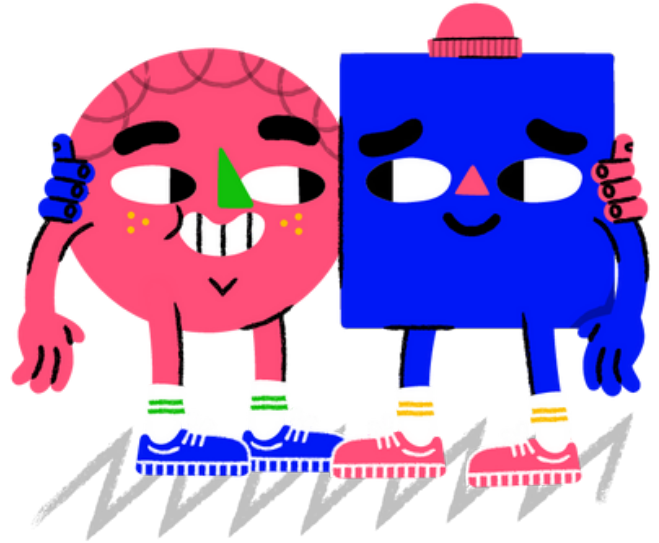


Engaging with Parents and Carers

Teacher Guidance



We actively encourage school partnership with parents and carers. We recognise the importance of engaging with parents and carers, and actively encourage school leaders to reflect on ways that work best in the context of your school and the communities you serve.

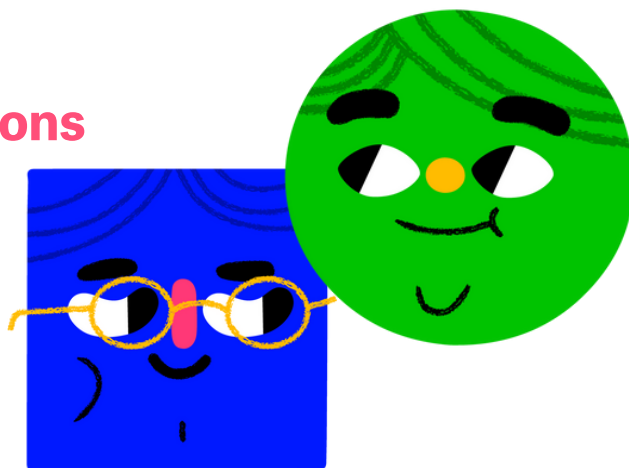
We recognise that school leaders know their community best and know ways of working with their parent community that work well. This will differ from school to school. For example, in one school a brief sentence in a curriculum booklet or a school newsletter may be all that is required, but in others, parents may prefer to be invited to an information session or workshop to explore the lesson content.

As these lessons are designed to be part of the overall PSHE education curriculum and link to statutory requirements for teaching about stereotypes, they should be viewed as part and parcel of the curriculum, and not necessarily anything 'special or different'. However, for some schools, perhaps especially the first time these lessons are delivered, teachers and school leaders will need to work more closely with their parent community to both promote and support the lesson content. Schools should work within statutory guidelines for Relationships and Health Education and engaging with parents.

There is more information and support about how to engage with parents and carers in the “Supporting Families” module of the Beyond Gender Stereotypes online training course. The FAQs below addresses some of the questions or issues parents and carers might want to explore.

Responding to common questions from parents and carers

Conversation Guide



Parent:

Why are you teaching about gender stereotypes?

Teacher:

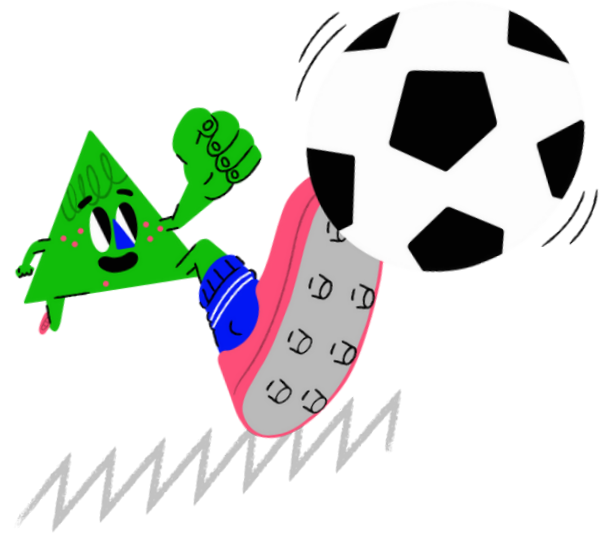
Gender stereotypes influence children from a very young age. By tackling gender stereotypes at an early age, we can enable children to thrive in their education, relationships, and wellbeing. Beyond Gender Stereotypes is designed to help all children to recognise and break free from gender stereotypes, so they can develop healthy relationships and ways of expressing emotions and find their own path in life. These goals are in line with current RSHE statutory guidance.

