

Focus area: LGBT+

April 2023

LGBT+
Toolkit

Recommended
Reading:

Being the
teacher that I
never had...

What if
we replace toxic
masculinity with
intersectional
masculinity?

Belonging on
Purpose

SCHOOL IN FOCUS

William Farr C of E Comprehensive School

Hello and welcome to the
William Farr LGBT+ Space!

The LGBT+ Space has been running at William Farr CE School, Welton for almost a decade and provides a space for the LGBT+ students and allies to meet, socialise and learn more about the LGBT+ community. For a lot of us, it is a lunchtime session where we can meet our friends and be accepted for who we are without judgement or having to explain anything to anyone. For others, it is a place to get advice from older students or a member of staff. For some people it is the first time someone has understood how we feel and for some people, it has literally saved lives.

The LGBT+ Space has changed a lot over the decade in which it has been running. It began with mainly older students from Year 10 to Sixth Form using it as a space to seek advice and visibility from others. However, since the pandemic, there has been a big increase in younger students attending. The importance of this space and the visibility that has been created at William Farr is hard to put into words. LGBT+ people and relationships are



"I didn't feel I could speak to anyone at primary school. This meant I didn't report homophobia or nasty comments and just suffered, carrying all of that around with me. There is no way I'd have a conversation with someone who I didn't feel will be kind and understanding. I'd rather suffer."

usualised at William Farr. We use this wording very deliberately. To say that it is normalised is not very inclusive to the LGBT+ community because it suggests that we are "other" and let's face it...what is normal anyway? Weekly meetings offer the chance to discuss many of the issues of the day; the group has taken an active role in the fight to ban conversion therapy, writing to our local MP to express our views. We have asked for and achieved gender neutral toilets in the school and a move towards gender neutral changing



rooms, all of which have come about as a result of the actions of us. It is really empowering to see how the school leadership listens and acts upon the voices it hears.

LGBT+ relationships feature in our PSHE lessons, in lessons across the school, in the assemblies we have and the speakers who visit our school. We have openly LGBT+ members of staff which is a big help because it lets us know that we can be safe, happy and visible within the world. Staff wear little rainbow badges and even the PE staff wear rainbow laces in their shoes. The power of visibility and inclusion cannot be underestimated. Welcoming everyone into your school and including the voices that are often ignored, marginalised and hated; shows a powerful message of acceptance.

"Almost all Staff wear badges and this is nice to see. It tells me that I can speak to that member of staff and trust them."



William Farr has values of Respect, Compassion, Responsibility, Wisdom, Friendship and Perseverance. All of these are shown in the way in which we are listened to, accepted and looked after at school. At William Farr we are taught to be good humans and that despite our differences we are united by kindness and understanding. We know as students that there will be other pupils who are unkind and hateful but we know that this will be dealt with quickly and appropriately which helps us to feel safe and looked after.

"At the LGBT+ Space I know I'm going to be taken seriously here. Other people assume things about me because of the way I express my gender and I'm told a lot that I'm silly or that this is a phase."

Some students have even moved to William Farr from other secondary schools as they heard how supportive we were as a school.

We have lots of chances to learn about the LGBT+ community in tutor time and at LGBT+ Space. We celebrate LGBT+ History Month, we marched at Lincoln Pride parade and keep a display board in the reception of school updated with our work. We have worked closely with Stonewall and Just Like Us (both LGBT education charities) and were the runners up in the Just Like Us Awards in 2019. We feature in Stonewall's guide to setting



up a Student Voice group and last year we won the Queer Student Awards as School/College of the Year which was really cool. We give staff INSET at William Farr every year. We teach staff about pronouns, our experiences as young people and how they can be more inclusive and representative in their lessons. We have also given training to Lincolnshire NHS Trusts for the last 7 years speaking to hundreds of doctors and nurses. These things make us feel heard, seen and confident in who we are.



"I'm accepted here, I feel safe around others that are like me. There is going to be no judgement and shame placed on me for simply being me."