

Gender inequality in Scottish schools

Gender inequality is rife in Scottish schools.

- More girls than boys attained high levels at SCQF Level 5 and above [1], and more young men leave education without any qualifications [2].
- Despite high attainment, women hold few positions of power in Scotland
 [3].
- Girls in Scotland are the least likely in the UK to say they are happy with their lives [4].

Gender inequality is compounded by other inequalities such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, and prejudice about disabled people.

- Girls and young women of colour are more likely than white girls to believe that the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted their education [4].
- 1 in 5 girls believe that gender stereotypes hold them back in education; but this rises to 2 in 5 for LGBTQ+ girls [4].
- Disabled girls and girls of colour are more likely than white, non-disabled girls to be put off pursuing careers such as politics because of the harassment women leaders face online [4].



Violence against girls in Scottish schools

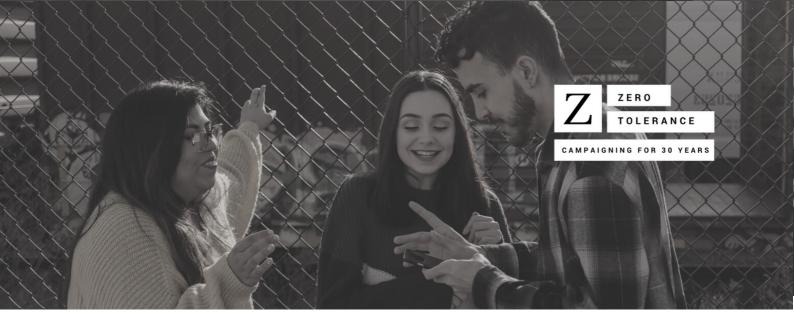
Girls and young women face violence every day in Scottish schools.

- 64% of girls and young women have experienced sexual harassment at school in the past year [5].
- 37% of girls know another girl their age who has experienced rape or sexual assault [6].
- Around 1 in 5 girls and young women don't feel safe in school [4].

Multiply marginalised women and girls face higher rates of violence.

- Girls living in deprived areas are more likely to say that fear of sexual harassment holds them back at school [4].
- Girls of colour are less likely than white girls to feel safe at school [4].
- 83% of transgender women have experienced a hate crime at some point in their lives [7].
- Disabled women remain in abusive relationships for a year longer than their enabled counterparts before receiving support to leave [8].

Violence against women and girls is caused by gender inequality. In order to prevent this violence before it starts, we must embed a culture of equality in our schools.



An equal, preventative education

Evidence shows that 'schools are...important sites where gender inequality is normalised unless it is challenged' [9]. The same is true of race, class, disability and LGBTQ+ inequalities, and their intersection with gender.

We need a whole-school approach to developing cultures of gender equality and non-violence. Every aspect of what the school does – its recruitment and induction of teachers; its policies; the way it treats its pupils – must be done in a way which works towards gender equality. Implementation relies on effectively supporting teachers and strong, gender-competent leadership.

Creating an equal education system means:

- Starting from a foundation of children's rights.
- Building governance systems where power is shared, a diverse range of women are equally represented at all levels, and inequality is challenged.
- Developing curricula with gender equality and rights at their core.
- Ensuring all children and young people learn about healthy relationships.
- Nurturing school cultures which model equality and the realisation of rights.

We need your support to build a Scotland where violence against women and girls is no longer tolerated. Read our <u>full contribution to the National Discussion</u> on education.



What is violence against women and girls?

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is defined by the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against women as:

'Any act of gender-based violence which causes or aims to cause physical, sexual, psychological harm, including threats and coercion, in public or private life.' [10]

The Scottish Government define it as violent and abusive behaviour, carried out predominantly by men, directed at women and girls because of their gender [11]. It stems from systemic, deep-rooted women's inequality and includes domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault, commercial sexual exploitation, stalking, sexual harassment and so called 'honour-based' violence like female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

Equally Safe, <u>Scotland's strategy to eradicate violence against women</u> and girls, recognises that VAWG is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality [11]. We can end VAWG by challenging gender inequality through changing the social attitudes, values, and structures that underpin it.

What does Zero Tolerance do?

Zero Tolerance is a national organisation working to end all forms of VAWG by tackling its root cause: gender inequality. We do this through raising public and political awareness of the causes of VAWG and promoting action on its prevention.



References

- [1] Scottish Government (2021) Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations.
- [2] Scottish Government (2022) National Indicator Performance: National Performance Framework.
- [3] Engender (2020) Sex & Power in Scotland 2020.
- [4] Girlguiding (2022) Girls' Attitudes Survey 2022.
- [5] Girlguiding (2017) Girls' Attitudes Survey 2017.
- [6] Girlguiding Scotland (2018) Girls in Scotland.
- [7] Equality Network, Scottish Trans (2017) Scottish LGBTI Hate Crime Report Picture (disaggregated data provided by Equality Network via email: 07/08/2018).
- [8] Safe Lives (2017) 'Disabled Survivors Too: Disabled people and domestic abuse,' Spotlight Report: #HiddenVictims.



[9] Griffin, H., Redai, D. and Guerrini, V. (2021) 'A Whole-School Approach to Gender Equality: Rationale and Country Contexts' in M. Tsouroufli and D. Redai Gender Equality and Stereotyping in Secondary Schools in England, Hungary and Italy (London: Palgrave Macmillan) pp. 1-36.

[10] Assembly, United Nations General. A/RES/48/104 - Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women - UN Documents: Gathering a Body of Global Agreements.

[11] Scottish Government (2018) Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy to eradicate violence against women.

Zero Tolerance is supported by

