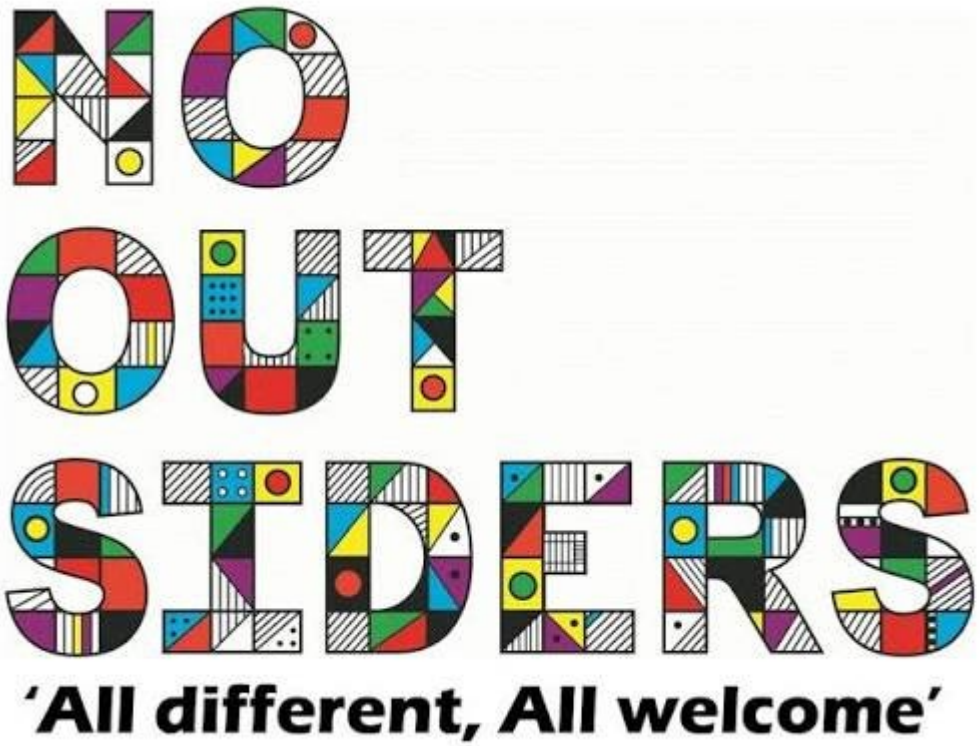

A Guide for Parents and Carers

(Adapted from the original document written by Andrew Moffatt MBE, No Outsiders CEO)

WICKLEA ACADEMY

What is No Outsiders?

What is an outsider? Someone who feels left-out, who feels like they don't belong and is not welcome. No Outsiders wants schools to teach that there are no outsiders because everyone is welcome. We need to create classroom environments where no child feels left out; every child needs to be taught that they belong.

As children grow up, they can sometimes learn that difference is a barrier to friendship. Our aim is to remove that barrier, we want children to see difference is a positive, not a negative. After all, we are all different; none of us is exactly the same; we are all unique.

As they move through school, we want children to explore their differences so that they feel comfortable in their own skin. Children should know who they are and feel proud to be who they are and also know that they are accepted without judgement. No child should feel they have to change who they are in order to fit in.

So how do we do this? No Outsiders have an ethos that is backed up by language and behaviour. All children are taught from their first year at Wicklea that we are all different and we like that. Wouldn't the world be boring if we were all the same? We explore reasons why some people might feel left out. After all, it is a fact that prejudice and discrimination exist, and children are going to experience it at some point.

We need to prepare them, give them confidence to disagree when they hear prejudice and show them that they are not alone.

No Outsiders language gives children a way to challenge prejudice and show acceptance. Not only will they feel safe knowing they belong, they can show others they too are safe; “I will be your friend; you belong here. You don’t have to change, there are no outsiders.”