Are you trying to make everyone be or think the same?

No, far from it. Beyond Gender Stereotypes is NOT about making everyone 'the same' - in fact the core idea is that everyone is unique and different, and that our individual qualities should be respected and valued. Pupils are encouraged to respect that people will have different views and opinions. The lessons do not provide off-the-shelf answers. They support children to think for themselves about who they want to be, and what is important to them.

Responding to common questions from parents and carers

Conversation Guide



Parent:

Aren't boys and girls just different?

Teacher:

There are biological differences between men and women, boys and girls, in regards to their physical development. But most of the differences in relation to personality, behaviour, and preferences are actually learnt. For example, boys are exposed to the idea that they should be tough and not show weakness from a very young age - at least by the age of 7. These ideas about gender vary between societies and cultures, and can change over time.

Aren't 7- and 8-year-old children too young to talk about sex and gender?

This curriculum does not teach children about sex, sexuality, or gender identity. Instead, the lessons focus exclusively on gender stereotypes. These lessons give children the chance to think about ideas that they have already been exposed to from an early age. They are about issues like "what sort of friends do I want?", and "are there things that only boys or girls should be able to do?" They are designed to help children develop healthy relationships and thrive now and in the future.

Responding to common questions from parents and carers

Conversation Guide



Parent:

Do these lessons criticise or undermine traditional ways of being a boy or girl?

Teacher:

These lessons are inclusive and respect pupils' diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. There is nothing wrong with a girl liking pink, for example, and a boy liking football. The problem comes when children are exposed to one-size-fits-all thinking about gender. Currently, children are still likely to experience limiting expectations about their behaviour or preferences based on gender stereotypes. So it is important to help children to recognise and challenge these stereotypes - so they can fulfill their individual potential, develop healthy relationships and ways of expressing emotions, and lead happier and healthier lives.

What does Beyond Gender Stereotypes have to say about questioning gender identity?

Beyond Gender Stereotypes does not teach directly about gender identity or encourage pupils to question their assigned biological sex. The lessons encourage children to be accepting and non-judgmental of all people, whatever their gender identity. The lessons are fully consistent with current RSHE statutory guidance.

Responding to common questions from parents and carers

Conversation Guide

Parent:

Do the lessons put pressure on children to talk about their personal and family lives?

Teacher:

No. These lessons use “distancing strategies” to allow pupils to consider the issue without it being about them. Pupils are enabled to ‘look at a situation from the sidelines’ - they view situations through the experiences of a fictional character, rather than being placed in the situation themselves. We also make sure pupils understand that they have the ‘right to pass’ if a question feels personal or private.



Helpful Resources

Below are resources from Lifting Limits:

Gender Stereotype Detective Activities



Gender Equality: Guide for Families



Online Influencers and Primary-Aged Children



Below are resources from Equimundo's Global Boyhood Initiative:

Conversation Starters

(7-9 year olds)



(10-13 year olds)



Action Steps for Parents on boyhood stereotypes



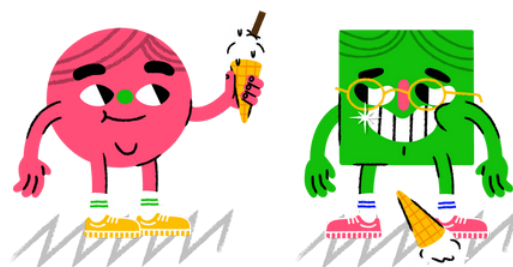
10 Tips on How to Talk to Boys about Radical Influencers



Parents and carers might like copies of [Resource 2: Caring conversations guide](#) (Year 3/4 Lesson 2) to support conversations they might have at home about concerns or worries they have about gender stereotyping or bullying.

