



Pride Month

12 June 2020



Pride month is usually a joyous and exciting time for the LGBT+ community, their friends, families and allies. However, Pride Month 2020 has started on a much more difficult note. We have spent the last few months quarantined in our homes trying to slow down a pandemic. We have experienced so much change, much of it challenging and unsettling. The loss of social contact from friends and support networks has been difficult for everyone, but especially those living alone or living in difficult home circumstances. For many young LGBT+ people, school, friends and local community groups are crucial support mechanisms and we are aware that many of our students will be missing this face to face support.

At Highlands School, equal opportunities are central to our ethos and values. We expect and actively encourage all students and staff to challenge and act upon racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and all other forms of prejudice and discrimination, including bullying and harassment. We are proud to be an inclusive school. Inclusion permeates through our DARE values and through our curriculum, assemblies and pastoral provision .



This week we are dedicating our special feature newsletter to Pride month, which celebrates LGBT+ communities all around the world. Pride month is usually celebrated with parades and marches, but with Covid-19 and social distancing, these events will be taking place via social media.

Pride month, along with LGBT+ History Month, plays an important role in increasing the visibility of LGBT+ people, celebrating diversity and equality, challenging misconceptions and stereotypes about LGBT+ people, celebrating the progress towards full LGBT+ equality made in many countries across the world. This is also a time to remember that vast numbers of LGBT+ people around the world live in fear of imprisonment, persecution and death and that despite the social and political progress many countries have made, homophobic and transphobic attitudes still persist. In honour of Pride Month, our special feature newsletter aims to educate, celebrate and raise awareness.

Thank you to Megan Lewis and Kyra Bilsoy in year 13, for their contributions and support with this newsletter.





LGBT+ TERMINOLOGY

There is lots of terminology and acronyms that you may have heard on the subject of sexual orientation and gender identity. Here are some of them. People sometimes ask, how can there be so many different identities? The answer is that there are many different sexual orientations and gender identities and the terminology below can be very helpful for some people to express who they are.



L

Lesbian (women who are attracted to women)



G

Gay (people who are attracted to the same gender)



B

Bisexual (people who are attracted to more than one gender)



T

Transgender (people whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth)

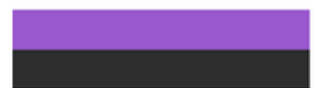
Heterosexual (men who are attracted to women, and women who are attracted to men)

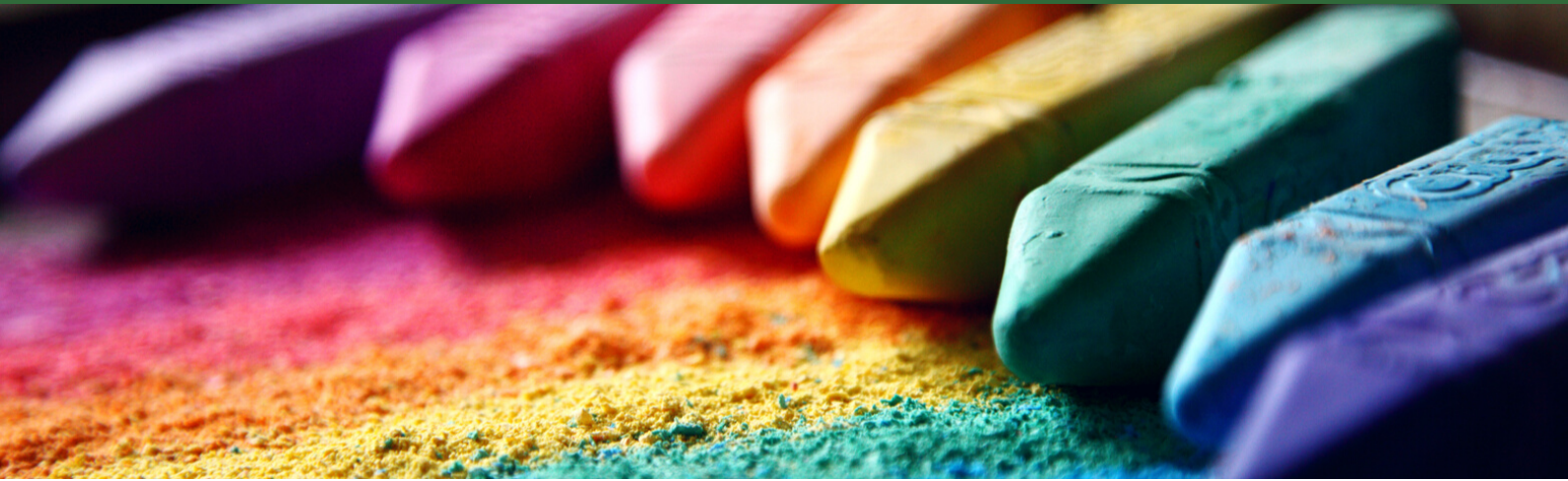


Non-binary (people whose gender identity isn't either male or female)



