



Parental Guide to Supporting Children Growing Up

Talking about growing up with your child can be awkward, tricky or embarrassing. We know from local and national surveys that many children want their parents to talk to them about how their bodies will change as they grow up, but parents can find it difficult to have these discussions.

Following consultation with parents, staff and pupils, we teach our pupils about puberty in the first term of year 5. This is taught over six lessons, with boys and girls remaining mixed in order not to create stigma or embarrassment about any of the issues. However, we do provide other opportunities for pupils to discuss issues should they feel embarrassed about discussing these in a mixed class. Our lessons cover the emotional and physical changes that happen during puberty and how relationships might change. We believe that children have a right to know how their bodies change and the emotional impact of puberty before starting to go through these changes to avoid confusion and anxiety when it happens to them.

In addition to learning about changes associated with puberty, we also teach about changes in life experiences such as: changing classes, changing schools and changes in the future e.g. going to university, getting a job, buying a house etc.

We differentiate to the needs of our SEND pupils who may need to learn in a different way (for example, through the use of social stories or symbols to help explain what happens at puberty). This will always be discussed with parents and supported by their teaching assistant.





Top Tips for Supporting Children Growing Up

1. Use the parent information leaflet for the associated 'Growing Up' or 'Changes' unit from school to initiate discussions. There is a section on 'useful conversations to have with your child at home'. In addition, you could use the puberty leaflets from school.
2. Use one of the websites on the next page. These may also have an information video. Always watch the video first and check that you are happy with the information and base your choices on the maturity of your child.
3. Use the correct terminology when talking about body parts: breasts, vulva, vagina, penis and testicles. Knowing the correct words for parts of their body helps to keep children and young people safe and look after their health. Even if you use other words at home, it's important that children know the correct terms too.
4. Talking about puberty, body image and body changes can be embarrassing. If you do feel embarrassed, you could use distancing techniques whereby you do not talk about personal situations but say, "This will/might happen" or "This happened to someone I know". However, if you feel comfortable doing so, it could help if you share your own personal experiences of puberty so that your child feels comfortable asking you for advice and information.
5. It is important that your child can ask you questions. Answer honestly and if you don't know the answer say you will find out. If your child asks a question at a difficult time prepare a response, e.g. *"that's a good question, let's talk about it later"*. However, ensure you do return to their question, or you risk your child not coming back to you in future.
6. Take a lead from your child as to whether the discussion is pitched at the right level. Don't worry though; too basic and your child will ask for more detail, too advanced and they will only take away what they understand for their age, maturity and ability.
7. Keep communicating with your child's class teacher. It may be useful to speak to them if your child has asked you questions which you find difficult to answer/not sure how to answer.
8. Stay up to date with what your child is learning in school. Parent information sheets for PSHE lessons are sent termly via ParentMail so remember to look out for these.
9. Be mindful of your child's mental health and how changing hormones through puberty (in addition to the changes they face when moving to secondary school) can affect your child's emotions/mental health and relationships.
10. Use one of the books from the book list in this leaflet to support conversations with your child.



Websites to Support the Teaching of Growing Up

Websites That Include Videos as Teaching Aids

<http://Amaze.org> - age-appropriate information, clear and accurate language, with many short videos that help explore various topics around puberty, body changes, periods, etc.

[Operation Ouch puberty special - CBBC - BBC](#)

Websites That Give Information About Puberty

www.outspokeneducation.com - online resources including a range of free home- schooling lessons for different age ranges, to support parents to talk openly about bodies, body image and relationships. Subscribe to a free newsletter.

Websites and Resources for Children with Additional Learning Needs

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/family-life-and-relationships/sex-education/parents-and-carers> - good advice from the National Autistic Society on talking about puberty to a child with autism.

[Puberty and growing up | Contact](#)

<https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/bookshop/paperbacks/susans-growing> - books on growing up for parents to share with children with learning disabilities.

