

# Creative Writing Competition

## 'OutWordBound'

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We are delighted to announce that we will once again be holding our writing competition for York school students, Years 7 through to 11.

Young people of York will be encouraged to write a piece of fiction, non-fiction or poetry that explores the themes of LGBT life. Entrants may wish to write about their own personal experiences, coming out, bullying, a family experience, the challenges still being faced today by the LGBT community or perhaps a future world view that explores how societal change can help enhance the lives of the LGBT community.

**Entrants do not need to identify as being LGB or T.**

The competition will be launched in November 2017 and the closing date will be the 28th February 2018. The competition coincides with the start of LGBT History month in February and judging will take place throughout the month of March. Winners will be announced at the end of March 2018. Whilst there is no requirement to link the chosen theme for LGBT History month 2018 (Geography: Mapping the World), entrants may wish to *consider* the theme within their submission.

A panel of judges will be selected to critique and assess all submissions. In line with the National Curriculum, our Judges will be looking for accuracy, imagination and fluidity. The founding principles of the judging criteria will be based upon: originality, enjoyability and relevance to LGBT related issues.

There will be prizes which are yet to be finalised, but we expect them to be in line with previous prizes which were worth £100 for 1st, £60 for 2nd and £40 for 3rd place and a judge's prize worth £100. The work will also be published in an anthology and the entrants will be invited to attend a prize giving ceremony where the winners will be announced.

**The rules are simple-**

- All entries should be emailed to [outwordboundinyork@gmail.com](mailto:outwordboundinyork@gmail.com) or handed in to your schoolrep.
- All entries must be accompanied by a completed entry form, whether emailed or posted. An entry form has also been provided for your convenience.
- There is no minimum word count but the maximum word count for all entries is 1,000 words. The title is not included in the word-count.
- Entries may be written in any style or form (fiction or non-fiction) but they must be presented in English.

## The smaller detail

- Entrants may withdraw entries from the competition by notification in writing to [outwordboundinyork@gmail.com](mailto:outwordboundinyork@gmail.com)
- Entrants can only enter individually and only one entry per person is permitted.
- The deadline date for entries is 23:59 (UKtime) on 28th February 2018. Entrants posted on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 will be accepted.
- Unfortunately we will not be able to return entries so please make sure a copy is taken before being submitted. Unsuccessful entrants will not be contacted in respect of their entry.
- Entries must not contain defamatory, obscene, offensive or any other unsuitable material and this will be at the discretion of the judging panel. We would advise entrants to seek advice and guidance from their teacher.
- All entries must be the original work of the entrant and must not infringe upon the rights of any other party. Entrants must not identify any person they know without seeking their permission first.

## Why Are We Doing This?

The York LGBT Forum in collaboration with LGBT History Month are dedicated to this initiative.

As community groups, we acknowledge that this is a sensitive area for pupils, teachers and parents alike. It's particularly delicate for those pupils who identify as LGB or T as they are often reluctant to open up and talk about their feelings and thoughts for fear of bullying and discrimination. We want to challenge this and create a platform for young people to unleash their creativity in a safe environment.

Homophobic bullying is part of a wider problem of bullying in many schools. In 2012, the LGBT organisation Stonewall produced The School Report (2012) which demonstrated the need for LGBT initiatives in schools. This report was recently updated in 2017 and suggests that although there is much to celebrate there is still much to do. We have no reason to believe that York is an exception to the depressing statistics in this report. For example, nearly half (forty-five percent) of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils have experienced direct bullying. Nearly two in three transgender pupils have been bullied with one in ten having received death threats. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying has a profoundly damaging impact on young people's school experiences. Students who experience bullying have been found to change their future educational plans because of it and indicate it impacts directly on their school work. LGBT people who are bullied are at a higher risk of suicide, self-harm and depression.

It's now an Ofsted requirement for schools to tackle prejudice and bullying related to homophobia and compulsory relationships and sex education (RSE) is now being implemented across schools in England. This competition aims to help support teachers in meeting the Ofsted requirements.

Through encouraging young people to partake in the competition, Schools will be demonstrating their commitment and support for LGBT pupils in a meaningful way.