



NEWS

newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk



HEADLINES

Dear Parent/Carer/Student

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Birchwood News, it has a very distinct feel when compared to previous editions this academic year. Photographs of students enjoying being back in the classroom or outdoor social areas. Everything feels far more 'normal' aside from the face masks and on this note, our students have been brilliant - they have universally conformed to the requirement to wear a mask indoors which can't be easy wearing for at least five hours a day.

As life in the UK continues to get back to normal, our students have returned after Easter in very much the same frame of mind, excellent attendance, enjoying being back, and working hard to catch-up. This was reflected in a recent parent council meeting, parents expressed their support of both the remote learning in January and February and the way the school had communicated with parents regarding the return to school in March. The minutes of the parent council meeting can be found on the school website and we still have a few vacancies. If you are interested and can commit to three meetings a year, please let me know and I will pass on to the Chair.

On the Covid front, there has been some recent coverage in the newspapers, questioning the cost and validity of lateral flow tests. Although we do this twice weekly at Birchwood, I would argue that it is still a very useful test and one that we do altruistically to ensure that we are also keeping family and friends safe from any risk of infection. Thank you for persisting with this despite the low prevalence of Covid-19 in our area. The truly shocking scenes in India at the moment are a reminder that this virus remains a highly contagious illness with the potential to cause serious illness or death.

It is great to see after school clubs and extra-curricular activities after such a long period without. The list of extracurricular events is shown on page 17 onwards. We are also beginning to look to plan trips, these will start off as local visits and day trips initially. As a contingency, please note that, in the event of further national or local lockdowns leading to the cancellation of this visit, we will seek to reclaim and refund any money paid from school insurance. In the unlikely event of an individual student testing COVID positive or having to self-isolate, leading to their non-participation in the visit. Birchwood High School, will not be liable to repay any money paid, unless we have been able to recoup this from other outside agencies.

As we begin to look at a post-pandemic society, rightly so, we are all taking a long hard look at ourselves. Whilst there is no doubt that we should be wary of returning to our old ways of high resource exploitation and excessive greenhouse gas emissions, societal issues of racial prejudice and misogyny have been raised in the tragic cases of George Floyd and Sarah Everard. The 'Black Lives Matter' movement and the 'Everyone's Invited' website highlight the continued divisions within our society that action is needed for prejudice to be confronted and eradicated.

Continued on page 2...

FINANCE



I am Mrs Young, the parental and student contact in relation to all income to the school.

We use an online payment system, ParentPay for administration of the school income, especially in these times. We would like to keep the students and ourselves as safe as possible so encourage everyone to use this payment method.

If you require ParentPay log in details or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email:
jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Summer Term 2021

Monday 12 April - Thursday 22 July

Half Term 2021

Monday 31 May - Friday 4 June

2021/2022

Term Dates 2021/22

Autumn 2021

1 September - 21 December 21
Friday 3 September – Years 7/12 only

Monday 6 September
– whole school starts

Half term

Monday 25 October -
Friday 29 October

Spring 2022

Wednesday 5 January -
Friday 1 April

Half term

Monday 14 February -
Friday 18 February

Summer 2022

Tuesday 19 April -
Friday 22 July

Half term

Monday 30 May -
Friday 3 June

CPD Days

Wednesday 21 July 2021
Thursday 22 July 2021
Wednesday 1 September 2021–
CPD (staff training)
Thursday 2 September 2021–
CPD (staff training)
Friday 1 October 2021
Wednesday 5 January 2022
Thursday 21 July 2022
Friday 22 July 2022

Please note that the school is closed to students on all CPD days, unless a member of staff has asked students to attend.

HEADLINES...

Birchwood is a highly inclusive school and, as such, we take a proactive approach with regards to equality. **Fusion** was founded in December 2016, originally as an LGBT+ support group for students within school. Whilst the central focus is still very much on supporting LGBT+ students and raising awareness of LGBT+ experiences and history, the group has evolved to explore wider issues within society, such as racism, gender difference and inequality, as well as looking at how intersectionality (a person's social and political identities) combine to shape their experiences of the world and the prejudices they may face.

