All change!

Year: Y4

Subjects and Issues

Body parts Feelings Growing and changing
Puberty Science Relationships education
Reproduction Periods Menstruation
Body changes Life cycles Masturbation
Emotions
National Curriculum science - relationships elements

Please note from September 2026 pupils should be taught the correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Pupils should understand that all of these parts of the body are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts. The RHSE guidance does not specify when pupils should be taught this content; that is a decision for the school.

Teaching note: We recommended watching all four videos linked in this lesson plan first to determine whether they are suitable to show your children.

The film clip Puberty for boys mentions self-touch/masturbation. This is to help you meet your 2025 statutory requirements under the categories of Developing Bodies and Being Safe. Please refer to your RSE policy regarding the inclusion of this content in your curriculum, based on pupil need.

The DfE acknowledges in the 2025 guidance that whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls' periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.

Introduction

Start by reviewing the class agreement or develop one if not already developed. Look at suggested ground rules/ class agreement.

Explain to the children that an Alien has just landed in their classroom and doesn't understand why we have both males and females on Planet Earth. Can anyone explain why we do? Amongst many suggestions, elicit the response that we need both a male and a female to reproduce and create another human being/baby.

Activity 1 - Body parts

Show the outlines of the male and female bodies on the IWB. Split the class up into groups of up to 5 and using the *Body outlines* Activity sheet ask children to draw on all the parts of the body that men and women have **in common** in one colour, and all of the **differences** in another colour. They can choose to write the words rather than draw if preferred (ask them not to worry about the spellings at this stage). Next, ask the children to share the different body parts they have come up with during this activity. As they do this, you write these on the body outlines on the IWB for both female and male. Make sure to include:

Female:

- Vulva (External parts of female genitals which are visible. This includes the clitoris, two sets of labia - the inner and the outer - and the entrance to the vagina.)
- Vagina (Inside the body - the opening of the reproductive part of the girl's body (the passage which leads to the womb. This is also where tampons and Mooncups or Menstrual cups are placed during menstruation.)
- Ovaries (Where eggs are stored)
- Eggs (Cell needed for reproduction)
- Womb (Space for baby to grow)
- Clitoris (A small, soft pea shaped bud which lies above the urinary opening and is protected by the clitoral hood. Very sensitive part of the body.)
- Labia (includes both the smaller lips/folds of skin that surround the entrance to the vagina and

urinary opening (wee hole), and the outer lips/folds of skin that surround the inner lips)
- Breasts (These develop and grow during puberty. Breasts produce milk after childbirth, to feed a baby.)

Male:

- Penis (This is the shaft-shaped reproductive organ that hangs outside the male body. It helps transport urine (wee) and sperm away from the body.)
- Testicles (produce millions of sperm everyday once a boy starts puberty)
- Scrotum (sack of skin that holds the testicles outside the body)
- Sperm (cell needed for reproduction)

Both:

- Nipples (help a baby to drink milk from its mother's breasts. Boys and girls have nipples but only females grow breasts when they're older. Some babies are breastfed, some babies are bottle fed.)
- Anus (end of the digestive system, where poo comes from)
- Pubic Hair (Hair which starts to grow around the genitals during puberty.)

Emphasise that nobody should ask to see or touch these parts of the body [unless we give permission, e.g. to see a doctor] These parts are private, but remember, your whole body belongs to you.

Explain that they might use different words at home to name their 'private parts' (their penis and vulva), but that these are their correct medical names and will help them if they ever need to talk to someone like a doctor about them, e.g. because they are sore. [You may find it useful to refer to the Puberty Glossary to help answer any questions regarding the function or correct medical name of a body part.]

Activity 2 - Changing

Explain that now or in the next few years everyone in the class will start changing, does anyone know what

this change is called? [puberty]

Explain that puberty is the process by which our bodies change from a child's to an adult's so that if they want to, they are able to have a baby. Puberty can be an exciting time, but for some young people it can bring a range of other feelings too. If they feel scared or worried about these changes it is important that they talk to a trusted adult.