The Equality Act 2010: British law

Difference is protected under British law; there are very clear aims in the Equality Act that provide guidance for schools. As public bodies, we need to:

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

And who are those different people? The Equality Act references nine 'protected characteristics'; these are groups of people. No one should face discrimination because of:

- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Age
- Disabilities
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage of civil partnership

So how do we talk about these different groups in an age appropriate way to primary school children? We use picture books that show different people in stories and we make sure children understand no matter who you are, you are welcome in our school.

No Outsiders works well in primary settings as the lesson plans do not explore the individual protected characteristics. There is not one lesson on race, a different lesson on religion and another on sexual orientation.

What is discussed in all lessons, through the use of picture books, is difference. All the characters in the books are different and they all exist together, side by side. There are 43 books in total from Reception to Year 6. At Wicklea we use 25 books across Years 3, 4, 5 & 6. The other books may be used as additional lessons, with groups of children or individuals, as needed. The children meet a huge range of characters in different situations; characters of different races, age, religion, gender, disabilities and who live in different families. No Outsiders have carefully chosen the books to represent a wide world of diversity.

We are not encouraging children to question their own race, religion or gender identity, rather we are encouraging children to explore, know and accept the person they are, know that they are welcome in our school and know how to make sure all of the children in our school feel like they belong.

Picture books used in “No Outsiders: We belong here”

Year Three

This is our house is a perfect story to introduce a No Outsiders ethos to a school. George shuts people out and gives each person a reason: they are a girl, they wear glasses, they are too short. When it is pointed out to George that he has red hair and could also be excluded, the penny drops. George makes sure that his game is for everyone. ***We're all wonders*** is a beautiful story about a boy who looks different. He is bullied and dreams of running away. What would happen at our school? What do we say about difference? We talk about choosing to be a bystander or choosing to stand up. Stereotypes are explored in ***The truth about old people***; what is a stereotype? How do we recognise a stereotype and how can we respond? ***Nefertiti*** explores the importance of names. Is it ok if I choose to call you by a shortened version of you name? This is a super, empowering story that we can use to talk about identity and also challenging assumptions. ***Aalfred and Aalbert*** tells the story of two aardvarks getting together helped by a bird who identifies things they have in common. The focus is recognising loneliness and considering how it affects mental health, choosing to help others, finding common ground. ***Shulin’s Grandpa*** tells the story of a little girl starting school with little English. She looks different to the other children and struggles to fit in. Her grandpa visits the school for an art session, and his art is transformative for the class, and for Shulin.

Year Four

In ***Red: a crayon’s story***, a crayon who looks red can only colour in blue. This is very distressing for him as he knows he really should be red, and he has always been red before... what should he do? ***When sadness comes to call*** explores how to recognise feelings of sadness and their impact. The lesson plan focuses on good mental health and how it can be achieved. ***Julian is a mermaid*** tells the story of small boy who wants to be a mermaid. The key is Nan’s attitude towards the grandson; the reader is led to believe she is going to be angry about his dressing up, but instead she is loving. This is a heartwarming story of difference and acceptance***. My beautiful voice*** tells the story of a nervous child who talks in whispers. The teacher helps the child to find their voice. It's a story of perseverance, language and bravery. ***Remixed*** is an honest look at families changing. The story starts with different colours falling in love, but later they split up, not because they are different colours, but because sometimes families change. However, new families emerge because, “Families don’t always stay the same, sometimes they re-mix.” ***My brother George*** is the first text in the resource that explores gender expectations. It is a very gentle story narrated by a girl about her brother George who looks different and is often thought by strangers to be a girl. The conclusion is, “I love my brother George and I'll always be there for him no matter what”.

