

Framework, Principles, and Guidance



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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TOOLKIT

**PREVENTING AND TACKLING SOGIESC-BASED BULLYING
AND ANTI-RIGHTS DISCOURSE IN SCHOOLS**

Framework, Principles, and Guidance

IGLYO (2026). Inclusive Education Toolkit: Preventing and Tackling SOGIESC-based Bullying and Anti-Rights Discourse in Schools. *Tool 0: Framework, Principles, and Guidance*.

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1. About this Tool



This introduction is part of the Inclusive Education Toolkit on preventing and tackling SOGIESC-based bullying and anti-rights discourse in schools. The toolkit has been developed by the Council of Europe Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) Unit in cooperation with the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO), under the EU and Council of Europe Joint Project entitled “Combating anti-LGBTIQ violence and hate speech and strengthening awareness-raising and fact-based narratives about LGBTIQ persons.”

The toolkit responds to a practical need identified by education professionals, civil society organisations, and international partners across the Council of Europe region. Schools are expected to ensure safety, dignity, non-discrimination, and participation for all students, but they do not always have the policy frameworks, institutional routines, educator competences, or support structures needed to address SOGIESC-based bullying, inclusive curricula, and related opposition in a competent way. This is particularly important in contexts where anti-rights narratives fuel misinformation and disinformation, stigmatise LGBTQI students and families, challenge inclusive comprehensive sexuality education, and create uncertainty or pressure for educators and school leaders.

Tool 0 provides the shared entry point for the toolkit. It explains the purpose, methodology, common rights-based framing, shared terminology, target audiences, and implementation principles that connect the three main tools. It is not intended to replace the detailed guidance in Tools 1, 2, and 3. Rather, it helps readers understand how the tools fit together and how to select, adapt, and apply them in different education systems and implementation contexts.

The three tools are:



✿ Tool 1: Policy Guidance on Addressing SOGIESC-based Bullying in Schools, which provides structural and institutional foundations for safe and inclusive school environments;

🟢 Tool 2: Countering Anti-Rights Discourse in Education, which builds resilience against misinformation, disinformation, polarisation and hostile narratives;

📖 Tool 3: Framework for the Development of a Training Module on SOGIESC for Educators, which supports the design and implementation of competence-based educator training on LGBTQI-inclusive schools and curricula.

Together, the three tools form a coherent package that links policy frameworks, narrative resilience, and educator competences into a systemic approach to advancing SOGIESC-inclusive education.

This introductory tool should be read before using any of the three main tools. It may also be used separately as a short orientation document for ministries, school leaders, training providers, civil society partners, or other actors who need to understand the toolkit's overall logic before deciding which tool to use first.

TABLE 1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THREE TOOLS

Toolkit function	Main question	Main tool	Link to other tools
Policy and systems 	What policies and supports should be in place so that schools can prevent and respond to SOGIESC-based bullying?	 Tool 1	 Tool 2 helps schools respond when policy implementation is contested.  Tool 3 helps build staff competence.
Practice and response 	How can educators and school leaders respond to misinformation, disinformation, tensions, and opposition in ways that protect learners and staff?	 Tool 2	 Tool 1 provides institutional backing.  Tool 3 supports training on the required competences.
Training and capacity 	How can educator-training modules be designed, implemented, and evaluated?	 Tool 3	 Tool 1 identifies policy expectations.  Tool 2 provides classroom and school-level scenarios for practice.
Shared implementation 	How can policy, practice, and training be aligned rather than treated as separate tasks?	 Tool 0 and all main tools	 Tool 0 provides common framing, terminology, and principles; Tools 1 , 2 , and 3 provide detailed guidance.

Schools often experience these issues as connected. A bullying incident may reveal gaps in reporting, staff confidence, digital safety, communication with families, and leadership support at the same time. A hostile public narrative may affect curriculum implementation, teacher well-being, learner safety, and partnerships with civil society. A training session may identify policy gaps that educators cannot resolve alone. The toolkit therefore encourages users to move between tools when needed.

2. Why this Toolkit Is Needed



All children and young people have the right to education in a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. This includes the right to learn free from violence, bullying, harassment, social exclusion, and other forms of discriminatory treatment, including when these are linked to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics. Schools also play a central role in promoting democratic values, respect for human dignity, equality, critical thinking, and participation. They are therefore not only places where harm must be prevented, but also environments where students can develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to live together respectfully in diverse societies. Yet many LGBTQI students across Europe continue to experience discrimination, harassment, exclusion, and violence in school, while children from LGBTQI families may also be targeted because of their family composition.

The latest EU Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) LGBTIQ Survey III shows the scale of this problem. Among respondents aged 15-17, 62% reported experiencing bullying by peers and 9% by school staff. The figures remain similarly high among respondents aged 18-24, with 58% reporting bullying by peers and 12% by school staff.

For some students, these experiences affect their educational pathway directly: 37% of trans girls, 35% of trans boys and 40% of intersex respondents aged 15-17 reported having changed or left school because of their experiences as trans or intersex students in that school environment. These figures underline the need for education systems to move beyond incident-based responses and to build school cultures where inclusion, safety, and respect are actively taught, modelled, and protected.

SOGIESC-based bullying is not limited to visible physical incidents. It may include verbal harassment, social exclusion, humiliation, threats, sexual harassment, misgendering, deadnaming, outing, hostile jokes, spreading rumours, coercive pressure to hide one's identity, or repeated exposure to messages that portray LGBTQI people as dangerous, inappropriate, abnormal, or incompatible with family, cultural, religious or national values. It may also target students who are perceived to be LGBTQI, students with LGBTQI family members, or students who challenge gender norms. Addressing these harms requires more than sanctioning individual incidents: it requires schools to promote accurate information, respectful relationships, empathy, media literacy, and a clear understanding that diversity is compatible with shared educational and democratic values.

Cyberbullying adds another layer of risk. Online harassment, image-based abuse, anonymous attacks, group chats, memes, screenshots, doxxing and coordinated pressure can follow students across the boundary between school and home. These harms may originate outside school, but they can directly affect school climate, attendance, peer relationships, safeguarding needs, and the ability of students to participate in education. For this reason, the toolkit treats online and offline safety as connected, and situates digital safety within broader work on school climate, democratic participation, critical thinking, and respectful communication.

The toolkit is also needed because stigma and exclusion are often sustained by lack of information, misinformation, disinformation, and stereotypes. In some contexts, SOGIESC-inclusive education is misrepresented as a threat to children, families, religion,

or parental rights. These narratives may be amplified through media, political debate, social media, community mobilisation, or pressure on individual educators. Schools may then face uncertainty, fear, or opposition when trying to address bullying, inclusive curricula, or learner support. At the same time, schools are uniquely placed to counter misinformation, disinformation, and prejudice through evidence-based teaching, inclusive curricula, dialogue, and the everyday modelling of equality, dignity, and non-discrimination.

Educators, school leaders and other school staff often want to act but need clearer guidance, institutional backing and training. Without a whole-school and system-level approach, responsibility can fall unfairly on individual teachers, LGBTQI staff, LGBTQI students, or civil society organisations. This creates risk: responses may become inconsistent, reactive, unsafe, or dependent on the confidence of one person rather than on recognised policies and shared responsibilities. A whole-school approach helps ensure that inclusion is embedded in leadership, policy, curricula, training, safeguarding, communication, and partnerships, and that schools can fulfil both their protective role and their educational role in shaping respectful and democratic learning environments.



____ / ____ / ____
The toolkit therefore starts from the following framework:

- SOGIESC-based bullying undermines students' safety, dignity, well-being, participation, and educational outcomes;
- Schools have a positive role in promoting equality, human dignity, respect, democratic participation, and critical thinking;
- Cyberbullying blurs the boundary between online and offline school life and requires coordinated responses;
- Misinformation, disinformation and stereotypes contribute to stigma, exclusion, and resistance to inclusive education;
- Inclusive education helps prevent harm by providing accurate information, challenging prejudice, and strengthening belonging;
- Educators need clear guidance, institutional support, professional learning, and safe escalation pathways;
- Schools may face pressure, opposition, or uncertainty when addressing SOGIESC inclusion;
- Comprehensive responses require policy, practice, training, monitoring, safeguarding, and partnerships.

The toolkit is designed to help education systems move from isolated action towards coherent implementation. It supports policies that can be applied in practice, classroom and school routines that are grounded in rights and safeguarding, and training approaches that build educator competence without leaving individual staff to manage institutional risk alone.

The toolkit recognises that, when implementation is not supported by clear policies, procedures, and institutional ownership, responses can become inconsistent, overly cautious, reactive, or dependent on individual goodwill. A school may have a general anti-bullying policy, but no safe reporting mechanism. A curriculum may contain references to diversity, but educators may lack the training or confidence to teach them. A teacher may be willing to support a learner, but may not know what information can be shared, with whom, and under what conditions. A school leader may want to respond to opposition, but lack agreed communication protocols or institutional support.

For this reason, the toolkit emphasises the connection between:



PREVENTION

so that schools build inclusive environments before incidents occur;



RECOGNITION

so that SOGIESC-based harms are named and understood;



RESPONSE

so that incidents, tensions, and opposition are handled safely and consistently;



CAPACITY

so that educators and school leaders have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to act;



ACCOUNTABILITY

so that policies, training, and school practices are monitored and improved over time.



