can happen through a change of name and clothes. They are therefore being taught that clothing choice demonstrates not someone's personality but their 'real' sex. A suit and short hair is shown to transform someone from a girl to a boy. A man is shown as changing to wear dresses and skirts and having long hair upon transitioning to a 'woman'.

Children are taught that there are masculine/ male interests and feminine/female ones, effectively teaching children that **there are male and female brains and personalities**. Teaching this will **increase sexism** among children and within the school community. It will also cause distress in children who do not fit in with the stereotypes often ascribed to their sex. These children may wonder if they are 'really' the opposite sex, and a mistake has been made.

Children are being taught that a person can know that they are a girl or a boy, man or a woman 'inside'. This is an ideological position which is not evidenced-based and therefore should not be taught or implied to children.

LACK OF LESBIAN ROLE MODELS

There are **no positive lesbian role models** in the primary or SEND home learning packs. There are no real-life lesbian role models at all. In the two animated representations of lesbian relationships, one lesbian relationship is presented as heterosexual, because one girl reveals that she is really a boy 'inside', and in the other the two women are parted never to be together again.

STONEWALL PRIMARY & SEND HOME LEARNING: LGBT HISTORY

ROBERTA COWELL

In the Primary pack from Reception onwards, and in the SEND pack, children learn about Roberta Cowell, who was a racing driver and the first person to undergo sex reassignment surgery in the UK. There is a video, linked craft and reading / writing activities, and accompanying fact files for KS2 at 3 different levels of complexity. There is no guidance given for age or ability on the SEND pack other than splitting the activities into 'simpler, 'most learners' and 'trickier'.

The video, from 1957, shows Cowell racing and explains that Cowell is also a past record holder 'but in those days, she was a man'. The children are informed that this is old-fashioned and that 'today we would say that Roberta was a racing driver before **her** transition and after **her** transition. Roberta was trans, this means that when she was born people thought she was a boy, but when she got older she told them "I'm a woman, please call me Roberta."

Children from age 4, including children with SEND, are therefore being taught that people can be wrong about the sex of a child from birth, and that someone can think that they are a boy and can be given a boy's name when they are really a girl. The idea that adults could get something this fundamental about them wrong will **confuse and worry children**.

Children are told that 'when she was born, everyone thought that she was a boy and she was given a boy's name' and that when she grew up she 'met a woman... got married... and had two children'. They are therefore introduced to the idea that someone who was wrongly thought to be male then becomes a parent. How has he fathered a child if he is not male? No explanation is given for this, therefore **confusing children about reproduction** and the role the sexes play in it. Instead, it is implied that an important part of being a woman involves having long hair and wearing skirts and dresses. This makes it very difficult to teach children that 'male' and 'female' are biological categories which don't determine their interests or abilities, which is a key message in **tackling sexism**.

The children are told that after the war Cowell 'was a racing driver... but that Roberta began to feel very bad about herself and her body. People still thought she was a man.' So Cowell 'changed her name to Roberta, grew her hair long and started to wear skirts and dresses'. Here children are introduced to idea that people may feel very bad about their bodies, and that a possible reason is that everyone has made a mistake about their sex. **Children who are on the autism spectrum, or who have suffered childhood sexual abuse, and who are therefore more likely to 'feel bad about their bodies', are very badly served by this message.**

There is no recognition of the difference between Cowell's life and that of most women in the 1950s. The pronouns 'she' and 'her' are used to describe Cowell's time in the RAF, suggesting that women could be a pilots during WWII. At the end of the video the voiceover says that despite not going 'flat out' in a borrowed car 'she still breaks the women's record for the climb'. No comment is made about the fairness of **a male breaking a women's sporting record**.

The use of Cowell as a role model does not fit with the DfE's RSE policy focus of 'families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children'. Cowell abandoned his daughters at age 4 and 6 when he separated from their mother. He got a surgeon friend to secretly remove his testicles, which allowed him to falsely claim that he was intersex, and to alter the sex on his birth certificate. To support this, he chose to claim that his daughters were a product of his ex-wife's affairs and refused attempts to re-establish contact; a source of life-long sadness for them.

STONEWALL PRIMARY HOME LEARNING: LGBT HISTORY

ALAN L. HART

From age 7 in the Primary pack (not covered in the SEND pack) children are taught about Alan L Hart, a doctor from the USA who did some important research on TB in the mid-20th century. Born Alberta Lucille, Hart was female and was only attracted to women, however, as this was considered abnormal at the time, she sought psychiatric help. After attempts to 'reverse' her lesbianism failed, she asked a doctor to perform a hysterectomy on her and lived the rest of her life as if she were a man.