Gender fluid (people whose gender identity is not fixed but changes depending on the context and how they are feeling)





LGBT+ EQUALITY IN THE UK

UK law ensures that LGBT+ people have rights and freedoms that are the same as the wider population. Here are some of the ways in which the UK does this.



The 2010 UK Equality Act protects the rights of LGBT+ (and many other people with a range of protected characteristics) people at work, in school and in places such as hotels and in public spaces. This means it is illegal to discriminate against someone because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.



LGBT+ people have been allowed to serve openly in Her Majesty's Armed Forces since the year 2000.



LGBT+ people have the same rights as heterosexual people to medical support to have children, eg: IVF and sperm donation.



Same sex parents can have both their names on their child's birth certificate.



LGBT+ couples can adopt and foster children.



Ofsted requires that all schools can demonstrate how they are tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying and promoting equality.



Since 2004 the Gender Recognition Act, it has been possible for transgender people to change their legal gender in the UK, allowing them to acquire a new birth certificate, affording them full recognition in law.



Starting in September 2020 in England, a new curriculum for relationships, sex and health education will become statutory. The new curriculum stipulates that young people must be taught about LGBT+ issues within a relationship and health context.





EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

Equal marriage means that same sex couples can be legally united as a married couple. This is an important part of equal rights for LGBT+ people because it shows that same sex relationships are equal to heterosexual relationships. Marriage brings with it legal rights and responsibilities. For example, married couples can share pensions and employment based insurance schemes. Married couples can also pass on wealth and assets to each other after death, without paying tax. Without equal marriage, same sex couples would have been denied these rights simply because of their sexual orientation.

These are the countries across the world where equal marriage is legal. You can also see the year in which this became law.

2001	Netherlands (Holland)
2003	Belgium
2005	Canada and Spain
2006	South Africa
2009	Norway and Sweden
2010	Portugal, Iceland and Argentina
2012	Denmark
2013	Brazil, France, Uruguay and New Zealand

2014	England, Wales and Scotland
2015	USA, Luxembourg, Republic of Ireland
2016	Greenland and Columbia
2017	Finland, Germany, Faroe Islands, Malta, Australia
2019	Austria, Ecuador, Taiwan
2020	Northern Ireland and Costa Rica

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIC, BI-PHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING

The legal rights given to LGBT+ people have helped to create societies where many people have supportive attitudes and values. However, as we can see from the statistics below, discrimination of LGBT+ people still exists. These are concerning and show that we all still have a lot of work to do in ensuring that the LGBT+ people are allowed to live their lives happily and free from discrimination.

(figures take from the 2017 Stonewall School Report)

- 45% of LGBT+ students are bullied at school.
- 50% of bullied LGBT+ students say this negatively impacts on their future educational plans

- **Homophobic:** The discrimination of gay people.
- **Bi-phobic:** The discrimination of bisexual people.
- **Transphobic:** The discrimination of transgender people

- 40% of bullied LGBT+ students regularly miss school.
- 61% of LGBT+ students have self-harmed because of bullying and this rises to 84% for bullied transgender students.



BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE A GOOD LGBT+ ALLY

One of the ways to support LGBT+ people is by being an ally. We wrote about being an ally last week in our Black Lives Matter special feature newsletter. We can be an ally for any group of people who are experiencing discrimination that we do not directly experience ourselves.