Websites Which Provide Information to Help You Support Your Child Growing Up and Mental Health Support.

[Place2Be: Parenting Smart: Articles](#)

[Parents Helpline | Mental Health Help for Your Child | YoungMinds](#)

[Support & advice for parents | NSPCC](#)

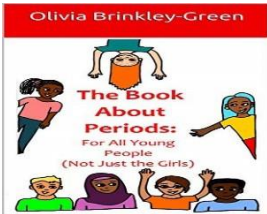

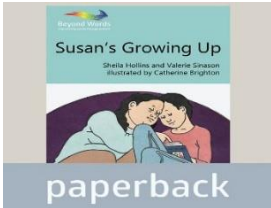
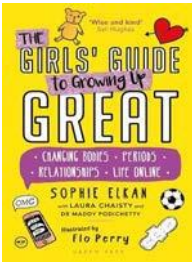
[Parent Talk - Support for Parents from Action For Children](#)

[Online parenting classes | Family Lives](#)





[Barnardo's Family Space | Barnardo's Family Space \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

[Parent Support for Children's Mental Health \(parentingmentalhealth.org\)](#)

Books on Puberty and Growing Up

<p>The Book About Periods: for all young people Olivia Brinkley-Green</p> <p>ISBN: 1090605641</p>	<p>This book is for all young people growing up and wanting to learn about periods, as well as parents, carers and teachers.</p>	
<p>The Period Book: everything you don't want to ask but need to know Karen Gravelle</p> <p>ISBN: 9780749917050</p>	<p>This book answers questions about menstruation and will guide you through all the physical, emotional and social changes that come with periods, as well as related issues such as; dealing with spots, mood swings and new expectations from friends and family.</p>	
<p>Susan's Growing Up Sheila Hollins and Valerie Sinason</p> <p>ISBN: 9781784581152</p>	<p>This is a story about a young woman with a learning disability who starts her period and doesn't know what is happening. Susan receives reassurance from both her teacher at school and her mum once she returns home.</p>	
<p>Hair in Funny Places Babette Cole</p> <p>ISBN: 9780099266266</p>	<p>This book uses cartoons of a girl and her teddy bear to explain the changes that happen to our bodies as we grow up.</p>	
<p>The Girls' Guide to Growing Up Great: Changing Bodies, Periods, Relationships, Life Online Sophie Elkan</p> <p>ISBN: 9781472973580</p>	<p>An accessible, clear and empowering book for girls going through puberty or wanting to know more. Looks at body changes, emotions, staying safe and having fun, with advice from other girls and women about growing up.</p>	

Books on Puberty and Growing Up

<p>Questions Children Ask and How to Answer Them Miriam Stoppard ISBN: 9781785040658</p>	<p>This book provides age-appropriate answers to a large range of questions that children ask. The author draws on research in child development and addresses what children can handle at each age.</p>	
<p>Where Willy Went Nicholas Allan ISBN: 9780099456483</p>	<p>By using cartoons and humour this book explains how sperm meets an egg in reproduction.</p>	
<p>Let's Talk About the Birds and the Bees Molly Potter ISBN: 9781472946416</p>	<p>This book uses clear, easy to understand language to answer questions about sex and relationships and covers subjects from puberty to consent with accuracy and honesty.</p>	
<p>Helping Your Kids with Growing Up Robert Winston ISBN: 9780241287255</p>	<p>This book demystifies puberty for parents and their children and covers issues such as social media and sexting, while also explaining mood swings, periods and breaking voices.</p>	
<p>What's Happening to Me? Susan Meredith ISBN: 9780746069950 ISBN: 978-0746069950</p>	<p>A series of books to help children aged 9 and above understand body changes during puberty and adolescence.</p>	
<p>It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing up, Sex, and Sexual Health Robie H Harris ISBN: 9780763668723</p>	<p>A book about changing bodies and growing up, covering a range of topics from puberty, gender identity, sex, birth and sexual abuse.</p>	