3. Methodology



The toolkit was developed through a participatory and rights-based methodology. The process combined initial scoping, multi-stakeholder consultation, drafting, review, written feedback, and final consolidation. The aim was not only to produce written guidance, but to ensure that the tools reflected the realities of different education systems, including contexts where SOGIESC-inclusive education is supported, contested, unevenly implemented, or constrained.

The process began with an initial consultation and scoping phase to identify what kind of support institutions, international organisations, education stakeholders, and civil society needed. This phase confirmed that a single tool would not be sufficient to respond to the range of challenges identified. Stakeholders pointed to needs operating at different levels of the education system: policy and institutional frameworks; school-level responses to opposition, misinformation and disinformation; and educator training and capacity-building. This initial phase, therefore, shaped the decision to develop three complementary tools, rather than one single guidance document.



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The main co-design milestone was an in-person multi-stakeholder working group meeting held in Barcelona on 25 June 2025, immediately before the IGLYO Proud Pupils Conference 2025. The conference was a broader international event on LGBTIQ-inclusive education, co-organised by the Council of Europe SOGIESC Unit and IGLYO, with FELGBTI+, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona's Department of Social Psychology, the research group Epi4health, and Observatori Contra l'LGBTIfòbia as partners. It brought together more than 150 civil society representatives, youth activists, education-sector practitioners and policymakers to exchange good practices, produce guidelines and strengthen an international platform on LGBTIQ-inclusive education. Locating the working group alongside this conference helped connect the toolkit's co-design process to wider policy, practice and community exchange in the field. The working group meeting itself brought together 26 participants, including representatives of IGLYO, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the OECD, national and regional LGBTQI organisations, family associations, youth organisations, and other civil society actors. This diversity was important because the toolkit needed to speak to policy, pedagogy, institutional implementation, and community realities across the Council of Europe region.

This meeting was structured around a common introduction followed by thematic breakout work. Participants received an overview of the initiative and of the three priority areas that had emerged from the initial scoping phase. They then worked in groups on: policy guidance for preventing and addressing SOGIESC-based bullying in schools; responding to anti-rights discourse, misinformation and disinformation through education; and developing a framework for educator training on SOGIESC-inclusive schools and curricula. Plenary discussions allowed participants to compare findings, identify links between the three areas, and further clarify why the final output needed to function as a coherent toolkit rather than as three disconnected resources.

To support informed participation, written briefing documents were prepared for each thematic area. These briefings summarised relevant policy contexts, challenges, debates, and guiding questions. Participants were therefore able to react to a shared baseline, test assumptions, identify practical barriers, and highlight where the final tools would need to be adaptable to different national, legal, linguistic, and political contexts.

After this meeting, the project moved into a drafting phase. Input from the working groups, the discussions that happened during the Proud Pupils Conference, bilateral exchanges with selected partners, and relevant international and European frameworks was synthesised into three draft tools. The drafting process was carried out in close cooperation with the Council of Europe SOGIESC Unit and with the support of external expertise. The purpose was not to record the discussions, but to translate them into usable instruments for policy and practice.

Internal coherence was treated as a core methodological requirement. The three tools were developed as complementary components of a single package, not as separate documents with unrelated assumptions. This was necessary because the issues are interdependent: anti-bullying policy is difficult to implement without educator competence; educator competence is difficult to sustain without institutional support; and both are affected by anti-rights discourse, misinformation, disinformation, polarisation, and opposition.

A second formal consultation milestone took place through an online multi-stakeholder feedback meeting on 3 December 2025. The meeting was designed to review the draft toolkit, gather qualitative feedback on each tool, test feasibility, identify risks, and clarify implementation pathways. Participants were asked not only whether the content was useful, but also how they could realistically use it in their own systems, what barriers they could foresee, what political or legal sensitivities needed to be considered, and which actors would need to be involved for the tools to work in practice.

The review process confirmed broad support for the three tools and generated practical recommendations. Participants asked for stronger acknowledgement of politicised or hostile contexts; clearer guidance on safeguarding, privacy, and legal alignment; more precise audience signposting; and greater attention to implementation pathways, including pilots, partnerships, translation, and adaptation. The process also highlighted the importance of engaging not only teachers and school leaders, but also families and caregivers, municipalities, teacher unions, equality bodies, inspectorates, NGOs, teacher education providers, and other trusted actors.

Following the online meeting, participants were invited to provide additional written feedback. The finalisation period allowed the project team to integrate comments carefully across the tools, particularly in relation to contested contexts, contextual adaptation, risk mitigation, user segmentation, monitoring and evaluation, safeguarding, and practical entry points for implementation.

TABLE 2. METHODOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOOL

PREPARATORY
FRAMING



Purpose	Main contribution to the toolkit
Identify the core problem areas and prepare shared briefing material.	Established the three thematic priorities and ensured informed discussion.

IN-PERSON
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
MEETING



Purpose	Main contribution to the toolkit
Gather policy, practice, institutional, and civil society perspectives through facilitated working groups.	Shaped the architecture, priorities, and practical orientation of the three tools.

TABLE 2 (CONT.)

**DRAFTING &
SYNTHESIS**



Purpose

Translate consultation input, research, and standards into usable tools.

Main contribution to the toolkit

Converted discussion into policy guidance, school-level routines, and training design guidance.

**ONLINE
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
MEETING**



Purpose

Test draft tools against feasibility, risk, and implementation realities.

Main contribution to the toolkit

Strengthened audience signposting, safeguarding, contextual adaptation, and practical use.

**FEEDBACK &
FINAL INTEGRATION**



Purpose

Consolidate comments and align the three tools.

Main contribution to the toolkit

Improved coherence, terminology, implementation pathways, and consistency of rights-based approach.

This methodology means that the toolkit should be understood as both evidence-informed and practice-tested. It draws on human rights standards, education research, and institutional frameworks, but it is also shaped by people working with schools, students, education authorities, and communities in varied national contexts.

The same participatory logic should guide later implementation. Where the toolkit is used to support policy review, school improvement or educator training, users are encouraged to involve relevant civil society organisations, LGBTQI youth organisations, equality bodies, professional associations and, where safe and appropriate, people with lived experience. Their role should not be symbolic. They can help identify local risks, review terminology, point to support pathways, contribute data and practice knowledge, and ensure that implementation responds to the realities of learners and communities.

Participants across the project included representatives from the Council of Europe SOGIESC Unit, the European Commission, UNESCO, and the OECD, alongside representatives from IGLYO, national and regional LGBTQI civil society organisations, youth organisations, family associations, and community-based organisations working on inclusive education, equality, and support for LGBTQI students and families.¹ This brought together expertise from policy, international standards, research, school practice, civil society advocacy, and lived community knowledge, ensuring that the toolkit was shaped by actors who understand both institutional responsibilities and the practical realities faced by learners, educators, and communities.

¹ Participants included representatives from the Council of Europe SOGIESC Unit; the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Unit for Non-Discrimination: LGBTIQ+, Age, Horizontal Matters; the European Commission Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture; the Education Sector of UNESCO; the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; and IGLYO. It also included the following representatives of civil society organisations: Arber Nuhui (CSGD); Bergrún Andradóttir (Samtökin '78); Blin Sali (Alliance Against Discrimination of LGBT); Dali Agrebi (MGRM); Dea Nini (Aleanca); Donatella Siringo (Agedo); Dorottya Kutassy (Háttér Society); Eglè Kuktoraitè (LGL); Elaine Murphy (ShoutOut); Els Verbeelen (çavaria); Gerardo Gómez Crespo (GALEHI - Asociación de Familias LGTBIQ+ / Diversit - Antirumores Global); Isma Benboulerbah (Education International); Jana Hugo (Oll Europe); Jo C.G. Matos (rede ex aequo); Joy Nikolaou (Colour Youth); Kaj Poelman (çavaria); Mariarosa Milazzo (AGEDO Nazionale); Marta Alonso (FELGTBI+); Monika Pisankaneva (Bilitis Resource Center Foundation); Robert Attard (MGRM); Ruadhán Ó Críodáin (ShoutOut); Sebastjan Sitar (Legebitra); Teija Ryhtä (Seta – LGBTI Rights in Finland); Venla Suutari (Seta – LGBTI Rights in Finland); and Yelyzaveta Samboruk (NGO Insight).

4. Shared Human Rights and Education Framing

The three tools share a common human rights and education framing. The toolkit is grounded in Council of Europe standards, relevant European Union frameworks, United Nations human rights standards, UNESCO education guidance, and other international or comparative sources. This framing is connected to the right to education, the right to non-discrimination, protection from violence, respect for dignity and privacy, participation, well-being, democratic citizenship, and the professional responsibilities of education systems.





Right to education

Education is a human right.



Institutional support

Schools and educators need clear institutional support to fulfil these responsibilities safely and consistently.



Children's rights

Children and young people have the right to safety, dignity, participation, and non-discrimination in education.

**The toolkit is grounded in
five shared principles**



System responsibility

Member states and education systems have responsibilities to prevent violence, discrimination, and harassment, including when these are linked to actual or perceived SOGIESC.