The group have visited the Houses of Parliament, presented awareness assemblies, as well as hosted several guest speakers such as activists Philip C Baldwin and Peter Tatchell. The group meetings are attended by students from across the school, with the fundamental aim to ensure that acceptance without exception is a central part of our learning community. Birchwood achieved Bronze level status as a Stonewall School Champion in 2019 for its work in tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. A big thank you to Mr Harlow for his sterling work in this area. Further more, last term we initiated a review into our systems and processes for dealing with incidents of sexism and misogyny and we are currently considering our response. Please be assured that we are determined that Birchwood needs to be an environment where all of our students understand what is appropriate behaviour and where any incidences of casual sexism are rare and promptly dealt with. If you have any concerns about any issues raised by this, please feel free to contact Mr Stopps at sstopps@birchwoodhigh.org.uk.

I would like to finish this editorial by recognising the resilience and hard work by Year 11 and 13 students. These last 12 months have really affected their preparations for public exams and further education plans. Not only have these students kept up with their studies during lockdown, they have shown an excellent attitude to the exams and assessments they are currently undertaking. We have a record number of Sixth Form and University applications and it is our plan to ensure that everyone can move on to do what they want to do despite the pandemic. I wish them all the best over the next few weeks.

Dr Ingate, Principal

Café



Please remember to top up your child's food account at school either using ParentPay or via the cash machine in the Café.

A quick reminder that the Café will be fully open for Breakfast, Breaktime and Lunchtime. We have zoned areas for each year group following all Covid directives for hygiene.

- Breakfast is served from 8.00am for bacon rolls, cereal, warm pretzels, a large selection of fresh/sliced fruit, orange juice, milk and hot drinks.
- Break time 11.00 - 11.30am (in year bubbles) hot wraps, paninis, mac and cheese, nacho pots, potatoes wedges, pain au chocolate, juices, drinks, sandwiches, smoothies and fruit.
- Lunch 1.20 - 2.00pm (in year bubbles) hot meal deal only £2.50, pasta king, wide range of sandwiches/wraps, cakes, drinks, fruit pots, hummus pots, cheese pots and fresh salads.
- There are three different zones, the main Café, Pasta King hatch and sandwich hub so less waiting time for everyone. There are also designated year bubble seating areas.

Café Competition

Calling all budding chefs...

Do you love cooking?
If so, why not enter the new
Café competition.

Design and cost a salad up to
the value of £1.30 for the Café.
Win a free meal and 100
House points.

The winning salad will feature
on the following weeks menu.

Closing date for entries is
Monday 17 May.

How to enter:

Send a photo of your salad and a list of
the ingredients you have used to
Mr Kadlec:
akadlec@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

Introducing the new salad and
smoothie menu from the Café.

Week 1

Ham and coleslaw salad
Goat's cheese and black grape salad
Berry and mint smoothie

Week 2

Chicken and avocado salad
Greek salad
Melon and strawberry smoothie

Week 3

BLT salad
Tomato and mozzarella salad
Mango smoothie

Week 4

Turkey club salad
Grilled halloumi salad
Banana and honey smoothie

All salad and fruit is packaged in
individual takeaway boxes
and are part of the Meal Deal Package.

Smoothies are £1.00 and salad are
£2.40 as individual items.

If you don't fancy a smoothie and
salad why not try the Café's new range
of ice-cream 50p and lollies 75p, all
available at break and lunch.

HOUSE

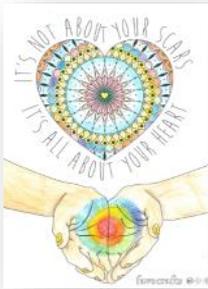
Star Jumps Challenge, Kahoot Quizzes (ranging from finish the song to guess the teacher), Mindfulness Colouring and meditation in form time, marked Birchwood's annual House Feel Good Week.