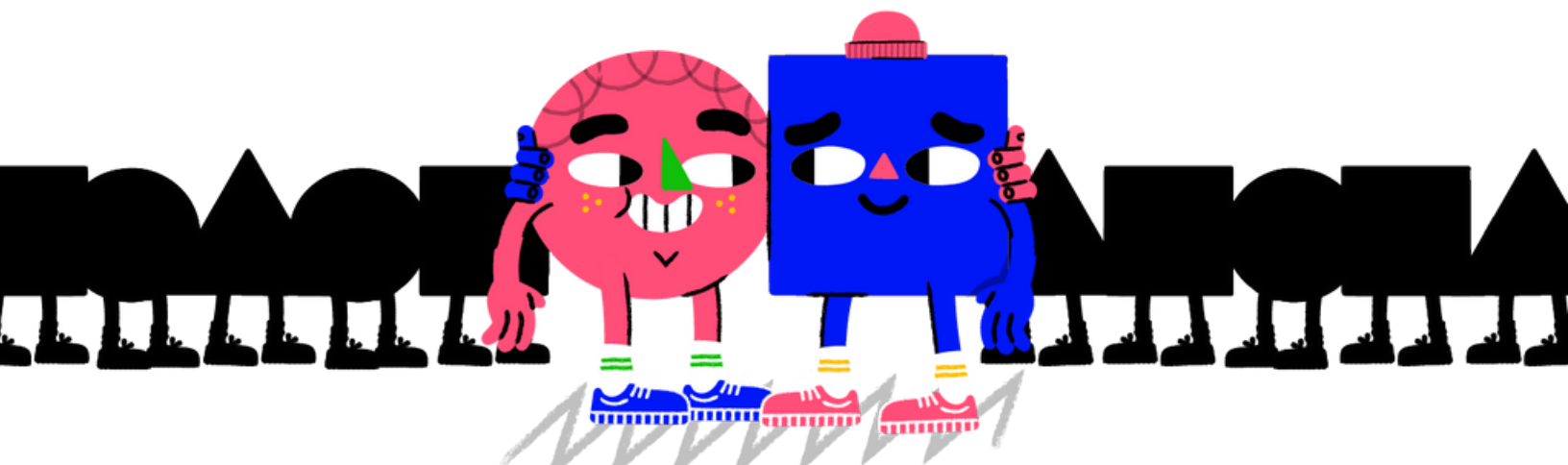
Home-school activities

Positive reinforcement at home



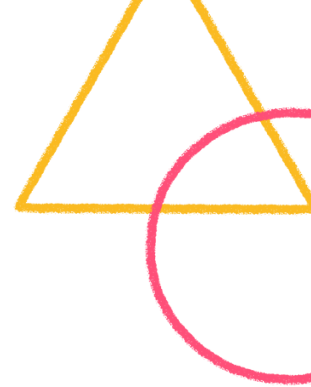
Below are ways parents and carers can support and encourage a positive partnership between home and school learning:

- Pupils can be encouraged to notice different gender stereotypes in everyday life and talk to someone about their views about them. Positive role models can also be discussed. This might include people who appear in local or national news stories who have achieved something that is not in line with stereotypical expectations for their gender.
- Ask pupils to have a look at different products in the supermarket or shops, on adverts, TV programmes, films and cartoons. Do they notice gender stereotypes? Are there non-gender stereotypical examples too?
- Parents and pupils can talk about how social expectations have changed over time - for example, the types of toys boys and girls played with then and now, or the types of activities boys and girls participated in then, and now. Parents or grandparents might talk about their own childhood experiences so pupils can compare how things have changed or stayed the same.
- Reading children's fiction about positive role models (including those from history), the importance of being oneself, and expressing emotions.
- Ask pupils to talk to their parents about the different careers, jobs and roles they chose and what skills or qualities they have that helps them do their role or roles, including recognising their role as parents as part of this.



Conversations with children

Guide for parents and carers



Pupils may ask:

- “Did you know some people think only boys or only girls can be ____?”
- “When you were a child, what sorts of toys did boys and girls play with?”
- “Did boys and girls get to do all activities or did they do different things?”
- “Do you notice gender stereotypes today?”

Carers can prompt:

- “Some people think only boys can ____ or only girls can _____. Why do you think this might be?”
- “When I was a child, I thought _____. Now I am an adult, I think _____.”
- “What happens at school if a boy is ____ or a girl is ____?”
- “Do you think boys or girls can ____? Why or why not?”
- “I wonder why the boy/girl in that advert/video/film is ____ (reinforcing or challenging a gender stereotype). What do you think about this?”