Safe and inclusive education

SOGIESC-based bullying, harassment, and exclusion are incompatible with safe and inclusive education.

The toolkit does not attempt to provide a full legal analysis of every applicable instrument. The three tools translate shared standards into practical guidance for education systems, schools, and training providers. The frameworks below are not all of the same legal status. Some are binding treaties, others are Council of Europe Committee of Ministers recommendations and Parliamentary Assembly resolutions, policy strategies, technical guidance, monitoring reports, or comparative evidence. Together however, they provide a strong basis for treating SOGIESC-inclusive education as part of ordinary education, child protection, equality, democratic citizenship, and violence-prevention responsibilities.

TABLE 3. RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Framework	Relevance for the toolkit
Council of Europe treaties and human rights standards	The <u>European Convention on Human Rights</u> , including Article 14 of Protocol No. 12 on non-discrimination, and Article 2 of Protocol No. 1, on the right to education, provide a regional human rights foundation. The <u>Revised European Social Charter</u> is also relevant, particularly its provisions on children’s rights to social, legal, and economic protection, education, and non-discrimination. These standards support the core principle that students must be able to enjoy education without violence, discrimination, or degrading treatment.
Council of Europe Strategy for Equal Rights for LGBTI People (2027–2032)	<u>This Strategy</u> was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in September 2026 and provides the first overarching strategic framework for advancing the equal rights, dignity, safety, and inclusion of LGBTI people across the Council of Europe region. The Strategy sets out a number of objectives and actions that directly connect LGBTI equality with the issues addressed across Tools 1, 2, and 3. In education, this includes creating environments in which LGBTI children and young people can participate safely and equally; preventing discrimination, bullying, violence, hate speech, and stigmatisation; addressing polarising and misleading narratives about LGBTI people; inclusive education curricula; and ensuring that public institutions have the legal, policy, professional, and institutional capacity to protect rights in practice.

TABLE 3 (CONT.)

Council of Europe SOGIE standards	<u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5</u> on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity is central to the toolkit. Its education section calls on member States to ensure that the right to education can be effectively enjoyed without discrimination, including by safeguarding children and young people in environments free from violence, bullying, social exclusion, and discriminatory or degrading treatment related to sexual orientation or gender identity. It also calls for objective information on sexual orientation and gender identity in curricula and educational materials, and for information, protection, and support for pupils and students. The <u>2025 third review of implementation of CM/Rec(2010)5</u> is also relevant for understanding progress, gaps, and polarisation across the region.
Council of Europe intersex rights standards	<u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)7</u> on Equal Rights for Intersex Persons provides a specific framework for protecting and promoting the human rights of intersex persons. For this toolkit, it is relevant because it recognises discrimination, stigmatisation, marginalisation, social exclusion, and violence against intersex persons, and calls for comprehensive and coherent measures across sectors, meaningful participation of intersex persons and their organisations, and protection of bodily integrity, autonomy, dignity, privacy, and equality. This strengthens the toolkit's attention to sex characteristics and to the need for intersex-inclusive policies, curricula, training, and safeguarding.
Council of Europe child rights and violence-prevention standards	The <u>Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)</u>, <u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10</u> on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence, the <u>Lanzarote Convention</u> on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and relevant work of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) and the Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence (ENF-VAE) support a child-centred violence-prevention framing.

Council of Europe hate speech, hate crime, and democratic education standards	<u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16</u> on combating hate speech, <u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4</u> on combating hate crime, <u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7</u> on the rights of the child in the digital environment, <u>Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)2</u> on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries, the <u>Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, Digital Citizenship Education</u> guidance, and related Council of Europe <u>education resources</u> support the toolkit’s approach to anti-rights discourse, misinformation, disinformation, cyberbullying, democratic citizenship, media literacy, and safe participation. These standards help connect SOGIESC-inclusive education to broader duties to prevent hate, address online and offline harm, support critical thinking, protect students and staff from hostile environments, and ensure that restrictions or responses to harmful speech remain consistent with human rights, equality, and freedom of expression standards.
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CM/Rec(2026)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of children from violence through age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education	The <u>Recommendation</u> frames age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) as a rights-based measure for preventing and protecting children from violence. It calls for CSE that is inclusive, non-discriminatory, science-based, grounded in children’s rights, and provided progressively in accordance with children’s age, development, maturity, and evolving capacities. It promotes equality, bodily integrity, personal autonomy, consent, mutual respect, critical thinking, safe relationships, and children’s ability to recognise, respond to, and report different forms of violence. The Recommendation explicitly calls for equality and non-discrimination for children with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, or sex characteristics, including where these intersect with other grounds of vulnerability or discrimination. It also calls for trained educators, inclusive and safe learning environments, meaningful participation by children, engagement with parents and civil society, and monitoring and evaluation of CSE provision. These elements reinforce the toolkit’s SOGIESC-explicit, child-centred, whole-school, and safeguarding approaches.
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TABLE 3 (CONT.)

Parliamentary Assembly resolutions	<u>PACE Resolution 2048 (2015)</u> on discrimination against transgender people in Europe, <u>Resolution 2097 (2016)</u> on access to school and education for all children, <u>Resolution 2191 (2017)</u> on promoting the human rights of and eliminating discrimination against intersex people, and <u>Resolution 2417 (2022)</u> on combating rising hate against LGBTI people in Europe are relevant political references. They reinforce the importance of access to education, respect for privacy and dignity, access to objective information, professional training, protection from violence, and attention to trans and intersex students.
Council of Europe education- sector evidence	The <u>Council of Europe report Safe at School: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression or sex characteristics in Europe</u> is a key reference. It frames SOGIESC-based violence as an education-sector responsibility and identifies the elements of comprehensive responses: policy, inclusive curricula and learning materials, training and support for education staff, support for students, partnerships with civil society, and monitoring and evaluation. These elements are reflected across Tools 1, 2, and 3.

**European
Union
frameworks
and evidence**

EU equality, child rights, education, digital safety, victim protection, and anti-discrimination frameworks are relevant for policy coherence, data, institutional responsibility, and implementation. This includes the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#), the [LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030](#), the [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), and the [European Child Guarantee](#), the [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#), the European Commission's [guidelines on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy](#), and the [2026 Action Plan against Cyberbullying](#). These frameworks are important because they connect SOGIESC-inclusive education to children's rights, equality, digital citizenship, online safety, protection from violence, and democratic participation. The [Digital Services Act](#), the [Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online](#), and wider EU work on misinformation, disinformation and online harms are also relevant where bullying, hate speech, harassment, or anti-rights narratives circulate through online platforms. EU criminal law and victim-support instruments, including [Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA](#), the [Victims' Rights Directive](#), and the [2024 Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) also provide useful reference points, while showing remaining gaps in explicit SOGIESC protection. FRA evidence on LGBTIQ people's experiences ([LGBTIQ Survey III](#)), including bullying, discrimination, mental health impacts, under-reporting, and school climate, is particularly relevant for understanding the scale and impact of the issues addressed by the toolkit.

**United Nations
human rights
standards**

The [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), including the rights to non-discrimination, protection from violence, education, health, privacy, and participation, provides a global human rights baseline. The [UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education](#), the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), and other UN human rights instruments also support the right to education without discrimination. UN treaty body guidance recognising the vulnerability of LGBTIQ children to bullying and violence is relevant to the toolkit's child-centred approach.

TABLE 3 (CONT.)

UNESCO and international education guidance	UNESCO resources on school violence, sexuality education, inclusion, digital safety, and safe learning environments support the toolkit’s education-sector framing. Relevant references include <u>Out in the Open</u> , <u>Safe to Learn and Thrive</u> , <u>Safe, Seen and Included</u> , the International <u>Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education</u> , the <u>Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action</u> , and UNESCO’s work on inclusive and equitable education free from discrimination and violence. These resources reinforce the need for evidence-based, age-appropriate, non-stigmatising, and rights-based education. UNESCO and IGLYO’s <u>Don’t Look Away: No Place for Exclusion of LGBTI Students</u> further supports the toolkit’s emphasis on monitoring, school climate, curricula, and learner safety.
Other international and comparative sources	The work of the OECD, Eurydice, Education International, and academic research help situate the toolkit within broader debates on inclusive school systems, teacher professionalism, school climate, policy implementation, media and information literacy, democratic education, and whole-school approaches. Relevant resources include OECD’s <u>Equity and Inclusion in Education: Finding Strength through Diversity</u> and <u>Results from TALIS 2024: The State of Teaching</u> , which support the toolkit’s focus on system-level policy, teacher capacity, leadership and professional learning; OECD’s <u>Fighting homophobia and transphobia in schools: A groundbreaking impact assessment</u> , which provides evidence on school-based LGBTQI inclusion interventions; Eurydice’s <u>Promoting diversity and inclusion in schools in Europe</u> , which maps national policies and measures on diversity, inclusion, and bullying prevention across European education systems; and Education International’s work on LGBTQI rights in education and on education as a target of anti-rights mobilisation. The <u>Yogyakarta Principles</u> and <u>Yogyakarta Principles plus 10</u> provide a human rights reference point for applying existing standards to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, including in relation to equality, non-discrimination, education, privacy, expression, and protection from violence.