The Café offered a selection of fruit half price and a selection of fresh fruit smoothies to keep everyone feeling GOOD!

Staff took part in a covid secure Easter Egg hunt in the staffroom which Mr Morton won as he managed to find three eggs!

Rosie Smith, Year 7 won a £10 Amazon voucher for her entry in the mindfulness colouring competition.

7CPD won the star jump challenge.



Rosie Pressland



Amy Johnson



Saskia Hawkes



Rose Smith



Charlie Clark



Alfie Elliott



7CPD winners of the star jump challenge.



10CLE took the meditation to a whole new level!



7CPD in deep meditation.

ART



HEROES STAMP DESIGN COMPETITION FOR THE ROYAL MAIL

Are you aged 11- 14? If you are you could have a piece of your artwork made into a stamp by the Royal Mail! We are running the 'Royal Mail Heroes' stamp design competition to honour the heroes of the coronavirus pandemic.

You could win £1,000 in high street vouchers plus the fame of having one of your designs printed onto the official Royal Mail stamps.

If you are interested in taking part look for the information it will be announced on Teams, then see Miss Morrison for an official entry form.

Virtual Summer Exhibition 2021



Have you been getting creative during the last year? Why not share your work with the Birchwood Community. Open entry to students, parents, friends, staff and Birchwood's wider community. In July, visitors to the website? will be able to vote for their favourite piece - but remember this is just for fun, so get involved!

What you need to do:

1. Photograph your work in good lighting.
2. Title your work.
3. Send the photograph of your work along with:
 - * The Title
 - * Artist name
 - * Media/technique used to create it.

Remember any creative media can be exhibited i.e. textiles, printing, photography, painting, drawing and sculpture.

Send to: dmorrison@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

Closing date is Wednesday 30 June 2021

Condition of entry

You must be happy for your name to be displayed on the school website. If you are a student under the age of 18 we will need parental consent.

Last year's vote winners were:

- 1st place**
Rebecca Smith (Year 12), Omo Valley Boy.
- 2nd place**
Tracey Pinnington (Parent), Hope.
- 3rd place**
Hannah Nicholls (Year 9), Rain Dance.



EPA News

Huge congratulations to our Year 11 GCSE and Year 12 BTEC Dance students

Well done to all Year 11 Dance students who completed their choreography moderation in the Easter holidays. Every single student gave it their all and the standard was incredibly high!



Well done all Year 12 BTEC PA students who completed their unit 2 exam just before the Easter holidays. They have demonstrated so much resilience and determination and all the hard work certainly paid off!



And you don't even know it!

COVID 19 has not stopped the joys of the Arts! This week Year 9 Dance students and Year 9 Music students teamed up to perform the hit musical number 'And you don't even know it!' from the West End musical 'Jamie'. The hall was full of so much excitement and it was lovely to see our Year 9 creatives working so well together. Unfortunately, we couldn't have an audience this time around, but we look forward to more of this in the summer term! Well done to all our students who took part!



Alumni

Karl Swanepoel

I'm currently in my final year studying Artificial Intelligence and Robotics at Aberystwyth University, and over the past few months I've been setting up a startup company called Topwork.

Topwork is a digital platform that connects entrepreneurs and small business owners with talented, remote-working freelancers and students who specialise in digital skills, including, but not limited to, graphic design, writing, programming and media. The goal of this platform is to pull down the barriers of entry to starting and growing a business online and earning a remote income.

Aberystwyth University hosts an annual alumni funded and judged startup competition called InvEnterPrize, with a main prize of £10,000 to start your business. I was fortunately able to win both the main prize grant of £10,000 and also an additional £3,000 grant funded by the Engineers in Business Fellowship.

Using these funds, I will now be able to hire a couple of part time students, and launch the Topwork platform in the very near future.

I'm incredibly grateful for the support I received at Birchwood in my entrepreneurial journey, and I'd like to thank Mrs Collyer (my Year 11 form tutor) specifically for her help and support with my ideas.

