



Statement from the End Sexism In Schools campaign on the sentencing of Sarah Everard's murderer

TW: sexual violence, murder

It is heartbreaking to have to write this statement. This week has been filled with horrific revelations about the actions of the man who kidnapped, raped and murdered Sarah Everard, which came to light during his trial. Our social media feeds, WhatsApp groups and daily conversations have once again been overwhelmed by anger, frustration, grief and fear.

The life sentence handed down at the culmination of this trial was the right - the only possible - verdict. But it is not enough.

In the UK, a woman is murdered by a current or former partner every three days. 85,000 women a year are raped by men and in 2020 only 1.6% of perpetrators were jailed. Over half of police officers found guilty of sexual misconduct have been allowed to remain in post. In Westminster, misuse of stationery carries a more severe consequence than sexual misconduct. Everyone's Invited gathered over 54,000 testimonies of girls' experience of rape culture in schools. And Ofsted's own report revealed the terrifying extent of sexual harassment in schools, with nearly 90% of girls being sent explicit pictures or videos and 92% of girls saying sexist name-calling is a regular occurrence.

Enough is enough.

Whilst we echo calls for justice, accountability and radical culture change, not just within the police but across society, and demand that male violence against women and girls is recognised and named as the domestic terror threat it undoubtedly is, we believe more is needed to tackle the **cause** of this culture. We firmly believe that this culture begins early and **must** be tackled within our education system. Calls for changes to the PSHE curriculum alone do not go far enough. Changing only PSHE is the educational equivalent of the bus women are supposed to flag down if they are being harassed. School misogyny lessons will have all the impact of plain clothes officers in night clubs.

We are calling on the Department for Education, the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and every school, teaching union and educational institution, to adopt a whole curriculum approach to tackling misogyny within schools. This means the content of **every subject** must be reviewed and reformed to address the gender imbalance in taught material, placing equal value on the works, achievements and experiences of women and men. The teaching of every subject must also be reviewed to prevent the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and ensure safe educational environments that allow all children to fulfil their potential, free from gendered expectations. We also call for Ofsted to improve their inspection practices, rigorously inspecting for equality within teaching, curriculum content and school culture, including how schools tackle reports of sexual harassment and gender based violence amongst pupils.

If you would like to get involved with campaigning on this issue, please get in touch.

We continue to focus on this work, in the hopes of a better future for women and girls.