

# WeMove

## DANCE PROJECT

**Using the power of dance and sisterhood to celebrate black cultural history and challenge misogynoir.**

We are a group of young women in Year 12 and Year 13 who have the opportunity to work with our teacher, professional dancers (Fumy, Chanelle and Kloe), a professional counsellor (Pauline) and women's rights activists to call attention to our bodies and feelings in safe, lively and joyful ways.

We meet once a week after the school day to talk, eat and dance together. We work with different dance and musical styles of West African and African-Caribbean roots, such as bashment, afrobeats, dancehall and more. These styles can be stigmatised by the mainstream media as scandalous and sexualised with little attention to the rich histories of cultural expression embodied in their movements.

By dancing together at the end of the school day, we have an opportunity to relax, restore balance and reclaim these dance forms for ourselves.

### *What is misogynoir?*

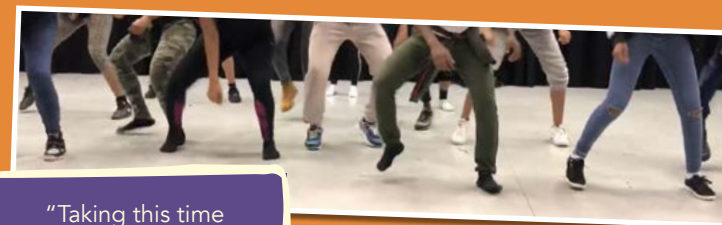
Misogynoir is a term coined by Professor Moya Bailey to address the intersection of racism and sexism directed towards black women in visual and popular culture. For more on the origins of Misogynoir, click [here](#).

### *Reworking the routine*

Meeting up weekly to dance, eat and talk together provides a place to discuss the problems we face in school, online and in our peer communities, a place to celebrate our power and achievements, and to explore what makes a positive relationship.

Each session begins with a warm up and exploring a different dance style, which allows us to move with our feelings from the day, and celebrate our identities.

We have talked about how our bodies can be invaded by unwanted touch and comments in the world around us, but dancing together allows us to feel good in our bodies. We move together to foster a supportive and celebratory space for girls and women, as well as to breakdown some of the barriers between us and staff members at the school. Talking and debating together at the end of the session supports this connection, enabling us to share and critically unpick hurtful and hidden experiences, and explore ways that we can create change, both within ourselves and the communities we are part of.



"Taking this time together is uplifting"

"It's a place to clear our heads"

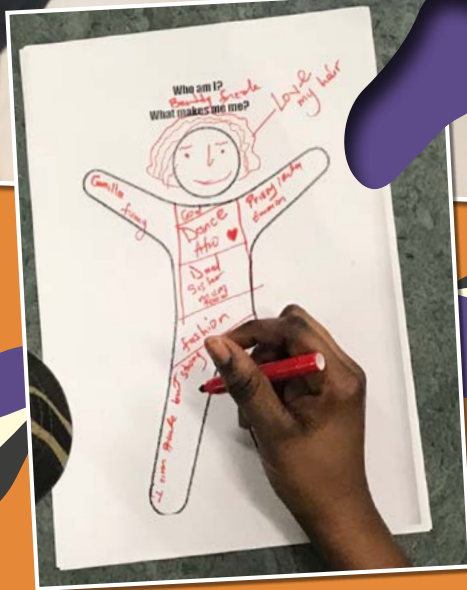
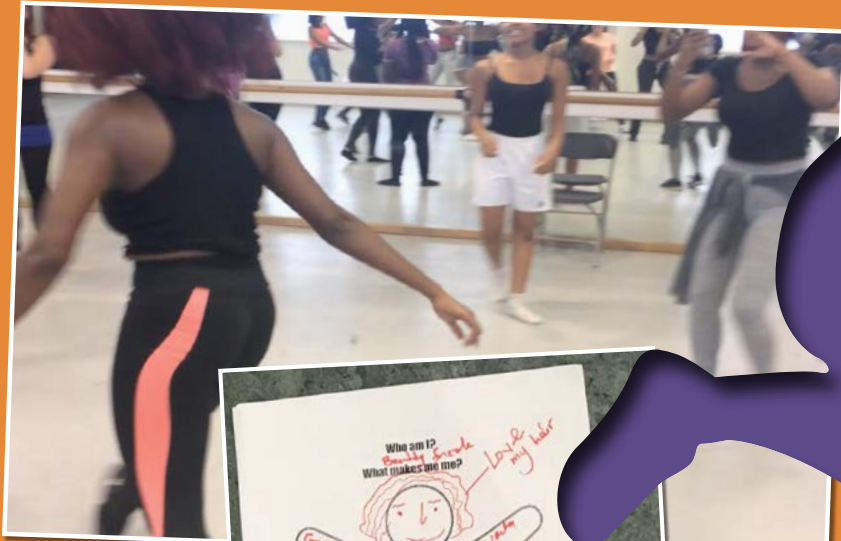
"It's a space to express your body"

"It's ok to make mistakes"

"Every week we remind ourselves of our worth"



