Is this normal?

Year: Y6

Subjects and Issues

Body parts FGM Growing and changing
Puberty Relationships education Periods
Menstruation Keeping safe Body changes
Female genital mutilation (FGM)
Religion or belief (protected characteristic)
Sex (protected characteristic)

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.

Preparation and considerations before this session

Ensure a safe and familiar location. Review the class agreement or develop one if not already developed. Look at suggested ground rules/ class agreement.

To maximise the session, gather children's own questions about puberty. This is best done anonymously - for example, by using a question box in the classroom where pupils can write and post any questions they have on this topic without being identified. This will also help to help involve them all.

You can turn some of the questions into Agony Aunt-style letters for the children to reply to themselves, as in the Activity sheet provided. This will help to answer some of the questions in an interesting and depersonalised way.

Introduction

Thank children for their questions and explain that as many as possible will be answered within the session.

Use an 'ice-breaker activity to establish a comfortable atmosphere. One possible activity is to ask children in two equal lines to arrange themselves in order of birthday date without speaking. They could try to be quicker than the other line.

Introduce the focus for the session – puberty.

What does puberty mean?

Gather ideas and clarify that 'puberty' is the word given to the time in a person's life when their body begins to change from a child's body to an adult's body capable of reproduction. Clarify that puberty involves physical, emotional, and psychological changes.

Today we are going to have a chance to talk together about the different changes and challenges that happen when a person reaches puberty. Explain that male and female bodies have differences, and things in common. We'll learn about both kinds of bodies today. This is important for all pupils – to have an awareness and understanding of what all the changes bodies go through during puberty, to help them be respectful and supportive of those around them.

Activity 1

Hand out the *Puberty statements: true or false?* Activity sheets for children to discuss in pairs. Allow a few minutes for them to consider and discuss these.

Go through the statements and address misconceptions.

NB: Please see the *Puberty statements: true or false?* Teacher answer sheet for guidance on the answers to the questions.

Reassure the children that most people go through puberty with little difficulty but explain that for some the time can be more challenging.

With any challenge, what sort of things help people? Having a trusted person to talk things through with; being prepared; understanding that solutions can be found; feeling confident etc.

Do the children know what an Agony Aunt is? Explain that they communicate in writing with someone who writes to them with a problem. They write a letter back with advice.

Give out the *Agony Aunt letters* Activity sheet. Working individually or in pairs, the children read and record their ideas as 'Agony Aunts' to support and help a range of young people with challenging situations in puberty.

Share some of their responses to the problems. Praise thoughtful and considerate advice.

Remind the children that we are all unique – our bodies, thoughts, needs and feelings are different, and our experiences of puberty might be different. Different changes might happen to different people at different times, and that's ok. We have different preferences too – the way we prefer or choose to handle some of the challenges of puberty might differ, and that's ok too! This can feel complicated at times, as other people might choose to manage things differently to us. Sometimes we need to try a few different ways of coping until we find one that feels comfortable for us. We can always speak to a trusted adult or a supportive friend if we have a worry about what's happening, or we're not sure what to do. Our personal needs, feelings and choices need to be respected.

Emphasise that young people have the right to decide what happens to their body. Their body belongs to them.

Teacher guidance around increased weight during puberty

Puberty brings rapid physical growth. Children gain height, muscle, bone mass, and body fat as part of healthy development. Research shows that both boys and girls experience increases in total body mass during puberty due to hormonal changes and growth spurts.

Not all children grow at the same time or in the same way. Variations in timing (early, “middle,” or late puberty) are all normal. Everyone grows at their own pace, and there’s no ‘right’ way for a body to look during this time.

Growth spurts significantly increase nutrient needs, and a balanced diet helps support healthy development. Eating a wide variety of foods ensures children receive essential nutrients such as calcium, protein, and vitamins needed for puberty.

Learning to listen to our bodies messages and signals is really helpful. Noticing when we feel hungry, full, and tired for example can help us decide what the best thing is, to give our bodies to support it and keep it healthy.

Activity 2

Recap the names for the private parts of the male and female body:

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.

Emphasise that young people have the right to decide what happens to their body. Very occasionally, young people have things done to their bodies that are criminal in this country. These crimes involve cuts made to female genitalia – the vulva - the external area around the opening to the vagina.

If you were concerned about yourself, or another young person you know, are there people you can think of who can help?

In the unlikely event of any safeguarding issues being raised during this discussion, these should be dealt with through the school's Safeguarding policy.

How can young people show respect to one another during such challenging times?

Summing up

Reassure the children that puberty brings changes but that they gradually occur, not all at the same time – and remember, we're all unique so changes might happen at different times to your friends or family. You might like to share this video as a way of bringing the session to a close (please check content for suitability before sharing it with the class):

Puberty and finding out who you are

Praise children for their mature approach to the session and check questions have been answered.

Reiterate the people and places where help, if needed, can be sought.

Additional teacher guidance

Our Puberty Glossary provides appropriate wording when defining puberty and RSE-related words. It may be of particular support when answering children's questions on this subject.

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.

Version History

Fri, 10 Apr 2026

- Wording added to explain that we all have different bodies, needs, ideas, feelings and preferences that need to be respected; that this might impact how we choose to manage challenges through puberty; that this can feel complicated at times, as other people might choose to manage things differently to us; that our personal needs, feelings and choices need to be respected.

