

# Tips for secondary school teachers

Here's how you can tackle sexism in the classroom.

## 1. Integrate anti-sexism activities into lessons

By integrating some short, simple anti-sexism activities into lessons or form time, you can open up a conversation about sexism, shift the culture and inspire students to act.

Look for opportunities within the curriculum to initiate discussions about sex inequality. If the curriculum is limiting – for example, if women are under-represented as authors or characters in required reading lists – discuss this with your students.

## 2. Tackle gender stereotyping

Gender stereotypes can be challenged through the resources students use, the activities they do, the visual environment they see each day and the discussions they have with teachers and peers.

When you see or hear gender stereotyping in the classroom, use it as a 'teachable moment' – an opportunity to have a discussion with students on the issue. Encourage inclusive language (e.g. 'firefighter' rather than 'fireman'). You could also use display boards to counter stereotypical images and provide a diverse range of role models.

## 3. Challenge sexist language

Ensure you are familiar with your school's policy and procedures relating to sexist language. Consistently challenge sexist language when you hear it and, where appropriate, use incidents as 'teachable moments' by having a discussion with the class about the language and the impact it has.

Monitor girls' and boys' participation in class-wide and group discussions. If girls are being inhibited from participating equally, there are a range of tactics you can use to widen participation. For example, make students aware of the problem; establish ground-rules for discussions to facilitate a supportive and respectful environment; select students to speak, rather than waiting for volunteers; or give students opportunities to consider questions independently or in pairs before having a class-wide discussion.

**4. Operate zero tolerance for sexual harassment**

Familiarise yourself with your school’s policy and procedures on sexual harassment. If your school does not have procedures in place, raise this with your senior leadership team or relevant staff member. Ensure students are aware of the school’s zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment and that they know how to report incidents.



**Over a third (37%) of female students in mixed-sex secondary schools have been sexually harassed while at school.**

– “It’s just everywhere”: A study on sexism in schools and how we tackle it, UK Feminista & National Education Union, 2017



**5. Support students to speak out**

Students have a vital role to play in challenging sexism and bringing about positive change – both in school and in society at large.

Signpost students to UK Feminista’s student resources for ideas and guidance on taking action. Support students who want to set up a feminist group or run a campaign, and celebrate pupils who take positive action to promote equality between women and men.



**6. Champion a whole school approach to tackling sexism**

Individual activities and one-off events addressing sex inequality can make a real difference. However, securing comprehensive, long-term change requires a ‘whole school approach’. This means that action to promote equality between girls and boys is guided by an over-arching framework and involves all members of the school community.

Propose the whole school approach to your senior leadership team. Use UK Feminista’s resources to highlight why this approach is necessary and how it can be implemented. UK Feminista can provide additional training, advice and resources to schools wanting to develop a whole school approach to tackling sexism.



For classroom activities and resources on how to tackle sexism in schools visit:  
[ukfeminista.org.uk/resources-hub/](http://ukfeminista.org.uk/resources-hub/)