These frameworks point towards a shared set of education-sector responsibilities:

- prevent and address SOGIESC-based violence, bullying, harassment, and exclusion;
- ensure that anti-bullying, safeguarding, and equality policies are explicit, implementable, and monitored;
- provide objective, age-appropriate, and non-stigmatising information on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics;
- ensure that curricula and learning materials do not erase, stigmatise, or misrepresent LGBTQI people;
- train and support educators, school leaders, and other education staff;
- protect students' privacy, dignity, bodily integrity, participation, and access to support;
- work with civil society, equality bodies, child protection actors, and other relevant partners;
- support parents in their role of fostering the values of non-discrimination, equality, particularly gender equality, and mutual respect in all interpersonal interactions and relationships;
- monitor incidents, school climate, and implementation while protecting confidentiality and personal data;
- address hate speech, hate crime, misinformation and disinformation in ways that uphold democratic, safe, and inclusive education.

This framing situates SOGIESC inclusion within ordinary education responsibilities: safeguarding, anti-bullying, well-being, equality, professional standards, school climate, curricula, digital safety, and democratic citizenship. The shared framing also helps users respond to opposition. When inclusive education is contested, schools and authorities should address it as part of their existing responsibility to ensure that all students can access education safely, without discrimination or violence, and with appropriate support for their dignity, privacy, and participation.

Implementation of the toolkit should be anchored in recognised education responsibilities, and focus on students' safety, dignity, education, well-being, and participation, and on the responsibility of schools to respond to bullying, misinformation, disinformation, and exclusion in a professional and rights-based way. Depending on the context, these may include:

- preventing and addressing bullying, violence, and harassment;
- ensuring equal access to education and participation;
- promoting student well-being, school belonging, and mental health;
- providing age-appropriate, accurate, and inclusive information;
- responding to parental concerns, and supporting them with age-appropriate, accurate and inclusive information;
- supporting democratic citizenship, critical thinking, and media literacy;
- protecting children and young people from harm, including online harm;
- respecting privacy, confidentiality, and data protection;
- strengthening professional standards and educator competence;
- building safe, inclusive, and respectful school climates.



5. Who Is this Toolkit for?



This toolkit is intended for actors across education systems who have responsibility for ensuring that all learners can access education in safe, inclusive, and respectful environments. It is not designed for one professional group only. SOGIESC-based bullying, cyberbullying, misinformation, disinformation and anti-rights opposition require coordinated action across policy, school leadership, classroom practice, safeguarding, training, monitoring and partnerships.

The toolkit is relevant across school education, with adaptation to the learner's age, developmental stage, school level, and national context. It is particularly relevant for primary and secondary education, including lower and upper secondary settings, where peer relationships, school climate, identity development, online interaction, and curriculum content can directly affect students' safety and participation. It can also inform work in early childhood education, vocational education, post-compulsory school settings, and teacher education, where relevant. Because school structures and age ranges differ across Council of Europe member states, users should interpret "school years" flexibly and adapt the tools to their own education system.

Age-appropriateness is central. The toolkit does not assume that the same language, activities, or examples should be used with all students. Across all school years, schools have responsibilities to prevent bullying, protect dignity, respond to harm, respect privacy, and ensure non-discrimination. However, the way these responsibilities are implemented should differ by age and context. In early years and primary settings, work may focus on kindness, belonging, family diversity, respectful language, trusted adults, and recognising exclusion or name-calling. In upper primary and lower secondary settings, it may include more explicit work on bullying, stereotypes, online safety, peer pressure, bystander behaviour, respectful communication, and reporting pathways. In upper secondary and vocational settings, students may be

ready for deeper engagement with rights, media and information literacy, anti-rights narratives, misinformation, disinformation, democratic participation, online harms, and institutional accountability.

The practical classroom examples in  **Tool 2** are often framed around secondary school contexts, because students at that level are more likely to engage directly with contested public narratives, social media content, misinformation and disinformation. These examples are illustrative rather than prescriptive. Educators should adapt them to the age group, subject, language, cultural context, available time, safeguarding risks, and level of institutional support. For younger students, this may mean simplifying language or focusing on concrete situations of respect and safety, always ensuring that discussion does not expose individual students or families.

The toolkit may be used by:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ✓ national, regional, and local education authorities | ✓ teacher-training institutions, universities, and accreditation bodies | ✓ teacher unions and professional associations |
| ✓ policymakers and ministries of education | ✓ counsellors, psychologists, safeguarding leads, and well-being staff | ✓ families, caregivers, and community partners, where relevant |
| ✓ equality bodies, inspectorates, and child protection bodies | ✓ civil society organisations and LGBTQI youth organisations | ✓ international organisations and intergovernmental bodies supporting education-sector reform |
| ✓ school leaders and school governance bodies | | |
| ✓ teachers, educators, and school staff across different school years | | |

TABLE 4. AUDIENCES OF THE DIFFERENT TOOLS

Main tool	Primary audience	Secondary audiences	Main use
 Tool 1	Polymakers, education authorities, inspectorates, equality bodies, and school leaders.	Teacher-training institutions, civil society organisations, child protection actors, families, and community partners.	Reviewing and strengthening policy, legislation, reporting, school environments, curricula, training, monitoring, and partnerships. It is relevant across school education and should be adapted to the way responsibilities are distributed in each system.
 Tool 2	Educators, counsellors, school leaders, and school-based professionals.	Ministries, equality bodies, teacher unions, civil society organisations, youth workers, and community partners.	Supporting classroom routines, school playbooks, communication, and safeguarding when misinformation, disinformation, tensions, or opposition arise. Its examples are especially relevant to secondary settings, but the principles can be adapted across subjects and age groups.
 Tool 3	Education authorities, teacher-training institutions, universities, and civil society training providers.	Ministries, school leaders, teacher unions, equality bodies, professional standards bodies, and international organisations.	Designing, implementing, and evaluating competence-based educator training. The framework can be adapted for pre-service teachers, in-service educators, school leaders, counsellors, psychologists, teacher educators, subject coordinators, inclusion leads, and other education professionals working across early childhood, primary, secondary, vocational, or higher education contexts.

The toolkit also supports dialogue between these audiences. For example, a ministry may use 🌸 **Tool 1** to review policy gaps, 📖 **Tool 3** to commission educator training, and 🟢 **Tool 2** to understand what schools need when facing opposition. A school leader may use 🟢 **Tool 2** to strengthen internal routines and then refer to 🌸 **Tool 1** to align those routines with policy and reporting systems. A civil society organisation may use 📖 **Tool 3** to design training while using 🌸 **Tool 1** and 🟢 **Tool 2** to ensure that training is connected to institutional responsibilities and safeguarding pathways.

When using the toolkit, users should therefore ask not only “Who is responsible?” but also “For which school years, students, and professional roles is this being adapted?” This includes considering the age and maturity of students, the school level, the subject area, the local legal and policy framework, the likelihood of opposition, the availability of specialist support, and the safeguards needed to protect students from exposure, retaliation, or harm.

6. How Do Responsibilities Vary Across Education Systems?



Responsibility for education policy, curricula, teacher education, professional development, inspection, safeguarding, and school governance does not always sit at the national or federal level. Across the Council of Europe region, these responsibilities are organised differently. In some member states, decisions are taken mainly at the national level. In others, substantial responsibility sits with regional, local, or school-level authorities, teacher-training institutions, accreditation bodies, inspection systems, professional standards bodies, or individual school networks.

For this reason, references in the toolkit to “education authorities”, “policymakers”, “training institutions”, “schools”, or “users” should be understood flexibly. Readers should apply the guidance according to the distribution of responsibilities in their own education system. A recommendation addressed to an education authority may be relevant to a ministry in one country, a regional department in another, a municipality in another, and a school board, inspectorate, or professional body elsewhere.

This flexible reading is important because it helps identify realistic and institutionally appropriate entry points for action. It prevents the toolkit from assuming a single governance model, recognising that SOGIESC-inclusive education may be advanced

through national policy, regional guidance, school development plans, teacher education standards, inspection frameworks, curriculum review, local partnerships, or training programmes.

It also helps clarify who has the authority to act. If a school cannot change a national curriculum, it may still be able to strengthen reporting pathways, staff training, classroom routines, support for affected students, and communication with families. If a teacher-training institution cannot change school policy, it may still be able to embed SOGIESC inclusion in learning outcomes, assessment, placement preparation, and trainer competence.

Finally, it avoids placing unrealistic responsibility on individual educators or learners. When responsibilities are unclear, the burden of inclusion often falls on the people closest to the harm: LGBTQI students or supportive teachers, counsellors, or civil society organisations. The toolkit therefore encourages users to map responsibilities explicitly so that action is owned by the appropriate institutions and supported by clear procedures.

When adapting the toolkit, users may find it helpful to ask:

- Who has formal responsibility for anti-bullying policy, child protection, and school safety?
- Who sets curricula, learning outcomes, and teaching materials?
- Who regulates initial teacher education and continuing professional development?
- Who is responsible for inspection, quality assurance, or school improvement?
- Who receives and responds to complaints, discrimination reports, or safeguarding concerns?
- Which actors can provide trusted expertise, training, mediation, or community support?
- Which responsibilities are legal obligations, which are professional standards, and which are institutional choices?

