

# What LGBTQ+ Students Want Teachers to Know

What better way to create a space of belonging for students than to ask students themselves! We asked a few Keshet youth leaders what tips they have for educators and here is what they said:

- 1** Be mindful that you have LGBTQ+ students in your class, even if no one has explicitly told you or “come out” to you.
- 2** When you’re assigning a debate topic about LGBTQ+ rights or a reading about LGBTQ+ identity, know that these assignments and the ways you and other students talk about them in class affect LGBTQ+ students differently than cisgender/heterosexual students.
- 3** It can feel emotionally taxing to come out to new people and explain our complex and ever-changing identities every day. When you make fewer assumptions about who we are, it helps ease that burden off of us.
- 4** Be mindful not to “out” us to others. When we do come out to you, it’s often because we either trust you, or feel like it’s a necessity. Ask us what would feel best in terms of privacy.
- 5** A little goes a LONG way in trying to make your classroom more inclusive and affirming. Even one instance of acceptance can change a queer/trans student's life.
- 6** Anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and legislation all over the country makes it hard to go to school without fear of violence or conflict, even when we live in more “progressive” areas. We’re carrying this with us all the time. When you center our voices and experiences, it helps us know we’re not alone.

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- 7** Ask your students what name and pronouns they'd like you to use for them, and ask whether there are any other communications preferences they have when it comes to names and pronouns: for example, the name and pronouns a student uses at home might be different from the ones they use in school.
- 8** Correct students when they make anti-LGBTQ+ statements or engage in microaggressions. Too often things are blown off as ignorant jokes or insignificant comments.
- 9** Be mindful of the questions you ask students in front of other students.
- 10** Spend some time learning about LGBTQ+ identities on your own to better prepare and have a working knowledge of LGBTQ+ terms and concepts for when it comes time to engage with students.