Homophobia damages, sometimes permanently, those young people who face the challenges of coming to terms with the reality that they are gay or lesbian in a society that can still be lacking in genuine understanding. We must challenge the threat openly and develop a shared understanding that passive collusion or acceptance of homophobia is moral cowardice of the worst form.

**Challenging Homophobic Language**

- A pupil makes a homophobic remark such as 'That's so gay'. Tell the pupil that homophobic language is not acceptable in school. Explain that homophobic language is offensive.
  - **Does the pupil understand?**
    - **NO**

- The pupil continues to make comments, as does the rest of the class. Explain in more detail the effect that homophobia and homophobic language have on people and that, like racist language, homophobic language will not be tolerated.
  - **Does it stop?**
    - **NO**

- Remove the pupil from the classroom and talk to them in more detail about his/her behaviour and why it's offensive.
  - **Does the pupil stop?**
    - **NO**

- Involve senior managers. The pupil should understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use homophobic language.
  - **Does this help?**
    - **NO**

- Invite parents in to discuss the attitude of the pupil. Even if parents and pupils think gay people should be treated differently, this does not mean homophobic language or bullying is acceptable.
  - **Parents respond negatively**

- Explain to parents why this policy is important as part of the anti-bullying policy of the school. Explain that all pupils should be able to feel safe at school. Reiterate that they have an obligation to help schools uphold policies.