You might find it useful to share these videos with the class as a way of introducing some of those changes. As with all videos it is recommended you watch them prior to showing them to your class to ensure they are suitable:

Puberty for girls

All about getting your period

Puberty for boys

Once you have shown these videos make sure to allow for any questions the children may have, to help them make sense of what they have watched.

In Puberty for boys film includes the following is included in the script: *"The most noticeable changes of puberty for boys is....possibly experimenting with masturbation; touching yourself for pleasure, again, normal if you do and normal if you don't."* This provides an opportunity to teach children that touching their own private parts is a private activity, which means it must be carried out in a private place e.g. their bedroom, or bathroom at home, where curtains can be drawn and/or doors locked.

Teachers may like to use the following language when talking to children about this topic:

"As children go through puberty, their bodies and feelings can change towards themselves and others, and they may become more aware of their bodies. It is normal if they do want to explore or touch their body, and it is normal if they don't."

Sometimes children ask, *"Is this called masturbation?"* Teachers can respond factually, saying: *"Yes, that's a term that's used."* Then emphasise privacy, boundaries, and safety, helping children understand that touching their own private parts is something done in private.

Not only does this help safeguard them from acting inappropriately in public, but it also helps them identify others, particularly adults, who may be acting inappropriately in public, and report it to a trusted adult.

Activity 3 - Starting families

Split the class into small groups of no more than 5. Using the Animal Cards ask the children to cut out the cards and then put them in order of age at which they think other animals are able to start reproducing and having babies. Once completed, read out the order and the age.

1. Butterflies (3-4 hours)
2. Mice (4 weeks)
3. Frogs (12-16 weeks)
4. Rabbits (6 months)
5. Birds (1 year)
6. Humans (8-13 years)
7. Elephants (12-15 years)

Ask the children why they think most people wait until they are a lot older to have children? Answers could include:

- Not legal to have sexual intercourse until the age of 16
- A baby needs lots of looking after
- Doesn't have enough money
- Not married
- Hasn't met a suitable partner

Explain that a baby needs lots of looking after. It is best to wait until the person is ready to take on that kind of responsibility, and it will make it easier if they have a partner to help care for their baby too. Also, a person needs to be emotionally and financially ready to have a

baby as well as physically ready. Being able to provide somewhere to live helps keep the baby safe and healthy.

Summing up

Explain that during puberty, not only does someone develop physically, but emotionally too, this helps in developing healthy relationships with those around a person, including their friends and family. This will be covered in another lesson.

Extension (optional)

If appropriate, as a take-home task, the children could discuss with their parent/carer or other trusted adult when they think is the best age for people to have children and why.

Adapting lessons for learners with additional needs

Teachers will need to consider the individual needs of children in their class in order to ensure the activities are inclusive. Advice from specialist teachers or the school SENDco may be helpful. Examples might include:

- It would be particularly useful for children with SEND to have physical self-care/puberty product objects that they can look at and be shown how they are designed to be used.
- Dependent on the level of need, it may be useful to build in time each day with pupils to practice using different products, e.g. brushing teeth, combing hair, and using deodorant.
- Using the Widgit symbols provided in this booklet provided by the NSPCC may be useful for some learners to access the learning, particularly as part of pre-teaching or overlearning opportunities

Our additional Signposting and Support page provides further guidance on adapting SCARF lessons to meet the needs of learners with additional needs.

Did you know?

Our specially trained educators can deliver RSE workshops that include the topics covered in this lesson. The advantages include providing staff with the opportunity to observe someone, which gives them the confidence and skills to deliver RSE going forward. Contact your local team to check the availability of these workshops for your school.

Version History

Wed, 01 Apr 2026

- Wording updated to include more specific explanation of private parts
- Vocabulary updated to include scrotum, nipples, anus

Mon, 30 Mar 2026

- Extra content added to regarding how covering self-touch/masturbation meets statutory requirements.
- Wording added from RSHE guidance 2025 about teaching about menstruation from eight years old and further detail around body odour.

Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

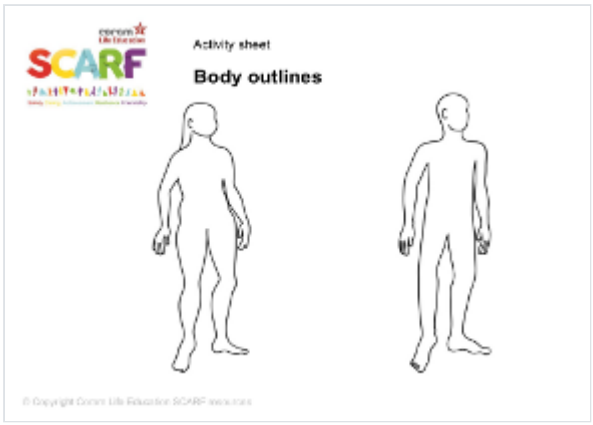
- Identify parts of the body that males and females have in common and those that are different;
- Know the correct terminology for their genitalia;
- Understand and explain why puberty happens.

Key Vocabulary

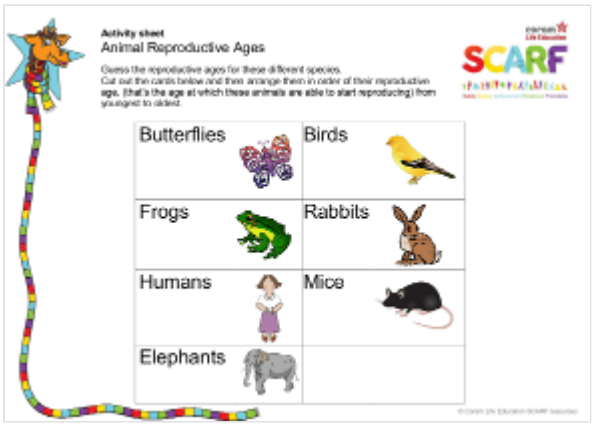
puberty
pubic hair
eggs

sperm
penis
testicles
breasts
ovaries
womb
vagina
vulva
clitoris
labia
semen
legal age of consent
marriage
If using the film clips, the following words are also used:
underam hair
sweat
growth spurt
acne
breast growth
Puberty for boys:
facial hair
body odour
ejaculation
spontaneous erections
wet dreams
pleasure
masturbation
deeper voice
spots
reproduction
testosterone
mood swings
sexual feelings/horny
romantic/sexual interest
privacy
Puberty for girls:
hair removal
wider hips
All about getting your period:
endometrium (uterus lining)
headache
stomach ache
cramps

foetus
nipples
scrotum
anus



Body outlines - Activity sheet - enough for working in small groups



Animal Cards - Ordering activity - enough for working in small groups. Cards should be cut out for the activity

06 Working in pairs or small groups

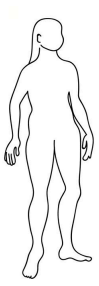
08 Sorting Activities

13 Using SCARF values to create a safe learning environment

17 Using correct terminology

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

Whiteboards



Female and male outlines

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory

requirements

- Relationships Education Being safe 7. How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) Changing adolescent body 1. Key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements (2025)

- Being Safe 6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Developing bodies 1. About growth and other ways the body can change and develop, particularly during adolescence. This topic should include the human lifecycle, and puberty should be discussed as a stage in this process.
- Developing bodies 2. The correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Pupils should understand that all of these parts of the body are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts.
- Developing bodies 3. The facts about the menstrual cycle, including physical and emotional changes, whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls' periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.

PSHE Association Learning Opportunities

- H30 . To identify the external genitalia and internal reproductive organs in males and females and how the process of puberty relates to human reproduction.
- H31 . About the physical and emotional changes that happen when approaching and during puberty (including menstruation, key facts about the menstrual cycle and menstrual wellbeing, erections and wet dreams).
- H32 . About how hygiene routines change during the time of puberty, the importance of keeping clean and how to maintain personal hygiene.
- H33 . About the processes of reproduction and birth as part of the human life cycle; how babies are conceived and born (and that there are ways to prevent a baby being made); how babies need to be cared for.