Mapping these responsibilities early can help users decide which tool to start with and how to sequence implementation. Table 5 offers examples of how responsibilities may shift depending on the governance model.

TABLE 5. EXAMPLES OF RESPONSIBILITY DISTRIBUTION

Area of work	Possible responsible actors	Implementation implication
Anti-bullying policy	National ministry, regional education authority, municipality, school board, inspectorate, or school leadership.	✳️ Tool 1 should be adapted to the level that can change policy, guidance, reporting, or accountability.
Curriculum and learning materials	National curriculum body, regional authority, school network, textbook provider, teacher-training institution, or school leadership.	✳️ Tool 1 can support inclusive curriculum review; 📖 Tool 3 can prepare educators to teach content safely and accurately.
Educator training	Universities, teacher-training institutions, professional development providers, ministries, regional authorities, civil society partners, or school networks.	📖 Tool 3 should be adapted to the training provider's mandate, accreditation system, and participant profile.
School-level response	School leadership, safeguarding lead, counsellor, educator teams, school governance bodies, or local education authorities.	🟢 Tool 2 can help develop response routines, documentation practices, and escalation pathways.

Safeguarding and referrals	Child protection bodies, school safeguarding leads, counsellors, social services, equality bodies, health services, or trusted NGOs.	Tools 1, 2, and 3 should be aligned with existing referral pathways and confidentiality rules.
Monitoring and evaluation	Ministries, inspectorates, school leadership, training providers, equality bodies, research partners, or civil society organisations.	Data collection and feedback should be proportionate, safe, and useful for improvement.

Where responsibility is shared, a short responsibility map can clarify which actor has the mandate to decide, who should be consulted, who can provide expertise, who will implement, and who will monitor progress.

7. How to Use this Toolkit



The toolkit is modular and should be used through a tailored approach. Users do not need to read or implement every tool at once. The best starting point depends on the user's role, the issue they are trying to address, the level of readiness in their education system or institution, and the legal, policy, and safeguarding conditions in which they operate.

Before selecting activities, recommendations, or training content, users should take time to understand the audience and context. A policy workshop with national authorities will require a different entry point from a school leadership meeting, a teacher-training session, a civil society planning process, or a discussion with families and caregivers. Users should consider participants' prior knowledge, professional responsibilities, level of contact with LGBTQI students, institutional authority, possible concerns and the support they will need after the first activity.

✳️ **Tool 1** should be used to develop or review policy, legislation, institutional frameworks, reporting systems, data collection, partnerships, and school-level accountability. Tool 1 is especially useful when there is a need to clarify responsibilities, strengthen anti-bullying measures, improve reporting and response, embed inclusive curricula, support data collection, or align school practice with policy obligations.

● **Tool 2** should be used to support classroom strategies, school-level responses to tensions and opposition, communication, alliances, and practice alignment. Tool 2 is especially useful when educators or school leaders face misinformation, disinformation, polarised discussion, community pressure, staff uncertainty, or incidents that require de-escalation, documentation, and safeguarding.

📌 **Tool 3** should be used to design, implement, and evaluate educator-training modules. Tool 3 is especially useful when users need to build educator competence, develop training content, define learning outcomes, prepare trainers, recruit participants, create safe learning environments, pilot training, monitor results, or embed training within wider professional development systems.

The tools may be used as a policy review resource, as a school improvement resource, as a training design resource, as a reference for institutional planning, as a basis for dialogue with partners, as a tool for gradual implementation in contested or constrained contexts, or as a common framework for aligning policy, practice, and training. They may also be used to structure accompanied processes, such as policy review meetings, school self-assessment, training design workshops, peer learning sessions, pilot actions, stakeholder dialogues, or implementation planning. In these cases, the toolkit should be adapted to the available time, the composition of participants and the specific decisions that need to be taken. Table 6 offers a practical starting point.



TABLE 6. STARTING POINT AND CONNECTING POINTS FOR EACH TOOL

Goal	Starting point	Connection
Develop or review anti-bullying policy	 Tool 1	 Tool 2 for school-level response routines.  Tool 3 for training needs.
Address SOGIESC-based cyberbullying	 Tool 1	 Tool 2 for digital citizenship, classroom routines, and school playbook responses.
Respond to misinformation, disinformation or hostile narratives	 Tool 2	 Tool 1 for policy backing.  Tool 3 for educator competence.
Support educators facing tensions or opposition	 Tool 2	 Tool 3 for structured professional learning and peer support.
Design educator training	 Tool 3	 Tool 1 for policy alignment.  Tool 2 for classroom and school scenarios.
Embed SOGIESC inclusion in teacher education	 Tool 3	 Tool 1 for institutional expectations;  Tool 2 for practice cases.
Build a whole-school approach	 Tool 1 and  Tool 2	 Tool 3 for staff training and implementation capacity.
Align policy, practice, and training	All three tools	 Tool 0 for shared framing and terminology.
Work in a contested or constrained context	 Tool 2	 Tool 1 for rights-based policy anchors.  Tool 3 for careful adaptation and risk mitigation.
Develop partnerships with civil society or community actors	 Tool 1	 Tool 2 for communication.  Tool 3 for training collaboration.

For strategic planning, the following four-step sequence could be implemented:



ASSESS THE CONTEXT AND AUDIENCE.

Identify the legal, policy, institutional, political, and safeguarding conditions in which the toolkit will be used. Clarify what is possible, what is sensitive, who needs to be involved, what participants already know, and what support they will need.



SELECT THE ENTRY POINT.

Choose the tool that corresponds most directly to the current need: policy and institutional systems, school-level response, or educator training. Where time is limited, select the most relevant sections rather than trying to cover the whole toolkit.



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION WITH PARTNERS.

Identify which recommendations, routines, or training components from the other tools are needed to support implementation. Agree who will do what, which partners should be involved, and what safeguarding or communication arrangements are required.



DELIVER, REVIEW, AND ADAPT.

Implement the selected activity, policy review, training process, or school-level change. Monitor what changes, what risks emerge, and what additional support is needed. Use feedback from learners, educators, school leaders, parents, and partners to refine implementation.

The toolkit should be used as an implementation support resource, not as a parallel system. Wherever possible, the tools should strengthen and align existing responsibilities and mechanisms, including anti-bullying, safeguarding, well-being, child protection, teacher education, and school improvement frameworks.

The tools can be used in full or in selected parts, depending on the user's role, mandate, and context. However, selected use should remain connected to the toolkit's rights-based, child-centred, and safeguarding principles. Individual activities, recommendations, or training components should not be detached from the wider conditions that make them safe and effective.

This means, for example, that a classroom activity from  **Tool 2** should be used alongside appropriate ground rules, safeguarding considerations, support for affected students, and escalation pathways. A training module inspired by  **Tool 3** should include trainer preparation, participant safety, and evaluation. A policy recommendation from  **Tool 1** should be accompanied by clear implementation responsibilities and monitoring arrangements.

The toolkit itself does not replace training, facilitation, or institutional planning. In many contexts, the documents will have the greatest impact when accompanied by workshops, peer learning, technical assistance, local adaptation, or follow-up support. Written tools can provide the structure; implementation requires people, time, coordination, and accountability.



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8. Terminology



Clear and respectful terminology is part of safeguarding, inclusion, and professional practice. The toolkit uses SOGIESC-explicit language because bullying, discrimination, and exclusion often target specific aspects of identity or perceived identity. Naming these grounds helps policy, practice, and training respond accurately. At the same time, terminology should be used with care: students should not be required to disclose, label, or explain their identities in order to receive protection and support.

The terminology in Table 7 draws on relevant Council of Europe, EU and international standards, reflects current terminology practice, and harmonises the language used across Tools 1, 2, and 3. It is intended as a shared working reference for the toolkit, not as a substitute for legal definitions in national law.

TABLE 7. GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE TOOLKIT



Affirmed name and pronouns

The name and pronouns a person uses for themselves. Using a student's affirmed name and pronouns can be an important part of respectful and safe practice, but schools should also consider privacy, confidentiality, and the risk of outing with the student.

Age-appropriate

Content, language, methods, and examples that are adapted to students' age, maturity, evolving capacities, developmental stage, context, and safeguarding needs. In line with the Council of Europe work on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, age-appropriate does not mean delaying all discussion of bodies, relationships, consent, diversity, safety, or rights until adolescence. It means providing accurate, reliable, and developmentally suitable information over time, delivered through active pedagogical approaches by competent and well-trained professionals. In this toolkit, age-appropriate practice includes addressing safety, dignity, family diversity, bullying, online behaviour, respect, consent, rights, and inclusion in ways that are suitable for the students concerned.

Anti-rights discourse

Narratives, claims, or mobilisation that seek to undermine equality, non-discrimination, bodily autonomy, inclusive education, democratic participation, or the rights and dignity of LGBTQI people and other people and groups at risk of being targeted by discrimination.

B Bullying

A pattern of intentional and aggressive behaviour, rather than an isolated incident, that occurs repeatedly against a learner where there is a real or perceived power imbalance and where the learner targeted may feel vulnerable or unable to defend themselves. Bullying may be physical, psychological, relational, sexual, or online, and can include hitting, kicking, destroying property, teasing, insulting, threatening, spreading rumours, exclusion from a group, humiliation, hostile jokes, comments or gestures, and cyberbullying. In this toolkit, bullying is understood as a form of school violence that undermines students' safety, dignity, well-being, participation, and right to education.

