Schools communicate with a wide variety of audiences, including parents/carers, students, staff and the wider community. Processes should be put in place to make sure communications materials are not reinforcing gender bias.

SOME IDEAS FOR HOW TO GET STARTED

EYFS	• Carry out an audit and create an action plan to address inequality relating to the welcome pack, communications used for open days and home visits, posters and other visual displays, leaflets, parent/teacher communication books, events, website, letters and so on. • Consider spoken communications and the way that staff talk to each other in front of children. • Give individual staff members responsibility for updating certain materials to ensure they are free from gender bias. • Develop a toolkit of phrases that should and shouldn't be used in written or spoken school communications, and alternatives that can be used. • Include gender bias as a standing item on meeting agendas to ensure all staff are updated and reminded about ongoing work.
PRIMARY	Many of the points in the other sections are also relevant for this age group. Primary schools may also want to: • Support children to carry out an audit of posters, displays and other materials to see whether stereotypes are being reinforced or challenged. This needs to cover a variety of materials, not just one display. For example, students could look at all materials about extracurricular clubs to see whether children are being given the message that some clubs are for boys and some clubs are for girls. • Look at reports to see whether bias has crept into comments and whether boys and girls are being judged differently. For example, are girls more likely to be praised for the neatness of their work and boys in relation to ability? Consider what needs to be done to make sure future reports do not reinforce stereotypes. • When planning assemblies, consider the themes, language used, messaging, music and so on. For example, are female and male scientists, authors, artists and historical figures being celebrated equally? • Include gender equity in the School Charter of Rights and/or mission and display it prominently on and offline. • Make sure children and staff are aware that sexist language is as unacceptable as racist and homophobic language.

SECONDARY	Many of the points in the other sections are also relevant for this age group. Secondary schools may also want to: • Work with students to audit all communications. This could be done in tutorial groups. Work together to write and design new materials that showcase the school's commitment to challenging stereotypes. • Update or create a school style guide with students. This could include phrases to avoid, with alternatives, along with guidance to ensure that gender stereotypes are being avoided and challenged. • Make sure that communications are balanced. Communications by single sex schools will, understandably, be less balanced, but materials relating to careers and opportunities should avoid gender stereotypes. • Share media articles or research about gender bias through relevant channels e.g. newsletters and social media. • Look at the roles played by students at events e.g. sports days, parents' evenings, open days and so on. Are boys and girls choosing or being given different roles? If so, why and what can be done?

WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?

- Staff are aware of the potential for gender bias and commit to avoiding it in all internal/external communications. A guide is developed for this, and care is taken to sense-check for unconscious bias when talking to different audiences.
- An audit has been carried out of all existing communications currently used by the school, e.g. school website, prospectus etc., to see whether gender bias is being reinforced.
- Communications have been refreshed where needed and new communications avoid gender stereotyping. Gender balance is therefore evident in the text and images used in all materials, e.g. website, prospectus, social media posts, leaflets, flyers, newsletters etc.
- The setting/school avoids using language that implies there's a limit to how much children and young people can achieve because of their gender.
- A plan has been created to ensure that all staff receive regular communications about gender bias, e.g. via standing item on meeting agendas.
- The setting/school does not imply that some roles are more suited to one gender than another, e.g. by referring to lunchtime support assistants as dinner ladies or through discipline mainly being carried out by male staff members.
- Job adverts do not mention gender or imply that roles are more suited to one gender than another.

POSSIBLE EVIDENCE

Evidence may include the results of any audits, along with refreshed communications. For example, schools could submit:

- The mission statement and principles setting out the school's ethos of inclusion and opportunity for all, with photos of where they are displayed and details of how they are communicated to staff, learners and parents/carers.
- A guide or toolkit developed to support staff to take ownership of creating any communications materials.
- Old and refreshed/new materials which demonstrate what changes have been made to avoid gender stereotyping. For example, this could include a leaflet co-created with students to promote a career open day, with details given about what improvements have been made on the previous version and why.
- An updated school communications policy that includes guidance for how gender is covered and discussed in handouts, case studies, parent/carer newsletters etc., and evidence that this is being followed for all new materials.