## Modelling supportive friendships through Year 8 and 9 dance workshops

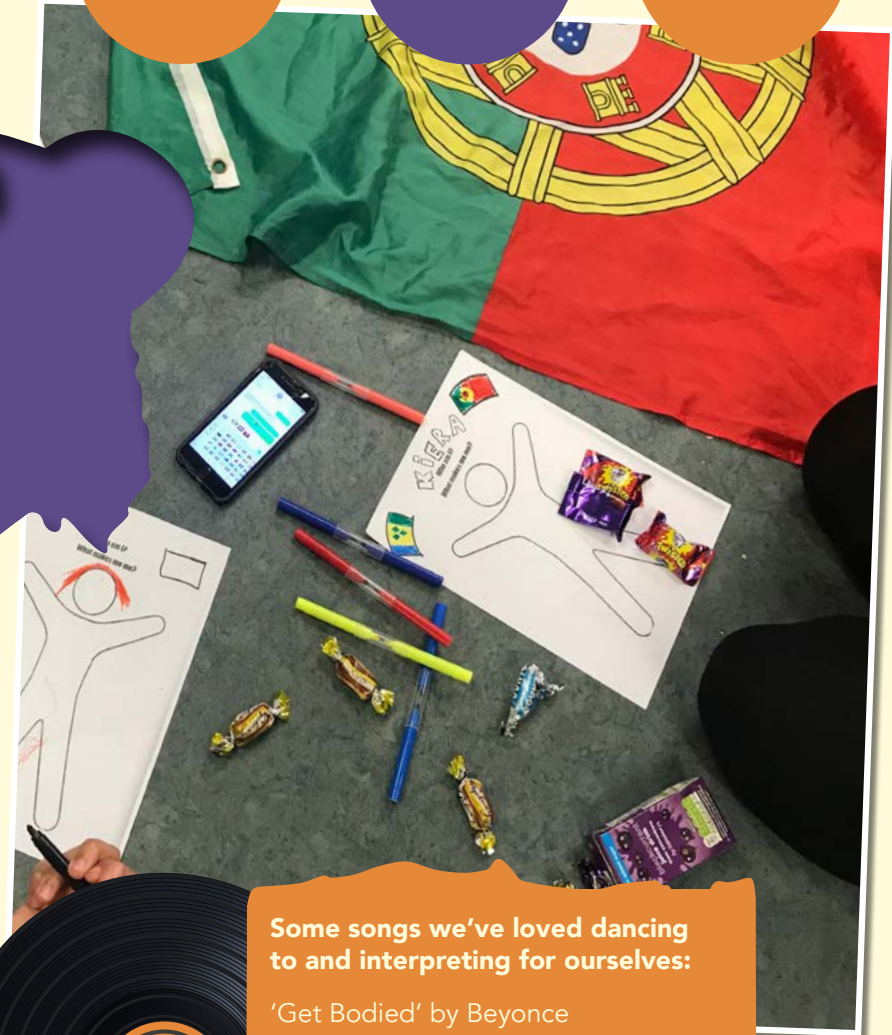


## Our dance teachers and their work

**Chanelle Hall**

**Kloe Dean**

**Fumy Opeyemi**



**Some songs we've loved dancing to and interpreting for ourselves:**

## 'Get Bodied' by Beyonce

'16 Shots' by Stefflon Don  
(original or Afrobeats remix)

'Walking Trophy' by HoodCelebrityy

'Praying' by Kesha



# DIY

## MOVING TOGETHER AGAINST MISOGYNOIR



Before you begin adapting this activity for the children and young people in your setting, read the section on **Safety and Support**.

### Working together as a whole group

- 1 Select a song in an upbeat musical style you love. It should also have lyrics you feel are empowering.
- 2 Play the song a few times over and freestyle to the music and the lyrics: on your own, in pairs, small groups – mix it up! Just do whatever comes naturally. Turn the lights down low to create a vibe if you like. Taking time to chill and listen is ok too.
- 3 Now come together as a whole group and create a routine by piecing together your freestyle ideas.
- 4 Consider what formations, levels and relationships you will create between people in the space in order to reflect the particular feeling of empowerment the music brings.

### Working in pairs or small groups

- 1 Choose a music video which you think reinforces misogyny and/or other inequalities and discriminations (e.g homophobia, transphobia, ableism, poverty etc)
- 2 Play the video and write down all the sexist and racist stereotypes referenced by the music video on sticky notes
- 3 Create a movement or frozen scene that combats or re-works the stereotypes referenced in the video
- 4 Share your movement or scene with other groups in your class, see if you can sequence them together into a performance or a digital story
- 5 Print out the lyrics to the song and read them silently to yourself
- 6 Discuss the lyrics you feel most strongly about with your group and note down some of these feelings
- 7 Take it in turns to underline a key word or phrase from the lyrics and cut them out
- 8 Place all the cut up words and phrases from the group together, move them around and play with the order to create different meanings and rhythms
- 9 When you've finished you might end up with a phrase, a poem or a new song.
- 10 See if you can combine your new words and movement to make your own music video challenging misogyny or other stereotypes



**Explainer: What is contemporary dance?**

**Crunk Feminist Collective**

**The Origins of Twerking: What It Is, What It Means, and How It Got Appropriated**

**Hip-hop dance Vs Donald Trump: how robot moves just got political**

**When does borrowing become cultural appropriation in dance?**

**We don't need macho stereotypes to entice boys onto the dance floor**

**Black Lives Matter activist teaches political activism through dance**

**Social Activists use Dance to combat racism**

**Dancing with Disability**

**Dance, Disability and Intersectionality**

See more AGENDA case studies on bodies and movement:  
**Under Pressure; EveryBODY Matters; Finding Balance.**