C Cisgender

Refers to people whose gender identity corresponds with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Coming out

A process through which a person shares information about their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics with others. Coming out is personal and should be voluntary.

Cyberbullying

Behaviour carried out through digital technologies, including social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, and other online environments, with the intention or effect of repeatedly or continuously humiliating, socially excluding, abusing, harassing, or harming children or young people. In this toolkit, cyberbullying may include threats, hostile messages, image-based abuse, impersonation, exclusion from online groups, spreading rumours, screenshots, doxxing, coordinated pressure, or harmful content linked to actual or perceived SOGIESC. Cyberbullying can affect learners' safety, mental health, school engagement, and participation, and may overlap with hate speech or other forms of online violence where it targets protected characteristics.

**Deadnaming**

Referring to a trans or non-binary person by a name they no longer use, especially where this disrespects their affirmed name and gender identity or reveals information without consent.

Digital citizenship

The knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed to participate safely, respectfully, and critically in digital environments. In this toolkit, digital citizenship includes online safety, respectful communication, privacy, reporting harmful content, and recognising online harassment or manipulation.

Disinformation

False, inaccurate, or misleading information that is deliberately created, presented, or shared to deceive, manipulate, polarise, or cause harm. In the toolkit, disinformation may include coordinated or strategic narratives that misrepresent SOGIESC-inclusive education, stigmatise LGBTQI people or families, undermine trust in educators or institutions, or mobilise opposition to equality, safety, and non-discrimination.

Do-no-harm principle

A principle requiring the avoidance of actions that may increase risk for learners, staff, or partners. In this toolkit, this includes avoiding outing, deadnaming, retaliation, unsafe data handling, unnecessary escalation, and placing the burden of explanation on affected students.

E Endosex

Refers to persons whose innate sex characteristics correspond with societal and/or medical understandings of typical female or male bodies. Endosex refers to persons who are not intersex.

G Gender expression

The intentional or unintentional outward presentation or communication of gender through socially and culturally recognisable cues. This may include appearance, clothing, hairstyle, beauty practices, bodily adornment, voice, manner of speaking, behaviour, gestures, mannerisms, names, pronouns, forms of address, movement, posture, and ways of interacting with others. Gender expression may or may not reflect a person's gender identity, and people may be perceived or treated in certain ways based on their gender expression, regardless of how they identify. In this toolkit, gender expression is relevant because students may experience bullying, discrimination, or exclusion when their appearance, behaviour, or self-presentation is perceived as not conforming to expected gender norms.

Gender identity

Each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. People with the same gender identity may express their gender in different ways, and a person's gender expression may or may not reflect their gender identity. In this toolkit, gender identity is relevant because students may experience bullying, discrimination, or exclusion because of their actual or perceived gender identity, or because others make assumptions about their identity based on their appearance, behaviour, name, pronouns, or other aspects of gender expression.

Gender non-conforming

Refers to people whose appearance, behaviour, expression, or roles do not fully conform to social expectations based on the sex assigned to them at birth. Students may experience bullying because they are perceived as gender non-conforming, regardless of their actual sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.

**Inclusive education**

Education that enables all students to participate, learn, and belong without discrimination, violence, or exclusion. In this toolkit, inclusive education includes explicit attention to SOGIESC, where possible and safe.

Intersex

Refers to persons who have innate variations of sex characteristics that vary from societal and/or medical understandings of typical female and male bodies. These variations are inherent and may be visible at birth or emerge later, for example during puberty. Not all persons with innate variations of sex characteristics identify as intersex, and personal terminology preferences should be respected.



LGBTQI-phobia

Discrimination, bias, prejudice, hostility, or violence directed at people because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics. In the toolkit, more specific terms such as lesbophobia, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or intersexphobia may be used where relevant. Terms like “SOGIESC-based violence” or SOGIESC-based bullying” have been prioritised throughout the tools.

LGBTQI

Acronym referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex people. Variations of this acronym are used in different legal, policy, research, and community contexts, including LGBTI, LGBTQ, LGBTQI, LGBTQIA+ and LGBTQ+. For consistency, the toolkit uses LGBTQI when referring to people and communities who may experience discrimination, violence, or exclusion because of actual or perceived SOGIESC, except when referring to the title or wording of a specific document, report, institution, programme, or source that uses a different acronym.



Media and information literacy

The ability to access, assess, interpret, question, and use information critically and responsibly. In the toolkit, media and information literacy supports students and educators to recognise stereotypes, misinformation, disinformation, and anti-rights narratives.

Misgendering

Referring to or addressing a person in a way that does not correspond with their gender identity, for example by using incorrect pronouns, gendered terms, or forms of address. Misgendering can be accidental, but when repeated or deliberate it can contribute to bullying, exclusion, and unsafe school climates.

Misinformation

False, inaccurate, or misleading information that is shared without the intention to cause harm. In the toolkit, misinformation may include errors, misunderstandings, outdated information, misleading claims, or inaccurate assumptions about SOGIESC, LGBTQI students, families, inclusive education, or school responsibilities.

N Non-binary

Umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside the binary of male or female. Some non-binary people identify as trans; others do not.

O Outing

Disclosing a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, or other identity-related information without their consent. Outing can create serious safety, privacy, and well-being risks.

Q Queer

An inclusive term used by some people to describe sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics outside heterosexual, cisgender, or endosex norms. It was historically used as a pejorative term and has been reclaimed by many, but not all, LGBTQI people. It should not be applied to individuals unless they use it for themselves.

R Rainbow family / LGBTQI family

Refers to families where one or more parents, caregivers, or family members are LGBTQI. Children and young people may experience bullying or exclusion because of their family composition, even if they are not LGBTQI themselves.

Referral pathway

An agreed route for connecting a learner, staff member, or family to appropriate support, such as safeguarding leads, counselling, child protection services, equality bodies, health or mental health services, or specialist civil society organisations.

Reporting mechanism

A clear, accessible, and safe process through which students, staff, or families can report bullying, harassment, discrimination, or other concerns. Reporting mechanisms should protect confidentiality, prevent retaliation, and connect reports to appropriate follow-up.

S Safeguarding

Policies, procedures, and practices intended to protect students from harm, including violence, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, unsafe disclosure, and breaches of privacy or confidentiality.

School climate

The quality of relationships, norms, expectations, safety, belonging, and participation within a school. A positive school climate supports learning, school attendance, educational attainment, well-being, and trust, and helps prevent bullying and exclusion.

Sex

A classification usually assigned at birth, based on a combination of physical characteristics such as chromosomes, hormones, reproductive anatomy, and external anatomy. Sex should not be understood as strictly binary, as sex characteristics occur on a spectrum.

Sex characteristics

Each person's physical and biological features relating to sex, including internal and external genitalia, sexual and reproductive anatomy, gonads, chromosomes, hormones, and the distribution of body hair, fat, and muscle mass. Sex characteristics occur on a spectrum and may vary from societal and/or medical understandings of typical female and male bodies.

Sexual orientation

Each person's capacity for emotional, affectional, and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, people of a different gender, the same gender, or more than one gender.

SOGIESC

Acronym referring to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. The toolkit uses SOGIESC when referring to the grounds on which bullying, discrimination, or exclusion may occur.

SOGIESC-based bullying

Repeated or serious harmful behaviour, including online or offline behaviour, targeting a learner because of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics. It may also target students associated with LGBTQI people or those who do not conform to gender norms.

T Trans / transgender

Umbrella terms for people whose gender identity differs from predominant social expectations based on the sex assigned at birth, or who portray their gender in ways that differ from such expectations.

W Whole-school / whole-education approach

A comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to school violence, bullying, and exclusion that combines policies and interventions across the education system, rather than relying on isolated activities or individual educators. This includes strong leadership and legal or policy frameworks; training and support for teachers; curricula, learning, and teaching that promote caring school climates and social and emotional skills; safe physical, psychological, and digital learning environments; reporting mechanisms, support, and referral services; participation of students and families; collaboration with community and specialist partners; and monitoring and evaluation. In this toolkit, a whole-school or whole-education approach embeds safety, inclusion, and non-discrimination across leadership, policy, curriculum, teaching, reporting, support, staff training, parental involvement, partnerships, and school culture.

Terminology may need to be adapted in translation. The toolkit is intended for use across different legal, linguistic, and institutional contexts, and direct equivalents may not always exist. Translation should preserve the rights-based meaning of key concepts, even where a literal translation is difficult. For example, terms such as “outing”, “deadnaming”, “anti-rights discourse”, “SOGIESC”, “misgendering”, or “affirmed name” may need explanation through the underlying practice, harm, or policy concept.

9. Shared Principles



The following principles apply across all three tools. They should guide adaptation, implementation, communication, training, monitoring, and review. They are not separate or optional elements: they should be read together. A response to SOGIESC-based bullying, anti-rights discourse, or gaps in educator competence will only be effective if it is rights-based, child-centred, practical, safe, participatory, and institutionally supported.