Thu, 02 Apr 2026

- Wording updated to include explanation of the names for private parts for male and female bodies
- Vocabulary updated to include penis, testicles, scrotum, nipples, vagina, FGM/cuts to the vulva

Thu, 31 Jul 2025

Extra ideas added for learners with additional needs

Learning Outcomes

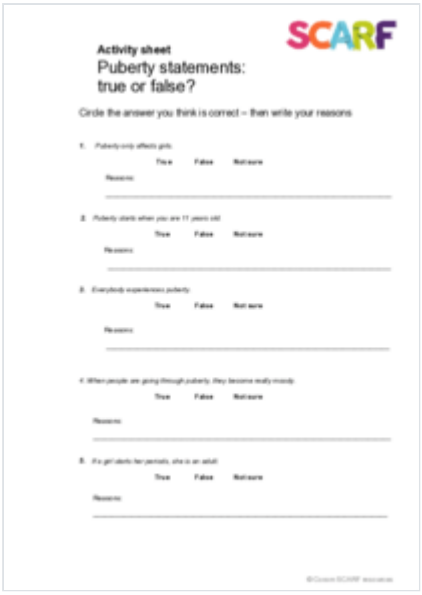
Children will be able to:

- Define the word 'puberty' giving examples of some of the physical and emotional changes associated with it;
- Understand that a healthy attitude towards food can really support growth and puberty changes;
- Suggest strategies that would help someone who felt challenged by the changes in puberty;
- Understand what FGM is and that it is an illegal practice in this country;

- Know where someone could get support if they were concerned about their own or another person's safety.

Key Vocabulary

puberty
physical changes
emotional changes
rights
FGM
periods
mood swings
spots
voice deepening
period products
vulva
If using the film clips, the following words are also used:
Puberty and finding out who you are:
identity
manage emotions
hormones
feeling funny sexually
start to have questions about sex
sexual reaction
friends
more independence
vagina
FGM/cuts to the vulva
nipples
penis
testicles
scrotum
increased weight



SCARF

Activity sheet

Puberty statements: true or false?

Circle the answer you think is correct – then write your reasons

1. Puberty only affects girls.

True False Not sure

Reasons:

2. Puberty starts when you are 11 years old

True False Not sure

Reasons:

3. Everybody experiences puberty

True False Not sure

Reasons:

4. When people are going through puberty, they become really moody

True False Not sure

Reasons:

5. If a girl starts her periods, she is an adult

True False Not sure

Reasons:

Puberty Statements: True of false? Activity sheet - enough copies for completing individually or in pairs, as appropriate

SCARF

Activity sheet

Puberty statements: true or false?

Circle the answer you think is correct – then write your reasons

1. Puberty only affects girls.

True False Not sure

Puberty affects both boys and girls. Both boys and girls experience hormonal changes which trigger growth spurts and both can experience physical, emotional and psychological changes.

2. Puberty starts when you are 11 years old

True False Not sure

Puberty does not start at a particular age. Girls generally start puberty before boys. Every person is unique; some start earlier than others, some progress through it more quickly.

3. Everybody experiences puberty

True False Not sure

Everyone goes through puberty as they grow from a child to an adult.

4. When people are going through puberty, they become really moody

True False Not sure

There can be times when people going through puberty feel emotions differently than they did as a younger child. Changes to emotions can occur unexpectedly and can seem 'out of character'. This can be an exciting time, though sometimes confusing. Usually, the emotional 'rollercoaster' settles as puberty passes.

5. If a girl starts her periods, she is an adult

True False Not sure

A female may be able physically to reproduce and have a baby once she has started her periods (menstruates.) Girls can start their periods as young as 8 years old. However, being an 'adult' able to take responsibilities is considerably more than this.

Puberty statements: true or false? Teacher answers and guidance sheet - one copy, for reference

SCARF

Activity sheet
Agony Aunt Letters

Dear Aunty Agatha,

I have noticed my skin is really greasy these days. I have also started getting some revolting spots. It is so embarrassing. I hate it because I feel as if everyone notices and is talking about me. What can I do? Ryan

Dear Ryan...

Dear Aunty Agatha,

I am so much shorter than my friends. I've always looked younger than them. Now all my friends seem to have started their periods. I keep wondering if there is something wrong with me. What should I do? Eloise

Dear Eloise...

Dear Aunty Agatha,

My voice is freaking me out. Sometimes I start to talk and it squeaks. People in my class laugh at me. I hate it. When will it stop? Mehmet

Dear Mehmet...

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Agony Aunt Letters Activity Sheet - enough copies for working individually or in pairs

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements

- Relationships Education Respectful relationships 1. The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- 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.
- Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) Changing adolescent body 2. About menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.

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.
- **Caring friendships** 4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
- **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.
- **Healthy eating** 2. Understanding the importance of a healthy relationship with food.
- **Respectful, kind relationships** 1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.

PSHE Association Learning Opportunities

- 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).
- H45 . That female genital mutilation (FGM) is against British law, what to do and whom to tell if they think they or someone they know might be at risk.

National Curriculum Links

- English **Y5 & 6** **Writing - composition** Draft and write by using further organisational and presentational devices to structure text and to guide the reader [for example, headings, bullet points, underlining].
- Science **Y5** **Animals including humans** Describe the changes as humans develop from birth to old age.
- Science **Y5** **Animals including humans** (Non-statutory guidance) Pupils should draw a timeline to indicate stages in the growth and development of humans. They should learn about the changes experienced in puberty.