Year Five

Year 5 includes both The Girls and The Boys; two different books but both exploring themes of friendship through a different gender lens. The books recognise the significance of companionship in our lives and can be used to reference mental health. There are also subtle LGBT references in both texts. ***Mixed*** is a wonderful vehicle to discuss racism and our responses to racist behaviour. The story shows the Reds, Yellows and Blues first getting on and then segregating because the Reds say they are best. But then a yellow and blue fall in love... can colours mix? ***And Tango Makes Three*** is a perfect way to talk about different families and also adoption. The lesson plan focuses on the book being banned in some places around the which enables us to explore homophobia and discrimination. ***Milo imagines the world*** is a fantastic story that explores the way people make assumptions about each other. Milo sits on a train and imagines the lives of the other passengers but at the end there is a big surprise both for Milo and for the reader.

Year Six

The Island is a powerful study of the power that one group has over another and the dire consequences of unchecked prejudice. ***Introducing Teddy*** is a wonderful tale of a teddy who comes out as trans. All of Teddy's friends accept her as Tilly; no one questions or asks Tilly to justify her actions. There are many forms of discrimination and prejudice and ***The proudest blue*** focuses on responses to a young girl who chooses to wear a hijab for the first time at school. The story is a beautiful way to teach children to be proud of the person they are. ***You need to chill*** is a response to anyone who might worry about the person they are. Here we are exploring responses to someone transitioning. Being trans is just another way we are different to each other, as is disability and ***You're so amazing*** is such an important picture book and one of the best to explore disability. The focus of the story isn't on Joe and his disability; the focus is on reactions from other people, who keep saying to him, "You're so amazing!" But Joe is not amazing, he's actually just Joe. ***Saving the butterfly*** is an honest depiction of a young refugee arriving in a country without parents and feeling responsible for her younger brother. The brother adapts well, but the older sister struggles. This story teaches empathy, resilience and hope. ***A day in the life of Marlon Bundo*** give us a fantastic opportunity to talk about democracy (one of the British values) and its impact. A rabbit in the White House wants to marry another male bunny but is told by the animal in charge that boy bunnies can't marry boy bunnies. The animals decide to hold an election and there is a super ending. What is democracy and how does it work?

Making sure children feel safe: How to talk about the world around us

The world can be a scary place for a young child. Our children are not wrapped in cotton wool, nor are they cocooned from the world around them. As they grow, they make judgements and form reasoning about everything they see and hear; adult and older sibling conversations, TV and radio news, YouTube videos and social media content... every day our children are exploring and making sense of the world around them.

So how do we show children the good that exists around the world? We cannot shield our children from all the negative stuff, but we can counter it by filling their world with stories of community cohesion, acts of kindness, empathy, hope and confidence in a world filled with diversity and difference, where they belong. Our aim is for children to leave school confident that they have a contribution make to that world.

So how do we do it? It's not rocket science; we simply use real-life stories children can relate to and demonstrate the world is full of great stories where different people get along and help each other.

The picture books are a great start; they build a foundation where an understanding of difference is accepted. But we also need real-life stories to demonstrate those positive stories aren't just in books. Here is where the assembly pictures come in. No Outsiders provide weekly assembly pictures to schools that are also accessible (free of charge) to parents at home with discussion points to help explore community cohesion. The aim of the pictures is to show No Outsiders is everywhere!

The assemblies can make great family discussions and it's wonderful for children to be able to talk at home about what they have discussed in school. There are over 500 of these pictures and plans freely available to use on the No Outsiders website — just go to the Assembly pictures link.

Answering difficult questions from children

Children are often very matter of fact about diversity and difference. Children have an innate sense of justice that shines through when they talk about being different and being left out. As adults we can complicate issues by overthinking them where actually the answer to what we perceive as difficult or embarrassing questions is a very simple one. The following are questions you may be asked by children about issues covered in No Outsiders, with suggested answers.

Why does he have different skin colour to me?
Because we are all different; isn't that great! Imagine how boring the world would be if we all

looked the same. We all have different amounts of melanin in our hair, skin and eyes, which give them their colour. We all have differences: freckles, hair type etc. Skin colour is just another brilliant way we are different.

Why can't she walk, why does she have to have a wheelchair?
Because her body works in a different way; we are all different and that's great — we can still be friends.