9.1. A rights-based and child-centred approach

The toolkit is grounded in the rights, dignity, safety, and participation of all children and young people. This approach reflects the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to be heard, protection from all forms of violence, and the right to education. It is also

consistent with Council of Europe standards on children's rights, equality, and protection from violence, including Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, and Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)7 on equal rights for intersex persons, as outlined in Section 4 of this tool.

A child-centred approach means that responses should begin from the needs and rights of learners, not from institutional reputation, public pressure, or adult discomfort. It also means recognising learners' evolving capacities, privacy, participation, access to support, and right to receive information that is accurate, age-appropriate, and relevant to their safety and well-being.



9.2. SOGIESC-explicit practice, where possible

Where legally and institutionally possible, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics should be named explicitly in policies, curricula, training, monitoring, and school practice. As shown across the toolkit, evidence from the Council of Europe, the European Commission, UNESCO, and civil society research shows that LGBTQI learners experience specific forms of bullying, exclusion, harassment, and violence, including misgendering, deadnaming, outing, gender policing, anti-LGBTQI slurs, social exclusion, and hostility towards LGBTQI families. Naming SOGIESC helps schools recognise these harms, respond to them consistently, and avoid treating them as generic conflict or isolated misconduct.

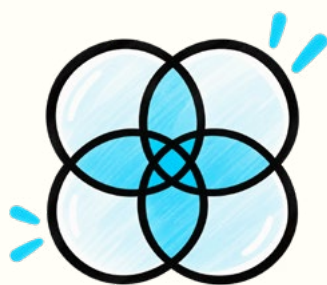
Where explicit naming is constrained by law, policy, or political context, schools and authorities should still act through child protection, anti-bullying, equality, well-being, school climate, safeguarding, digital safety, and democratic citizenship frameworks. Adaptation may be necessary for safety and feasibility, but it should not erase the learners affected, dilute the duty to protect them, or make SOGIESC-based harm invisible.



9.3. A whole-school and systemic approach

Preventing and addressing SOGIESC-based bullying cannot depend on individual educators alone. In line with UNESCO's whole-school and whole-education approach to preventing school violence and bullying, effective action requires leadership, policy, reporting pathways, staff training, inclusive curricula, learner support, partnerships, monitoring, and accountability. It also requires attention to the full school environment: classrooms, corridors, online spaces, school events, extracurricular activities, family communication, and institutional culture.

This principle is also reflected in the three tools. 🌸 **Tool 1** focuses on policy and whole-school responses to SOGIESC-based bullying; 🟢 **Tool 2** addresses communication, misinformation, disinformation, and opposition; and 📖 **Tool 3** supports educator competence and training. Together, they show that SOGIESC inclusion is not a single lesson, campaign, or disciplinary procedure. It is a system of routines, responsibilities, and relationships that allows schools to prevent harm, respond to incidents safely, and build inclusive learning environments over time.



9.4. Intersectionality

Responses should recognise that SOGIESC-based bullying may intersect with racism, ableism, sexism, socio-economic exclusion, and discrimination based on gender, migration status, religion or belief, language, disability, care status, and other characteristics. Learners may be targeted because of several actual or perceived characteristics at once, or because different stereotypes combine in the way they are treated. For example, an LGBTQI learner who is racialised, disabled, Roma, migrant, Muslim, in care, or living in poverty may face forms of harm that cannot be understood through SOGIESC alone.

An intersectional approach helps schools avoid one-size-fits-all responses. It requires attention to how power, exclusion, and vulnerability operate in specific contexts, and to whether reporting, support and disciplinary, and safeguarding systems are accessible to all learners. It also means that SOGIESC inclusion should be aligned with broader equality, anti-racism, disability inclusion, gender equality, child protection, and social inclusion work, rather than treated as a separate or competing agenda.



9.5. Safeguarding and the do-no-harm principle

Action should protect learners' privacy, confidentiality, dignity, and safety. This includes avoiding outing, deadnaming, misgendering, unnecessary disclosure, unsafe data collection, retaliation, public exposure, or placing the burden of explanation on affected learners. The do-no-harm principle is especially important when schools respond to bullying, family conflict, online harassment, media attention, community opposition, or questions about a learner's identity, body, family, or private life.

Safeguarding also applies to educators, school leaders, trainers, and civil society partners who may face harassment, intimidation, or pressure for supporting inclusive education. Schools should therefore have clear escalation pathways, communication protocols, referral systems, and institutional backing. Safe implementation requires preparation, boundaries, documentation, role clarity, and access to specialist support when needed.



9.6. Evidence-based and practical implementation

The toolkit translates human rights standards, research evidence, and practice knowledge into usable guidance. It draws on Council of Europe standards and thematic reviews, European Commission policy frameworks, UNESCO work on school violence and bullying, OECD and Eurydice analyses on education systems, and civil society expertise from LGBTQI youth, family, intersex, trans, and education organisations.

The tools are designed to support practical decisions: how to review policy, how to respond to incidents, how to communicate during opposition, how to structure training, how to protect learners' privacy, how to monitor implementation, and how to strengthen institutional readiness. Evidence should therefore be used to inform action, not only to describe the problem.



9.7. Context-appropriate adaptation without weakening rights

The toolkit is designed for use across different legal, political, linguistic, and institutional contexts in the Council of Europe region. Education systems across member states may vary significantly in how responsibilities are distributed between ministries, regional authorities, municipalities, schools, inspectorates, teacher education institutions, and professional bodies. Political conditions also differ: in some contexts, SOGIESC-inclusive education is supported by policy; in others, it may be contested, unevenly implemented, or constrained.

Adaptation is therefore necessary. However, adaptation should support safe and effective implementation; it should not normalise discrimination, erase affected learners, or weaken the core commitments to safety, dignity, non-discrimination, and participation. Where direct action is difficult, users can identify safer entry points, such as child protection, anti-bullying, school climate, mental health, democratic citizenship, digital safety, or professional competence. The aim is to maintain rights-based action while responding intelligently to context.



9.8. Shared institutional responsibility

SOGIESC-inclusive education is not the responsibility of LGBTQI learners, LGBTQI staff, individual supportive educators, or civil society organisations alone. Responsibility should be institutionally owned. Schools, education authorities, training providers, and partner organisations should clarify roles, provide guidance, create safe reporting and referral pathways, and ensure that staff are trained and supported.

Shared responsibility also prevents inconsistent or individual-dependent responses. A learner's safety should not depend on whether they happen to approach a supportive teacher, whether one staff member has personal knowledge of LGBTQI issues, or whether a civil society organisation is available to intervene. The toolkit encourages users to map who is responsible for prevention, reporting, response, communication, safeguarding, training, monitoring, and review.

9.9. Meaningful participation and accountability



Learners, educators, and communities affected by policy and practice should have meaningful opportunities to inform implementation. This reflects the right of children and young people to be heard in matters affecting them, as recognised in the Council of Europe child participation standards, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Participation should

be voluntary, safe, supported, and age-appropriate. It should never require learners to disclose their identity, share personal experiences, or represent a whole community.

Accountability means that feedback should be used to improve practice, not only to demonstrate that consultation has taken place. Schools and authorities should consider how learners, staff, families, and partners can safely report concerns, identify gaps, review implementation, and contribute to better responses. Participation and accountability are especially important where policies exist on paper but are not consistently implemented in daily school life.



9.10. Sustainability and institutionalisation

Effective implementation requires more than one-off training, awareness days, or isolated activities. SOGIESC inclusion should be embedded into policy cycles, school development planning, teacher education, continuing professional development, safeguarding procedures, curriculum review, monitoring systems, and partnerships over time.

This is consistent with whole-school and whole-education approaches, which emphasise leadership, capacity-building, monitoring, and long-term institutional commitment. Sustainability also requires resources, coordination, and follow-up.

10. Adapting to National Contexts



The toolkit is designed to be adaptable across different education systems and implementation contexts. It can be used independently by education authorities, schools, training institutions, civil society organisations, and other partners. Where possible, it may also be accompanied by technical assistance, peer exchange, capacity-building, or facilitated workshops provided or supported by the Council of Europe. This reflects the broader approach of the EU-Council of Europe joint project “Combating anti-LGBTIQ violence and hate speech and strengthening awareness-raising and fact-based narratives about LGBTIQ persons”, which combines guidance, tools, research, training, awareness-raising, technical assistance, and cooperation with public authorities and civil society to support coherent and coordinated responses.

Technical assistance is most useful when it supports an implementation process: understanding the context, identifying needs, adapting the relevant parts of the toolkit, delivering support safely, agreeing next steps, reviewing learning, and embedding change into ordinary systems. Before any technical assistance activity, a brief needs and context assessment should be carried out. This should clarify the audience's prior knowledge, professional roles, legal and policy framework, existing school policies, safeguarding arrangements, available partners, political sensitivities, practical constraints, communication risks, and intended outcomes. The purpose is to ensure that support is relevant, safe, realistic, and connected to institutional responsibilities.