Website: karlswanepoel.com

LinkedIn: karl.im/linkedin

The University has just published an article on the competition:

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2021/04/title-241830-en.html>



Oliver Say

After many interviews I found investment2020 which is an online platform aimed at apprenticeships within the investment sector, I have found an apprenticeship at Fidelity. This company was looking to take on 10 apprenticeships for the tech department and three client service roles, I was successful in securing the client service role. I will soon start the level 5 apprenticeship which will lead to the qualifications I need to continue working within the investment industry.

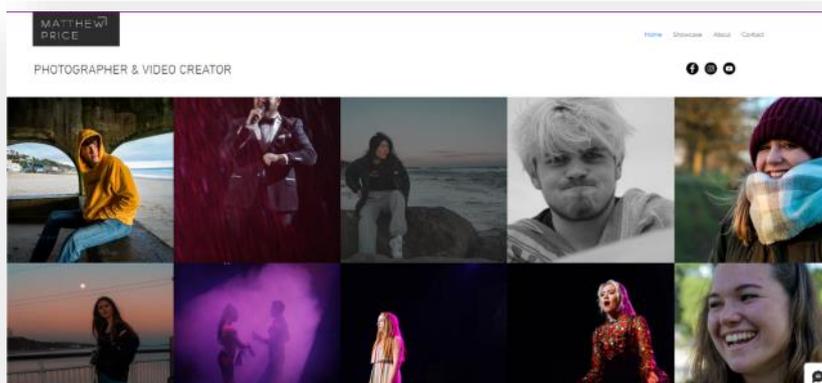
Matthew Price

Right now I'm studying TV production at Bournemouth University and am loving every second - Even if there hasn't been as much on-campus teaching as normal. I've produced a few programmes and shorts that you may be interested in (see the linktree youtube link). I also bought a new camera and have become even more of a hobbyist photographer - my portfolio is also under the link tree.

I have also dabbled at writing and a couple of my works have been published - not too shabby for someone that used to struggle with writing.

I will graduate from Bournemouth in 2023.

My link tree: <https://linktr.ee/Matthewprice1>



BUSINESS



Pitching for Business

For Mrs Dervish's Unit 19 in Business, I did a presentation where I had to come up with a business idea for a start-up small business to pitch for funding. Having my own small business, Jessica.bakesx, creating and decorating bespoke cakes and cupcakes, I chose to talk about this. I started this business creating cakes for family which has grown over time giving me a small business to run alongside my school work. Doing this pitch gave me time to focus on different areas of my business I might not necessarily have thought about so much.

Giving a presentation also helped improve my confidence.

Members of staff took part in the presentation, which they found easy to follow.

Some of the results are pictured above and below.

By Jessica Herbert, Year 13



Student Photography Competition

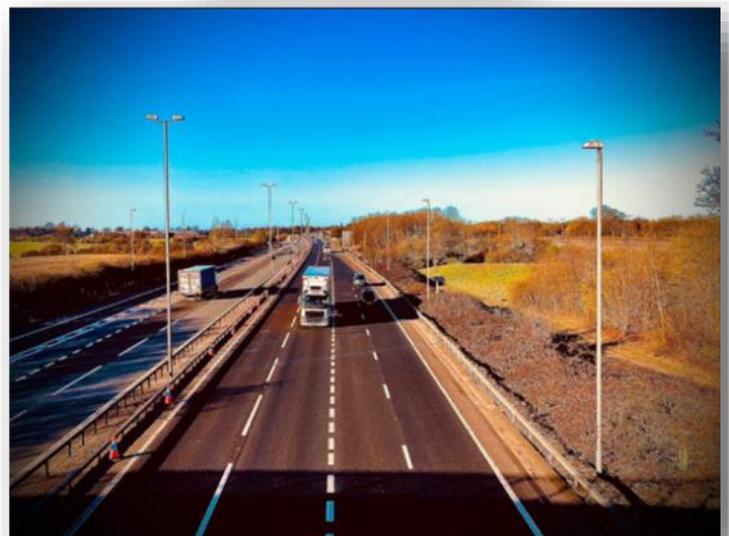
Our photography competition, which ran over Easter, invited students to capture '**Human Impacts of the Environment**'.