- **Respect and education:** everyone is different and should be able to live freely without fears of hate and judgment. A good way to immerse yourself in respect for the LGBT+ community is by doing your research and understanding the struggle that LGBT+ people went (and in many parts of the world are still going through) through to gain equality, even though there is still a long way to go.
- **Listen:** listen to what people have to say and respect their views by being supportive of them as it is sometimes a difficult journey for LGBT+ people to come to terms with who they are.
- **Rainbows:** what is a better way to show your support than by wearing rainbow pride related items.
- **Question people's attitudes and misconceptions:** if someone is behaving in a homophobic, bi-phobic or transphobic way, question why they are doing that and counter it by spreading messages of inclusion and understanding.
- **Don't ask personal questions:** just because someone is LGBT+, this does not mean it is ok to ask personal questions about their love life or their body, that you wouldn't ask anyone else.
- **Don't randomly ask someone if they are gay:** targeting individual people to ask them if they are gay or transgender etc, is inappropriate and is likely to be experienced as bullying.
- **Don't out someone:** if you know someone is LGBT+ then this is not your information to share in any form; verbally, through text messages or on social media. **Doing so could put the other person at risk and is an invasion of their privacy.**
- **Be aware of your language:** the words gay, trans or dyke should never be used as an insult or a joke. Although these words have been used in an offensive way, LGBT+ people have recently reclaimed some of these words and use them in a positive way to refer to their own identity.





WHAT ARE WE DOING AT HIGHLANDS SCHOOL TO BE LGBT+ ALLIES?

Our DARE values show our commitment to treating everyone equally.

Our behaviour policy and expectations has a zero tolerance position to any form of discrimination.

We celebrate LGBT+ History Month and Pride Month with assemblies, displays, newsletters, curriculum activities and workshops.

We work with charities and organisations who support schools in creating LGBT+ inclusive school environments.

We have an LGBT+ student support group at lunch time.

Many of our staff wear rainbow lanyards to show their support.

Many staff and students wear LGBT+ flag badges to show their support.

Our PSHE and relationships curriculum is LGBT+ inclusive.





LEARN

CHALLENGING MISCONCEPTIONS

A misconception is commonly held belief on something that actually is not true or correct. Misconceptions arise from a lack of understanding about an issue. Many misconceptions exist about LGBT+ people and these often lead to discrimination and bullying. Here are some commonly held misconceptions about LGBT+ people and an explanation of why these are misconceptions. When you hear these misconceptions, be sure to challenge them with the information provided here.

Misconception 1

Sexual orientation and gender identity are the same thing. This is a misconception because sexual orientation is to do with who you are attracted to and gender identity is whether you see yourself as a woman, man, non-binary etc. Someone who is transgender is not necessarily gay.

Misconception 2

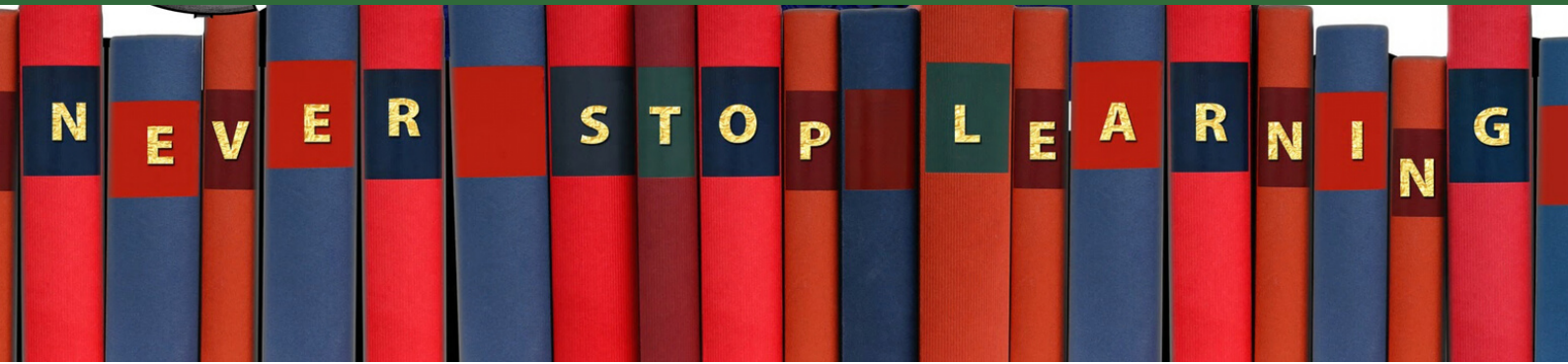
Being LGBT+ is a choice. This is a misconception because no one would say being heterosexual is a choice. People do not wake up one morning and decide their sexual orientation or gender identity. Our sexual orientation and gender identity is something we feel within ourselves as we grow up.