TABLE 8. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CYCLE

Step	Purpose	Possible outputs
1. Assess 	Understand the legal, policy, institutional, educational, and political context, as well as the needs, roles, and prior knowledge of the audience. This should include a light risk scan, especially where SOGIESC inclusion is contested or where learners, educators, or partners may face exposure.	Context map; stakeholder map; training or implementation needs assessment; review of existing policies; risk scan; initial identification of relevant tools.
2. Adapt 	Decide which parts of the toolkit are most relevant and how they should be adapted to the audience, language, school level, education system, and political context. Adaptation should concern framing, examples, sequencing, and delivery format, while preserving the rights-based purpose of the toolkit.	Tool selection note; adapted agenda; terminology note; local examples or scenarios; safeguarding checks; roles and responsibilities; communication framing.
3. Prepare 	Put in place the practical and safeguarding conditions needed for safe implementation. This includes identifying facilitators, agreeing ground rules, preparing referral pathways, clarifying confidentiality, and deciding how to manage difficult questions, opposition, or media attention.	Facilitation plan; safeguarding protocol; referral pathway; communication protocol; participant information; escalation route; partner agreement.
4. Deliver 	Use selected parts of the toolkit in a defined setting, with attention to safety, participation, accessibility, and institutional relevance. In new or sensitive contexts, a pilot or smaller workshop may be more appropriate than immediate large-scale rollout.	Policy review workshop; school playbook session; training pilot; stakeholder dialogue; peer learning session; partnership meeting; adapted training module.

**5. Plan
next steps**



Translate discussion and learning into concrete actions. Participants should identify what will be done, by whom, by when, with what support, and how risks will be managed. This step helps avoid technical assistance ending as a useful conversation with no institutional follow-up.

Action plan;
implementation
roadmap; revised
policy process; training
plan; reporting or
referral pathway;
communication plan;
partnership agreement.

**6. Review
and adjust**



Gather feedback from participants and affected stakeholders, including what worked, what was unclear, what created risk, and what further support is needed. Feedback should be used to improve materials, support implementation, and inform future technical assistance.

Feedback summary;
revised materials;
updated risk
assessment;
implementation
learning note;
trainer debrief;
recommendations for
follow-up.

**7. Sustain
and scale**



Embed the learning into ordinary systems and expand use while maintaining quality and safety. Scaling should be gradual and supported by institutional ownership, resources, training, and monitoring.

Integration into
professional
development; school
improvement planning;
inspection or quality
assurance frameworks;
data collection; policy
review cycles; regular
partnership structures.

Implementation conditions will differ significantly across the Council of Europe region. In some member states, SOGIESC-inclusive education is supported by law, policy, curriculum guidance, or school practice. In others, it may be contested, unevenly implemented, under-resourced, or constrained by legal, political, institutional, or public pressure. The toolkit is designed to support action across this spectrum while maintaining a rights-based foundation.

The starting point should therefore be a realistic assessment of context and risk. This means identifying the safest and most effective entry points, sequencing implementation carefully, and ensuring that learners, educators, and partners are not exposed to avoidable harm. In more enabling contexts, this may involve explicit SOGIESC-inclusive policy, curriculum reform, educator training, and monitoring. In more contested contexts, it may be safer and more effective to begin through recognised education priorities such as child protection, bullying prevention, well-being, school climate, digital safety, democratic citizenship, professional standards, or support for affected learners.

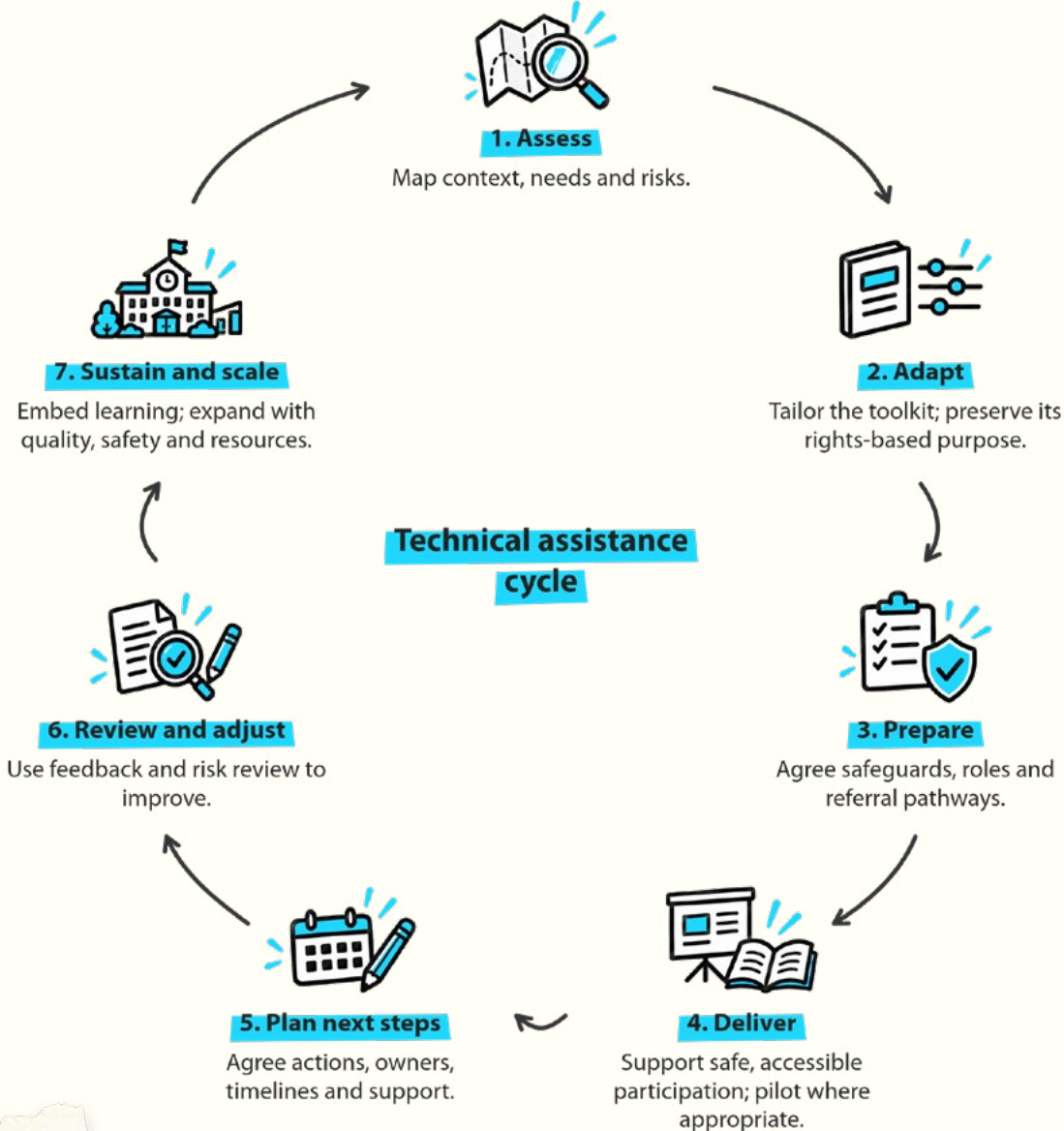


TABLE 9. POSSIBLE ENTRY POINTS ACCORDING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION CONTEXT

Context condition	Possible entry points	Risks
Supportive or enabling context	Explicit SOGIESC-inclusive policy; curriculum review; educator training; data collection; school improvement; visible learner support; partnerships; and monitoring.	Assuming implementation is complete because policy exists; overlooking intersectional harms; failing to monitor school-level practice.
Mixed or uneven context	Anti-bullying; well-being; safeguarding; digital safety; democratic citizenship; teacher professionalism; pilot training; and school climate work.	Inconsistent practice across schools; over-reliance on motivated individuals; unclear reporting pathways; weak leadership backing.
Contested or pressured context	Child protection, safety, dignity; non-discrimination; educational participation; anti-bullying; media and information literacy; professional standards; and careful alliance-building.	Public escalation; staff exposure; unsafe disclosure; symbolic action without support; placing learners or individual educators at risk.
Legally or institutionally constrained context	General safeguarding; violence prevention; school climate; student well-being; privacy; anti-harassment; support for affected learners; and trusted referral pathways.	Erasure of SOGIESC-specific harms; unsafe data collection; lack of specialist referral; fear-based silence; isolation of LGBTQI learners and staff.



**Don't forget
to read the other tools!**

Effective SOGIESC-inclusive education requires more than individual policies, classroom strategies, or training activities. It depends on a shared understanding of human rights standards, terminology, institutional responsibilities, and how policy, practice, and educator capacity connect across different education systems. Tool 0 supports education authorities, school leaders, teacher-training institutions, civil society organisations, and other partners to understand and use the Inclusive Education Toolkit as a coherent whole. It provides the common framework connecting Tools 1, 2, and 3, setting out shared rights-based principles and terminology, clarifying audiences and responsibilities, and offering practical guidance on selecting entry points, adapting the tools to different contexts, safeguarding considerations, and linking implementation with partnerships and technical assistance.

Tool 0 is part of the Inclusive Education Toolkit for Preventing and Tackling SOGIESC-based Bullying and Anti-Rights Discourse in Schools, developed within the EU–Council of Europe joint project “Combating anti-LGBTIQ violence and hate speech and strengthening awareness-raising and fact-based narratives about LGBTIQ persons.”