



Student Wellbeing Resource

Gender Equality

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Overview

Gender equality is essential for healthy relationships within schools and in wider society locally and globally and so needs to underpin all work on relationships in schools.

According to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the root of gender-based violence is 'the historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men' and this is 'intrinsically linked with gender stereotypes that underlie and perpetuate such violence as well as other factors that can increase women's and girls' vulnerability to such violence'¹.

Gender based violence includes domestic abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, so called 'Honour' Based Violence, child sexual exploitation, issues around sexual consent and sexual health. Gender stereotyping and norms can also underlie issues to do with eating disorders, self-esteem, bullying, bereavement, housing, mental health, substance abuse, young carers and youth crime.

Gender stereotyping is linked to the enormous pressures on young people to conform to particular body image ideals which children and young people are constantly confronted by through social and other media. It also impacts on young people's ability to recognise and express emotions, with many boys and young men lacking in the emotional literacy that can prevent angry feelings erupting into violence, and sad feelings resulting in suicide.

Key Facts

In a recent survey:

- 22% of girls aged 7-12 had experienced jokes of a sexual nature from boys.
- 12% of girls had seen rude pictures or rude graffiti about girls and women.
- 10% had experienced unwanted touching².

There is extensive evidence that children's perceptions of sex, consent, gender roles and relationships are changing as a result of the pornography they are seeing. Research with over 1,000 16–21 year-olds in 2014 found that:

- Almost a quarter of young people were 12 years old or younger when they first saw porn online (24.6%), and 7.3% were under 10.
- The majority of young people (60%) were 14 years old or younger when they first saw porn online—although 62% said they first saw it when they weren't expecting to, or because they were shown it by someone else.
- Only 22% of those surveyed say they were looking for it on purpose³.

The End Violence Against Women YouGov Poll carried out in October 2010⁴ with a representative sample of 788, 16-18 year olds revealed that:

- 71% of all 16-18-year-olds (i.e. boys and girls) say they hear sexual name-calling with terms such as "slut" or "slag" towards girls at schools daily or a few times a week.

Key Facts (cont)

- Close to one in three (29%) 16-18-year-old girls say they have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school.
- Close to one in three (28%) of 16-18-year-olds say they have seen sexual pictures on mobile phones at school a few times a month or more.
- In 2012 the NSPCC said 'One of the key findings of this research highlights the extent to which gendered power relations saturate the young people's lives. No understanding of sexting would be complete without an appreciation of the extent to which an often completely normalised sexism constitutes the context for all relationships both on and off-line.
- deeply rooted notion that girls and young women's bodies are somehow the property of boys and young men.
- 'boys' failure to perform a particular kind of macho masculinity carries with it the risk of being labelled 'gay': "If they had a picture of a girl naked and you told them "That's wrong" they will think straight away you are gay.'" (Focus group, year 10 boy)⁵.

References

¹ [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_\(CSW_report_excerpt\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_(CSW_report_excerpt).pdf)

² Written submission from Girl Guiding to House of Commons, Women and Equalities Committee Sexual Harassment and Violence in Schools, Third report of Session 2016-2017 HC 91 Published on 13 September 2016 by authority of the House of Commons <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/91.pdf>

³ <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/91.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/yougov-poll-exposes-high-levels-sexual-harassment-in-schools/>

⁵ NSPCC (2012) A Qualitative Study of Children, Young People and 'Sexting', A report prepared for the NSPCC by Institute of Education, London King's College, London School of Economics, Open University available at http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/resourcesforprofessionals/sexualabuse/sexting-research_wda89260.html

Resources

Website of DECSY's Gender Respect Project.

<https://genderrespect2013.wordpress.com/>

Includes teaching materials for EYFS, Primary and Secondary; background information; scoping study of children and young people's attitudes to gender issues in Sheffield and soon to be developed guidance on whole school development: Gender Equality Charter Mark for secondary schools.

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Local Offers and Providers

Provider	What they offer	Cost	Contact details
Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY)	Training for teachers and other professionals, resources, projects.	Training fee: £600 per day	helen.griffin@decsy.org.uk
Golddigger Trust	<p>Golddigger Trust is a Sheffield based Charity, offering a variety of wellbeing projects, both within the school environment, and extra-curricular activities within the community, for young people aged 11-19.</p> <p>Services include:</p> <p>1:1 Mentoring – Bespoke, flexible programmes of mentoring for students addressing specific needs identified. Minimum 6 sessions (usual course approx. 8-14 sessions).</p> <p>Students accessing Golddigger Trust services via school can also access additional free services outside of school hours, including drop in youth clubs, sexual health clinic, sports and music sessions and online support.</p>	<p>Cost varies based on service and available charitable funding, contact for most up to date costings.</p> <p>Community based services are free, accessed by community referral (MAST, CAMHS, Self-referral etc). There is no charge to young people.</p>	<p>0114 327 1191</p> <p>Golddigger Trust Centre For Young People, 10 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YN</p> <p>info@golddiggertrust.co.uk</p> <p>www.golddiggertrust.co.uk</p>