I am sure that you will join me in congratulating **Severin Fleet 9ZBD** on his inspiring winning photograph which encapsulates the very essence of **the worlds growing population** and the need for wider roads which often transect countryside, thus destroying natural habitats, coupled with the pollution of endless vehicles.

Well done Severin.

Mrs Pressland, Science

Human Impacts on the Environment



CYCLING

BIKE RACKS

Birchwood High School are grateful for the donation, by East Herts District Council, of a two tier cycle rack capable of storing up to sixteen bicycles. You may recognise it from its previous location along the Causeway in Bishop's Stortford Town Centre.



The Council approached local secondary schools in February to see if there was interest in rehoming the rack which was snapped up by Birchwood. The new rack is a brilliant addition to our cycling provision and we now have space to store fifty bikes. More students than ever before are cycling to school which is something we actively encourage. Cycling is wonderful for health and well-being and also supports our commitment to improving the local environment.

CYCLING CLUBS ARE BACK!

We have two cycling clubs that are currently run by Mr Barrett and Mr Gilbank on Mondays and Wednesdays after school. This week the groups had their first sessions on our recently remodelled dirt cycle track which is located on our detached playing field. The track includes a challenging array of intermediate berms and bumps which the students had great fun trying out. There are still a few places available in the cycling clubs, so if you are interested in joining please speak to Mr Barratt.



PSFA NEWS

Annual General Meeting

The PSFA are pleased to announce their Committee Members following an election at our recent AGM:

Jane Wach – re-elected as Chair

Katie Horwood – re-elected as Secretary

Joy Newton – re-elected as Treasurer

Kate Byers – re-elected as Trustee

Next Meeting is Tuesday 18 May 2021, venue: tbc via schoolcomms nearer the date. Everyone is welcome!

Birchwood Bonus Ball

Congratulations to Sarah Williams who was the winner of the March draw. Ball 36 was drawn by Mr Gilbank, the monthly prize is £102. The Birchwood Bonus Ball is a raffle style club, with up to five numbers available to purchase per person, per subscription period. If you would like to take part by purchasing one or more numbers, please email treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com confirming your name and contact telephone details. Wednesday 28 April is the closing date for subscriptions to be included in the monthly draw. Full terms and conditions of the Birchwood Bonus Ball Club can be found on the PSFA page of the school's website.

Birchwood Future Foundation Fund

Thank you to everyone who has donated so far to the Fund. With the monies donated, the School have been able to purchase new picnic benches, sheltered outdoor canopies for Years 7 and 11 and a Table Tennis Table for Year 8.



Every penny goes a long way to helping raise additional financial resources to enhance students' educational experience whilst at Birchwood High School. With your support the PSFA is hoping to play a significant role in helping to keep Birchwood a well-resourced school with opportunities for all students. There are two ways to make a donation to the Birchwood Futures Foundation. Either by ParentPay or via Virgin Money Giving, details of which can be found on the Birchwood PSFA Page of the school website. As a registered charity, Virgin Money Giving is the easiest way for us claim Gift Aid, which means that if you are a UK tax payer you are able to boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate. Donations of any value are voluntary and collectively will make a huge difference for the school.

Upcoming Events

We are hoping to be able to host events in the not too distant future, so please keep an eye on our Facebook Page for updates.

Other ways to support the PSFA

You can support the PSFA when shopping online with Amazon Smile. Find us on there under Birchwood Parents Staff & Friends Association or by searching our registered charity number 1184425. Alternatively, you can generate free donations to our school at no extra cost to you every time you online shop via TheGivingMachine. Please have a look online www.thegivingmachine.co.uk and search for Birchwood High School.

