

# Tips for school and college support staff

## 1. Zero-tolerance for sexual harassment

Familiarise yourself with your school or college's policies and procedures on sexual harassment for both students and staff.

If your workplace does not have procedures in place, raise this with your Senior Leadership Team or relevant staff member.

Sexual harassment is a serious safeguarding issue, so it is vital that any incidents are reported and logged. Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', regardless of the age of students.

Ensure that students are aware of the school or college's zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment and that they know how to report incidents.

If you experience sexual harassment as a member of staff that is not dealt with appropriately, contact your union for support.

## 2. Challenge gender stereotyping

Gender stereotypes can be challenged through the roles that staff have in the school or college, resources students use, the activities they do, the visual environment they see each day and the discussions they have with staff and peers.

Try not to perpetuate gender stereotypes by delegating tasks based on whether the person is male or female, or speaking about roles in a way that infers it is the norm for men or women to undertake them. Encourage others to do the same.

Use and encourage inclusive language (e.g. 'lunchtime supervisor' rather than 'dinner lady').

If you are involved in producing displays, consider how these can be used to challenge gender stereotypes. If you are involved in extra-curricular activities, ensure that there are a range of options open to everyone.

## 3. Call out sexist language

Make sure you know what your school or college's policy and procedures are in relation to sexist language.

Challenge sexist language when you hear it so that students know that it is unacceptable. How you respond may depend on the situation and the type of language used.

If you do not know the student using sexist language when you challenge it, frame your challenge in terms of your workplace policy, stating that sexist language is not tolerated and perpetuates inequalities. Alternatively, where appropriate, use incidents as 'teachable moments' by having a discussion with the student about the language and the impact it has.

If you do not have the opportunity to discuss the sexist language used with the student concerned, follow the school or college procedures and make sure you report it.

**4. Ensure that you are included in training**

You are an integral part of a whole school or college approach so make sure that you are included in any training on sexism and sexual harassment.

If you think that you need additional training in this area, let your line manager know.

You can also access UK Feminista's online training course for free at any time.

Do not underestimate the impact that you can have on changing attitudes and behaviours.

A whole school approach is a whole school effort.

**5. Support students to speak out**

Students have a crucial role to play in challenging sexism and bringing about a positive change in education settings and 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.

Celebrate students who take positive action to promote equality.

**6. Uphold safe and equal spaces**

Be mindful of how students interact in unregulated spaces outside of classrooms, because you may be the only member of staff who observes students in these spaces.

Challenge or report any behaviour that concerns you.

Notice whether certain spaces in the school tend to be dominated by boys to the exclusion of girls or vice versa. Where possible, encourage and support everyone to use these spaces.

**7. Model positive behaviour**

Always challenge sexist behaviour or report it to the relevant member of staff.

If the behaviour affects you or a colleague, and you do not think that it has been dealt with appropriately, contact your union for support.

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