There are fact files at 3 different levels of complexity on Hart ('simpler, 'most learners' and 'trickier'), but otherwise no material about her life. Hart was previously considered to be a lesbian role model but is now identified as trans in LGBT history resources. There isn't enough source information to say how much of her decision to transition was due to homophobia and sexism.

The children are taught that 'Alan L Hart had to hide the fact that he was trans. How might it feel to hide something about yourself?' They are then told to 'Write a script or record a short section for a podcast on the importance of being yourself and finding acceptance from others'. There is no exploration of the **restrictions on girls' lives** in the early 20th century or how homophobia may have affected Alan's ability to find acceptance from others.

The fact files state that 'Alan was treated as if he was a girl when he was growing up' and 'Everyone thought he was a girl'. **This will be confusing and upsetting for children who do not feel that they fit in with sex stereotypes**, who may worry that although everyone thinks they are a girl or a boy, everyone may be wrong.

The fact file states that at university 'Alan started to wear suits and change how he looked. He looked more like a man and less like a girl.' And in the 'trickier' fact file we are told that 'In those days, it was mainly men that wore trouser suits. Because people still thought that Alan was a woman, not everyone was kind to him about his appearance.' Children are being taught here that dressing in suits and changing your look is only done for reasons of 'gender identity', rather than frustration with restrictive clothing. **There is no context provided about women's struggles to wear trousers** and play an active role in society.

Hart herself had strong feelings about women's clothing: while still known as Lucille she [wrote to a newspaper](#) to ask 'Why, indeed, should men try to dictate what women should wear and not wear?'. She pointed out the hypocrisy of men criticising women for wearing 'thin stockings and low shoes for coolness', when they had much more choice about what to wear, **and argues that the answer is not a 'swathing, formless, all-concealing garment for women', but for society to change.**

Was this a woman who believed she was a man, or a woman who was frustrated by the restrictions placed on her sex? [An excerpt](#) from a medical journal of the time shows how differently the sexes were treated: speculating on her sex, it states that 'this... means more than enslaving a man to female attire... If Dr. Hart is of the male sex... we must accord to the doctor all the privileges of a male.'

The children are given no information about the beliefs of the time in male superiority **and there is no discussion about sexism**. Instead, the way that the fact file is presented means that children will have no idea of the social and political reasons why Hart may have felt more comfortable presenting as a man. **The only idea put forward is that she was really male** and that everybody around her got it wrong.

OTHER ROLE MODELS AND SEXISM

In both the Primary and SEND packs the children are also taught about Bayard Rustin, a gay man who fought for racial equality, Alan Turing, a gay man who was a code-breaker during WWII, and Josephine Baker, a bisexual woman who was a dancer, a spy during WWII and a campaigner for racial equality.

The videos for the two men are well-produced cartoons about their whole life and work. The video for Josephine Baker is a recording of her dancing in a Jazz bar wearing revealing clothing. **This does nothing to challenge sexist traditions in recording history whereby men are remembered for their actions while women are remembered for what they looked like.**

The children are asked to consider the LGBT people that they have learnt about and rate them for creativity, intelligence and bravery. It can be predicted from the materials provided that Josephine Baker would be rated highly for creativity and that the others who are either male or identify as male would be rated for intelligence and bravery, **reinforcing sex stereotypes.**

The children have been introduced to two role models who are described as trans, but none who are described as lesbians. There is a pattern throughout the packs of featuring real life gay men, bisexual women, males who identify as woman, woman who identify as men or who they identify as 'transmen', but not lesbians.

The Ice Queen and Her Wife

Both the Primary and the SEND Home Learning packs direct all children from ages 4 upwards to watch a video from 'LGBTQ+ and equality educational resource' website 'Pop 'n' Olly' called 'The Ice Queen and her Wife.'

Safe Schools Alliance UK support positive representations of lesbian couples. However unfortunately this video does not deliver a very optimistic message about the possibility of living happily as a lesbian couple.

The ice queen is dressed like the main character from the movie 'Frozen' and has similar powers of ice. She lives in a castle with her wife, Summer, who is magic too because she can make anything flower. The couple are very happy together but one day decide to visit the town. The towns people fear the women's magic, and tell them it isn't welcome, and it would be better if they left. The queen responds to this by taking her wife's hand and walking around.

The voiceover then explains that the townspeople fear their 'magical love' and so they begin to 'tear it apart'. The ice queen and Summer do not fight back and allow themselves to be separated. The couple never meet again despite wandering the world looking for each other, a search which continues even after death: 'for once they had passed from this world to the next, their magical powers continued their quest.' The story ends by saying that they now take it in turns to rest, and this is why we have seasons.