Second Hand Uniform

If you are replacing items of school uniform and the old items are still in fairly good condition, please consider donating good condition items of second hand uniform to the PSFA. Please drop off clean items of uniform to our reception. If you would like to make a purchase of second hand uniform, please email birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com.



William is a World Record Holder!

William Rose, Year 11 has now been officially presented with his Guinness World Record certificate for building a model tank from an estimated 13,000 K'nex pieces.

To secure his place as the builder of the world's largest moving K'nex vehicle, William had to make sure his tank was able to complete a five metre journey. The whole event was videoed in front of two witnesses and then sent to Guinness World Records via video.

The tank measured an impressive 4.2metres (14ft).



Year 8's up-cycling unwanted jeans in Textiles Technology Lessons.

A huge thank you to everyone who has donated their unwanted denim jeans for our Year 8 students to use on their Textiles Technology projects. As part of this Year 8 Technology rotation students are required to design and make a new product out of the denim whilst learning about the environmental impact of the life cycle of a pair of jeans from the cotton fields to the dustbin.

Your continued support is really appreciated. Any donations should be brought to C3. Thank you

Mrs Reynolds, Technology

SCIENCE



Year 8 have been studying Circuits as part of their Electricity topic. They had fun building bigger and more interesting circuits encompassing fans, lights, buzzers and cells. Well done!

Mr Loveday, Science



Year 7's have been studying sound in the Spring term and have been actively engaged in experiments in lessons and for home learning. They found using the visual Oscilloscope very interesting and you can try this at home by finding it at: <https://academo.org/demos/virtual-oscilloscope/>

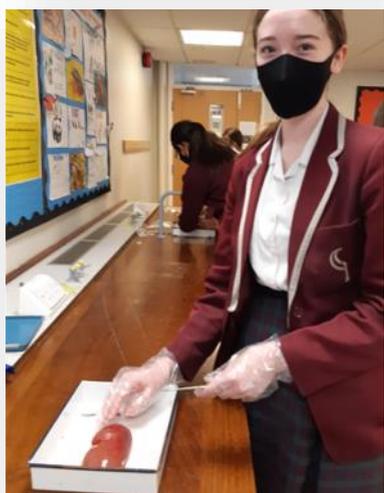
Mr Loveday, Science





Year 10 Chemistry - Rates of reactions, surface area and potatoes.

To tackle a challenging concept of the surface area the students first cut potatoes to the size, they hypothesised would cook the fastest. The students then checked their hypothesis in the real experiment where they measured how long it took for the same volume of gas to be produced when marble chips of different sizes reacted with hydrochloric acid. The results didn't leave any doubts: the smaller the potato chips the faster they cook!



Year 10 Biology - an amazing kidney.

In two consecutive lessons Biology students have been exploring the structure of the mammalian kidney and its role in maintaining the ion and water balance in the body.

Did you know that molecular mechanisms found in the cells of the human kidney are exactly the same as in the frog urinary bladder?



Using a number of biochemical methods. The students analysed the content of the model urine samples 'obtained' from different patients. The students were able to draw conclusions about the conditions that patients suffered from based on the results of these experiments.

MUSIC

The Music department is extremely excited to announce that this year's Young Musician Competition will be a virtual event. Due to the ongoing COVID situation a 'live' final is sadly impossible, however we are looking for as many students as possible to send in videos of performances, these will be used to judge the overall winners. As in previous years there are two categories that students can enter - Pop and Classical. All students need to do is video record themselves performing their favorite piece and send it to Mr Grogan – mgrogan@birchwoodhigh.org.uk. Please note that recordings should be made in a communal space e.g. living room. Entries should arrive by Friday 28 May and the two winners will be announced after half term, and will be given the opportunity to perform in our fourth upcoming open air Summer Prom concert.



Due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, we are unable to hold a 'live' event. However, the show will go on!

As usual, there are two categories - Pop and Classical.

How to Enter

All you need to do is email a video recording of you performing your favourite piece in a communal space, e.g. your living room, to Mr Grogan mgrogan@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

The two winners will be announced after half term and will be given the opportunity to perform in our upcoming open air Summer Prom!

