

# TAKING A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORT AND ACTIVITY

Take Action

**WOMEN**  
**N**  
**SPORT**

Supported by...



# 1. Challenge stereotypes and expect girls to be as active and sporty as boys

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Use planned and more informal opportunities to challenge stereotypes across the school community and beyond. Unpick any unhelpful assumptions and biases you hear expressed by staff and children. Use language, scenarios and role models that show sport and physical activity is just as important for girls as boys. Assemblies can be used to support whole-school values around sport and physical activity and model desired shared language.

# 2. Language - change the narrative

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We are all affected by stereotyping but we often don't recognise how this affects our language. We often use different language with girls and boys according to our gendered expectations. We need to learn a new language in which girls are expected to be good at sport and confident in themselves. We need to talk in a way that allows boys to express vulnerability meaningfully, and to challenge their peers if they are excluding girls. Using the right language consistently is vital. With this we can reset expectations and change the story for girls.

# 3. Close the gender skills gap

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As a result of stereotyping and lack of opportunity more girls than boys will lack sporting skills. They can build them quickly though, and this should be a priority for every school. Instil a growth mindset: all skills can be learnt, practised and mastered. Provide opportunities for girls to address any skills gaps in a supportive, planned way. Give girls access to extra-curricular sport and structured lunchtime games and activities. Communicate why girls may need more investment in their skills, explaining the underlying reason for this to children, parents and carers.



## 4. Look at all opportunities for sport and physical development

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Look holistically at the school day and extended hours. If boys are being more active than girls, why might that be? Does the playground encourage equal sharing of space and physical activity for all? Is being active outdoors seen as being valuable for girls as well as boys? Are there afterschool clubs in place where girls can try new sports and skills? Does the school encourage girls and boys to be part of active travel schemes to and from school?

## 5. Recognise and celebrate girls and women in sport

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It is important for all children to see girls and women succeed and enjoy sport and physical activity. Look closely at who leads certain opportunities at school. Is there an over reliance on male teachers to lead PE and school sport? Are there a range of male and female sports coaches visiting? Can you disrupt assumptions by having a male coach for dance and a female coach for football? Are you giving profile to fabulous female role models in the school or local community and celebrating female athletes as much as men?

## 6. Make a whole-school commitment to gender equality and allyship

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Boys can learn to be allies from a young age if they are helped to understand why sport matters for girls as much as boys. We need to help boys to understand that being an ally for girls is part of being a sportsman, and with this a good person. Any negative attitudes towards girls in sport must be challenged in a helpful way.

Equal opportunities, equal participation and equal recognition will help fuel male allyship. This is vital if girls and women are to enjoy better sporting futures.

