



SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ISSUES AROUND SEXUALITY AND/OR GENDER



Werneth School prides itself in ensuring that we provide a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where every student can feel empowered to grow, learn and develop themselves. We recognise that to achieve this we must ensure that our LGB+ and Trans students feel that they have a safe learning environment which allows them to be themselves.

To achieve this, we have within school several support options for students who think they might be lesbian, gay, bisexual or are questioning their sexual orientation, and/or who think they might be trans, non-binary or are questioning their gender identity. In addition, we also recognise the importance of supporting family and friends to fully understand and be ready to support your child, as and when, they are ready to share these issues.

This note is therefore intended to provide parents and carers with key internet sites where you can find essential support information/advice, that may help you better understand the issues and emotions that your child will be experiencing.

You can also be assured that in school, we will continue to support your child to work through any concerns or issues they may have in coming to terms with their sexuality/gender. Additionally, we will also extend that support to you and your family, if you would find that useful.

1. “COMING OUT”

Research shows that over 50% of young people who are LGBT+ suffer with Anxiety, as they see this “coming out” as the single scariest thing they will do. Their key concern is the reaction of immediate family and friends.

We recognise that most parents will not be prepared when they hear their child tell them that they may be gay, bi or even trans. This might be because you don't fully understand what you are hearing, or because it doesn't match your image of their “potential future”.

However, how you react to this initial message is incredibly important to them, and the best things you can do to help them at this point is:

- listen to what they have to say carefully,
- feel free to ask questions of clarification, but do not be judgemental,
- do not use the phrase “this is probably just a phase you are going through”
- and
- remind them that you love them just as much now as you did before they told you.

**Please do not under-estimate how important
this first conversation is to your child**



More advice and guidance for parents about Coming Out can be found by clicking on this link: [So you think your child is gay, lesbian, bi and/or trans? \(stonewall.org.uk\)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/so-you-think-your-child-is-gay-lesbian-bi-and-or-trans)

2. Sexuality:

Sexuality is the word used to describe the sexual feelings we experience towards other people. It isn't necessarily about who we actually have sex with. There are different categories of sexuality, and here are some of the most common terms you may have heard:

Straight: attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Gay: attracted to people of the same sex. This term is used by both men and women.

Lesbian: attracted to people of the same sex. This term refers specifically to women.

Bisexual: attracted to both men and women. Some people prefer the term pansexual to indicate that they are attracted to different kinds of people, regardless of gender.

Asexual: not sexually attracted to anyone.

Childline provides a lot of useful information to help you understand sexuality and sexual orientation and can be found by clicking this link: [Sexuality | Childline](https://www.childline.gov.uk/sexuality)

3. Gender:

Our sex, which is physical (male or female) is distinct from our gender, which is psychological and social. What this means is that some of us have a gender which is different from our sex:

We may be male physically but identify or feel more comfortable thinking of ourselves as a female,

Equally, we may be a female physically, but identify or feel more comfortable thinking of ourselves as a male, or

We may also identify as being male **and** female **or** neither.

When we feel this way, we may be transgender or gender non-binary. Being transgender or gender non-binary, however, **is completely natural**.

Knowing how to support your child when they've come out as transgender can feel understandably overwhelming. Again, being patient, talking openly and checking in with them can help you to understand their needs at home and at school, especially if they're feeling vulnerable or worried about being bullied.

Coming out as trans is a huge step. It takes real courage and bravery. And the most important thing to remember is that they know you love them for who they are inside.



SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ISSUES AROUND SEXUALITY AND/OR GENDER



Whilst we will continue to do everything that we can in school to support both you and your child, we think that it is important that you are also able to access external advice and support from specialist groups.

The following internet sites will provide you with a lot more detailed information/advice:

[Resources for Parents - Mermaids \(mermaidsuk.org.uk\)](https://mermaidsuk.org.uk)

<https://gids.nhs.uk/young-people>

<https://gids.nhs.uk/parents-and-carers>

https://www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/001159-PAPYRUS-L-eaflet_Sexuality-and-Gender.pdf

<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1054/coming-out-guide-for-t-people.pdf>

4. Support available in school

The HART Team already provides a confidential one-to-one support service to many students who are questioning their sexuality or gender. We are here to listen and offer specific advice and counselling to you and your child to help address any concerns you or they may have.

The Skittle Squad is a group of LGBT students (supported by teachers) who meet every Monday lunch time.

Their aim is to help students understand differences in others and build acceptance within the school community.

The group caters for an open age range with members from Year 7 to Year 11, and is open to all students who are interested in discussing key issues around Inclusion, whether those students identify as LGBT+ or not, and

Focuses on issues surrounding the LGBT+ community, and how these apply within a school setting.

5. Further help/advice

If you would like any further information, advice or support then please feel free to email Vince McAllister, in confidence at vince.mcallister@wernethschool.com