This is a confusing video for children to make sense of. It starts by saying that the townspeople were scared of the magic, but it is then explained that it is magical love that the people are afraid of, on the basis that the townspeople's 'love would now not survive'. No explanation is given that makes sense of why people might think this. The issue is confused by making the prejudice about the non-existent quality of magic, and it is not clear how this is supposed to tie in with portraying different (real life) families positively.

This is the only significant representation of lesbians in the Primary and SEND home learning packs. It is very disappointing that it is not based on a real woman but rather on two cartoon women whose love is doomed.

Stories of lesbian love in films and on TV often end tragically. This one is no different and does not reassure children that lesbian relationships can have happy endings. There are certain topics which the DfE's statutory guidance says that relationships education should cover in primary school; including 'families and people who care for me; caring friendships; respectful relationships'. It is unclear what this video is supposed to be demonstrating about any of these topics.

Jamie

Children from age 7 are asked to watch a Pop'n'Olly video called 'Jamie', based loosely on the story of Cinderella. They are told that Jamie was very handy. She was great at fixing things and could make almost anything'. She has two mean older brothers who make her fix their cars and bikes. She also has to do all the cooking, cleaning and sewing. The brothers have their own fairy godmother who grants them wishes, but she won't grant wishes for Jamie. Jamie has only ever wanted to wish for one thing, which was to 'feel right. Because she didn't... feel right at all. Not in her body that is'. What she feels inside does not match up with what she sees in the mirror.

The Princess invites everyone to the Royal Ball. The brothers and the Fairy Godmother laugh at Jamie's desire to go. She decides that she will go to the ball in disguise, so she designs and makes a car out of a pumpkin, sews a suit and her mice friends cut her long hair short. Jamie likes her new look. She looks in the mirror and realises that she is finally seeing 'who he was...and I'm a boy, I always have been.'

Jamie goes to the ball. The princess is not having a good time as nobody seems to just be themselves. She is intrigued by the young man Jamie and they dance and talk. Jamie tells the princess everything. At the end of the night, the Princess asks 'didn't you want to reveal yourself to your brothers?' but Jamie says that's not possible as 'I'm not wearing a disguise'. Jamie stays with the princess and the brothers find the next day to their disgust that nobody has darned their socks or cleaned the house.

This apparently happy little story is in fact sending **several negative messages** to children:

- A child who is good at stereotypically male pursuits is 'really' a boy 'inside'.
- A child who is unhappy with their role at home will find an escape by 'becoming' the opposite sex.
- A child can become her 'true self' by rejecting her sex and her sexual orientation in order to find happiness

There is clearly a lot wrong in Jamie's life. She is bullied and mistreated by her brothers, as well as the Fairy Godmother, and made to do all the housework. It isn't made clear why, but as she is the only girl it is implied that girls are less valued in Jamie's family. This could sadly be the case for many young girls watching this video.

Instead of challenging this and showing Jamie leaving home to find happiness in a lesbian relationship with someone who values her for herself, it is shown that she is valued when she changes to become part of the standard fairy tale couple: the beautiful princess and the handsome prince. **This is not really challenging society's norms at all but telling children that if they don't fit in with the way that society is set up then they will only be happy if they change themselves.**

This is a damaging message to give to young girls. Stories like this do nothing to tackle the huge increase in girls seeking treatment for gender dysphoria, many of whom would otherwise grow up to be lesbian.

STONEWALL PRIMARY HOME LEARNING: ENGLISH

In the Primary pack children from age 7 are asked to 'Choose a fairy tale – for example The Princess and the Pea, Little Red Riding Hood, Beauty and the Beast. Rewrite the story so that all the characters are a different gender than in the original. For example, in Beauty and The Beast you could have Belle as a man, The Beast as a woman and **Gaston as a non-binary person**. You could even make it into a picture book or an animation.'

While the idea of changing the sexes of Beauty and the Beast could lead to some interesting conversations about stereotyping, the introduction of 'a non-binary person' is **introducing children to a particular form of gender ideology**. There is no legal definition of 'non-binary'. Stonewall's definition is *'people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'*. Most parents will struggle to explain this to their children without reinforcing sexist stereotypes. How can a parent tell a child that it is fine for a girl to want to be a footballer, or a boy to be a ballet dancer, while at the same time explaining that some people believe that they have neither a male nor a female 'identity' because they want to both play football and do ballet?

This will both undermine children's understanding of biology at a crucial time and also make it very difficult to break down stereotypes and open up horizons for boys and girls.

SEND: The SEND pack does not use the 'Jamie' video or mention the concept of 'non-binary'.