Closing date for entries is Friday 28 May

MFL

Frohe Ostern! (Happy Easter)

Around Easter time in Germany it is a popular tradition to decorate the house with decorative Easter eggs (called *Ostereier*). The eggs are a symbol of fertility and new life and mark the arrival of Spring and celebrate Jesus' resurrection in the Christian calendar. The tradition of dyeing eggs dates back to the 12th Century. These days the eggs are often dyed or painted together as a family and are usually then presented on an *Osterstrauß* (an 'Easter bouquet').

This year, our German students across different year groups were given an egg (plastic of course!) and set the challenge of decorating it to be hung on our very own *Osterstrauß*. They did not disappoint! As you can see in the photos we had a range of creative designs including mandala patterns, two chicks breaking out of their shells, a Berlin cityscape at sunset and even a plastic egg painted to look like a real egg!

I couldn't choose a winner, so set up a vote for the staff of Birchwood to choose their favourites, with the results as follows: 1st Willow Robson (Berlin cityscape), 2nd Jessica Newton (Chick breaking out), 3rd Kiaya Payne (Hatched chick). Well done to everyone who submitted fantastic entries!



International Asexuality Day



The first International Asexuality Day took place on Tuesday 6 April 2021. According to the International Asexuality Day website, it is "designed to complement other ace events like Ace Week (the last week in October), but with a special emphasis on the international community". As with the annual Trans Day of Visibility (March 31), IAD also serves as a focal point for giving asexuality some visibility in the first half of the year. International Asexuality Day celebrates the full asexual spectrum; asexual, greysexual, demisexual, and all other ace identities and it aims to promote the work of ace advocates, especially in non-anglophone and/or non-Western countries. The day is a collaborative project with ace organisations and advocates from over 26 countries, including several Arabic-speaking countries, Brazil, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK.

The Asexual Spectrum is a group of sexual orientations that all fall under the umbrella term of asexual- feeling little to no sexual attraction. People on the asexual spectrum are often referred to as "ace-spec" for short, and ace-spec people can have any romantic orientation, including aromantic (feeling little to no romantic attraction). The spectrum itself is broad, featuring many sexualities, including asexual, greysexual (can experience sexual attraction but very infrequently), demisexual (only experiences sexual attraction once a deep emotional bond has been formed) and lithosexual (may experience sexual attraction but does not want it reciprocated).

Fusion is the LGBTQ+ equality group at Birchwood. If you wish to know more about LGBTQ+ identities or the group itself, Mr Harlow is happy to answer any questions; jharlow@birchwoodhigh.org.uk. If you wish to know more about International Asexuality Day, information can be found at <https://internationalasexualityday.org/en/>

Niamh Payne, BBC Reporter



DRUGS - THE FACTS - Get clued up in 90 minutes!

The Unplugged programme is designed for the parents of 11-15-year-olds and is delivered via Zoom by a trained Unplugged© facilitator.

Is your child moving to Secondary school in September? Keep up to date with the latest on issues affecting teenagers.

We will focus on the facts around drug taking and different types of drugs. Parents will find out the latest information on which drugs are trending locally, signs to look out for, and how best to talk to their teens about drug and alcohol misuse.

£5.00 per household

To book please email: admin@aspects.org.uk

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEEN

A Masterclass delivered by Zoom
for parents & carers of children
aged 11-18

Time: 7pm to 9pm

Date: Thursday 6th May 2021

Price: £5.00 per household



Topics covered include:

- ◆ Understand the latest research around the development of the teen brain and how it affects behaviour
- ◆ Why Teens take risks and have challenging behaviour
- ◆ Is stress different for teenagers?
- ◆ Unpick the puzzle of your teens personality and how it affects their behaviour
- ◆ Supporting your Teen with the impact of lockdown



To request a booking form please
contact

Jo at Aspects - email:
admin@aspects.org.uk
or call 01279 758134