Misconception 3

A boy who appears feminine or a girl who appears masculine must be gay. How someone looks or dresses does not tell you anything about their sexual orientation. Making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation based on how they look is something we should all avoid doing as this means we are stereotyping.

Misconception 4

Being religious means you cannot be LGBT+ or that you cannot support LGBT+ people. While people will have different views on this, the fact remains that many religions and religious communities now perform same sex marriage ceremonies and are fully inclusive of LGBT+ people.



What does the rainbow flag represent?

Did you know that the rainbow pride flag has a meaning behind each of the six colours? It was created in 1977/78 by a San Franciscan gay artist, Gilbert Baker.

He created the flag to give the LGBT+ community a new symbol that they deserved as the flag was created at a time during a 'social revolution' for gay rights. He also never copyrighted the flag, as he believed everyone owned it. He wanted to create something positive which would celebrate love.

Each colour has a meaning



Image source: [Time Magazine](#)

More recently a new rainbow pride flag has been launched to reflect the diversity that is the LGBT+ community. The black and brown stripes were added as a symbol of racial diversity and inclusion and the white, pink and blue stripes were included to represent transgender people.





INSPIRED!

INSPIRATIONAL LGBT+ PEOPLE



Image source: [Kofi Painstil](#)

LADY PHYLL

Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, known as Lady Phyll, has given a voice to a generation of young black LGBT+ people who did not feel represented by the mainstream LGBT+ movement. She is the Co-founder and Executive Director of [UK Black Pride](#), which was conceived as an event in 2005 to give a voice to the minority communities within the LGBT+ movement. UK Black Pride is one of the most diverse prides in Europe.

It has since expanded beyond a single event format to serve as a protest promoting “unity and co-operation among all Black people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Middle Eastern and Latin American descent, as well as their friends and families, who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.”

On her own personal experience, Lady Phyll has commented: “As a Black lesbian woman, I’ve experienced every prejudice, challenge and smack in the proverbial mouth you can imagine, from the workplace to any number of institutions and establishments. What I go through as a Black woman at work and society at large is well documented and so I use every opportunity to speak to others and understand their struggle to see where I can reflect on whether I contribute towards that struggle, and where I can speak out about, and fight against, discrimination that affects others.” Lady Phyll calls on young LGBT+ people to “teach others that we deserve to take pride of place and feel safe, also protected, here and abroad” and allies to “step up, to listen, give up space, speak up and help us create a world where no one lives in fear due to prejudice and discrimination.”

MARK ASHTON



Image source: [Wikipedia](#)

Mark was a young gay Northern Irish man who was an LGBT+ activist in the 1980s. An activist is someone who campaigns for social and political change. He formed the Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) movement, which helped raise money during the miners’ strike of 1984 to 1985. The miners’ strikes in the 1980s are an important part of the UK’s political history. The miners went on strike due to the Government’s announcement that it would be shutting down the UK’s coal mining industry. This resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs, which devastated the communities that heavily relied on the coal mining industry for the vast majority of its local employment.

Along with his friend Mike Jackson, they started to collect money at the 1984 gay pride march. He also volunteered for the LGBT+ switchboard, which is the second oldest LGBT+ helpline in the UK.

The alliance which was built between the miners and members of LGSM was pivotal in working towards equal rights for the gay community. At the 1985 Labour party conference, the National Union of Mine Workers stood in solidarity with the labour campaign for gay rights. The film ‘Pride’ was made about LGSM and Mark’s fight for equality and their journey helping the mining community of Dulais, Wales.



SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

If you or anyone you know would like support about any of the issues raised in this newsletter, then please reach out in one of the following ways.

- Contact our welfare support email address where a member of staff will appropriate support and guidance:
- **staysafe@highlearn.uk.**
- **Stonewall**, the UK's leading LGBT charities has a support page for young people.
- **The LGBT switchboard** has a web page and multiple ways to contact them for support and guidance 0300 330 0630.
- **The Proud Trust** are a charity who support LGBT+ youth. They have lots of help and advice for young people on their website.
- **Mermaids** work with young people who do not identify with the gender they have been assigned at birth. They also work with parents and carers of young people going through these feelings.
- If you have been harmed, feel unsafe or at risk then call the police on **999**.
- You can report discrimination or homophobic abuse to the police on **101**.