

# Is this normal?

Year: Y6

## Subjects and Issues

Body parts Building self-esteem Bullying FGM Growing and changing Puberty Relationships Education (formerly SRE or RSE) Periods Menstruation Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Preparation and considerations before this session.

This session may be best planned to be done with boys and girls at separate times. It may be considered appropriate to have male staff working with boys and female staff with girls, if possible.

Ensure a safe and familiar location.

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 chance to talk together about the different changes and challenges that happen when a person reaches puberty.

## Activity

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.

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

Who is the best person to decide what happens to a person's body? Very occasionally, young people have things done to their bodies which are criminal in this country. These crimes involve cuts made to female genitalia – 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?

## Plenary

Reassure the children that puberty brings changes but that they gradually occur, not all at the same time. 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.

## Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

- Define the word 'puberty' giving examples of some of the physical and emotional changes associated with it;
- 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.