What does gay / lesbian mean?
Gay is where two people who are the same gender love each other. Men and women can be gay and there is also the word 'lesbian' for when two women love each other.

I love my dad, we are both male, does that mean we are gay?
No, that's different. Gay means when two men love each other like a mum and dad who love each other.

Why does she have two mummies?
Why doesn't she have a mum and dad? Because all families are different. Some families have a mum and dad, some have just a mum or just a dad, some children are looked after by their grandparents, some families have two mums or two dads.

How can two men have a baby?
There are lots of different ways of having children; for example some babies are adopted or fostered. All families are different. The most important thing in a family is love. It doesn't matter who the parents are.

Chloe used to be a boy but now he says he's Chloe. Can you change from a boy to a girl?
Fantastic! Good for Chloe that she can finally be herself. Chloe hasn't changed - she used to think she had to try to be a boy but now she knows she can be Chloe. I'm really pleased for her. We're all different aren't we; we just need to make sure Chloe knows we accept her now she's being true to herself.

FAQs

How does No Outsiders fit in with the RSE guidance?
The RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) guidance is statutory for primary schools. The focus of RSE is relationships; "In primary schools we want the subjects to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships"

No Outsiders teaches children to acknowledge difference while forming respectful relationships and friendships. A key theme running through the scheme is to understand that we can like

different things and we can still be friends. We are teaching children to be non-judgmental, accepting and welcoming.

Can I withdraw my child from No Outsiders lessons?
Why would you want to? Look at all the beautiful picture books we are using and read the aims of these lessons:

To understand what discrimination means / To understand what a bystander is/ To recognise a stereotype / To show respect / To find common ground / To look after my mental health / To be proud of who I am / To speak up / To understand how families change / To consider how my language affects others
(*Lesson aims in Y3/ Y4*)

To explore friendship / To check in with people / To exchange dialogue and express an opinion / To consider responses to racist behaviour / To find self-acceptance / To try not to judge by appearance / To show acceptance and non-judgement / To consider how new experiences affect us / To consider attitudes towards disability/ To consider how democracy works
(*Lesson aims in Y5/ Y6*)

Are you teaching children to be gay or to be trans?
No, we are teaching children to be proud of who they are and to accept others. We teach non-judgement and acceptance. Everyone is welcome in our school. We are preparing children for life in modern Britain where the Equality Act is law, and we can't pick and choose which bits of the Equality Act 2010 we are comfortable with and which bits we are not comfortable with. Equality is for all people.

Aren't children too young to be taught about this?
Some children have two mummies or two daddies and there is nothing confusing about this; children are very accepting of each other and their differences and will encounter those differences as they grow up, whether it is taught in schools or not. There is no sex in no outsiders; it is all about community cohesion and difference being a positive not a negative.

Are you indoctrinating children?
We do not teach children what to think, rather, we teach children the skills to think and reason; to form an opinion and speak their mind; how to agree and disagree respectfully. It is ok to hold different opinions to your friend; it is also ok to hold or to understand two views at the same time. Not everyone has to agree. No Outsiders lessons are very neutral; children are encouraged to make their own mind up.

How will you take in to account my faith?
We recognise that there are different beliefs in the world about LGBT+ equality and the No Outsiders lessons in Y5 and Y6 reflect that. For example, the aim of the lesson in Y5 based on “And Tango makes three” about two male penguins that fall in love is, “To exchange dialogue and express an opinion”.

In this lesson we acknowledge that this book has been banned in a few countries in the world because some people believe children should not see examples of same sex families. We talk about why that is and children are encouraged to develop their own responses. At no point are we telling children what to think; we are teaching children to acknowledge that there are different views in the big wide world and not everyone thinks in the same way.

There is an emphasis on accepting and embracing difference in No Outsiders rather than "celebrating" difference. This is a key concept; we are teaching children that it's ok to hold different and even opposing views and we can still have respect for one another; we can coexist.

For more information on No Outsiders go to www.no-outsiders.com