



**Eastcote**

Primary Academy

## Preparing for Puberty



**Information for Parents and Carers**

## Our growing children

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. We hope that it will provide an insight into the learning expectations, content and resources used as we teach your child about puberty, along with some guidance about your role in our partnership through this learning journey.

## Government Guidance

Health education now is a statutory part of the curriculum and the following statement relating to *the changing adolescent body* comes from the Department for Education:

By the end of primary school pupils should know:

- key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.
- about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.

*(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers)*

## Puberty Education - Our Approach

At Eastcote our main aims will be for pupils to:

- understand the emotional and physical changes of puberty for male and female bodies
- know that some people get periods and this is normal
- know and describe how to prepare for and manage periods

## Engaging Parents & Carers

Learning linked to 'Preparing for Puberty', is more effective when parents & carers are involved and aware of the content of the learning taking place.

With careful planning, teachers pre-empt the level of current knowledge, appropriate pitch and make time for research in order to respond to questions children raise in a factual way. Based on what we currently know about our pupils and what they need to know about puberty, we have planned lessons to meet government requirements whilst sensitively meeting the needs of the pupils.

This booklet contains resources that will be used in school along with specific vocabulary that will arise. By knowing this we hope it will help you to support your child at home with factual and biological information, enabling you to be open to answer questions your child may have. Some questions can make us feel uncomfortable; it is OK to tell your child you need time to respond and you can always approach us if you have any queries about how to answer their queries so do not worry! The NHS website can also provide factual information about the stages of puberty or type **NHS stages of puberty** into your search engine. Should you direct your child to any online resources to answer their questions please ensure that sites are quality assured and reputable, for safeguarding purposes.

After *Preparing for Puberty* is taught, children will come home with information booklets - some parts are duplicates of what you have here - which they may share with you.

## Pupil Consultation

TELL THE BOX

STATEMENT SPECTRUM

TALK IT OUT

Before teaching anything a range of strategies may be approached to gauge the level of knowledge of the class by posing the open-ended question:

### How might you change as you grow up?

Children might respond by writing a note and posting it into **THE BOX**. They might have time to discuss their ideas with their peers as they **TALK IT OUT**. The teacher might read statements such as 'My shoulders will become broader' and 'My eyes will change colour', and children may walk along the **STATEMENT SPECTRUM** deciding whether to stand anywhere from 'Agree' to 'Don't know' to 'Disagree'.

### Working Agreement - Class ground Rules

Having agreed rules in place for lessons allows every pupil to feel safe and respected. These are discussed in advance and may include:

- We can be open and honest.
- We feel safe.
- We have opportunities to ask questions\*
- We know it's OK to disagree.
- We listen.
- We use appropriate language.
- We will try to join in but we have the right to 'pass' if we feel uncomfortable.
- If we need help and advice we can speak to our teacher or another adult we trust.
- We help our friends get help if we think they need it.

\*This is essential and can reassure concerns, fill gaps of knowledge and address misconceptions. Questions do not have to be aired by pupils in front of everyone. An example of an alternative opportunity is the...



Pupils (choosing to be anonymous or named) write their concern / question / comment and can request that a response is given to either the whole class, just to themselves or receive no response should they just wish to express themselves.

## What exactly will be taught?

Up to this stage in your child's life they have learnt to celebrate uniqueness, recognise and manage, to some extent, their feelings, respect one another and to value privacy and differing opinions. More recently they have learnt how they started as an egg and had forty weeks of growth and change in their mother's womb before being born.



To give you some insight into how lessons will be approached in school, some example activities and facts that will be shared with pupils are included below. It is important that pupils understand that the changes occurring during puberty are natural and can happen at different times for different people. The correct biological vocabulary will be used to teach in a factual way.

## Feelings - how puberty may affect emotions, how changing emotions may

affect pupils & how to respond. Some example activities...



### Storm Bottles

Given a small bottle two-thirds full of water, pupils add coloured objects that represent and reflect how they feel when they are angry. They think of a time when they felt very angry about something. This is a personal reflection and they will not be asked to share what the situation was. As they shake the bottle the swirling water represents an angry storm, demonstrating how anger can stir up inside of them. As they think of something that they like doing to help them feel calm they put the bottle on the desk and watch the angry storm calm down.

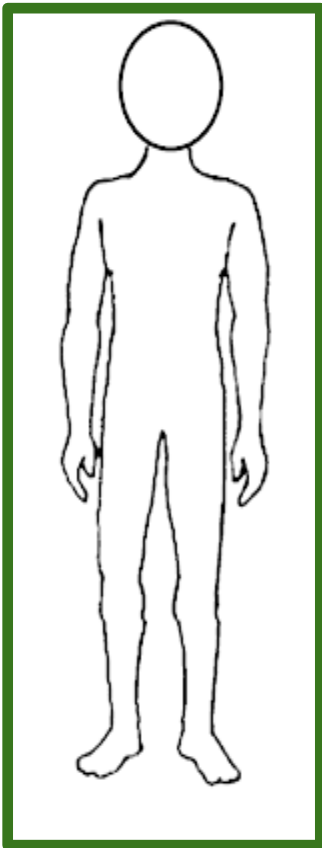
### Role Play

There are discussions about various feelings, how they might quickly sway during puberty (mood swings) and how some might be comfortable and others uncomfortable. Pupils may feel emotions they have not experienced before and this is natural. Children in groups act out scenarios displaying uncomfortable behaviour (e.g. anger in the supermarket towards their parent) along with possible reactions to it and ways to manage it.



# Body

– How male and female bodies can be affected by puberty, how changes may make a person feel about themselves & how to manage changes to the body. Facts and examples of how they will be taught...

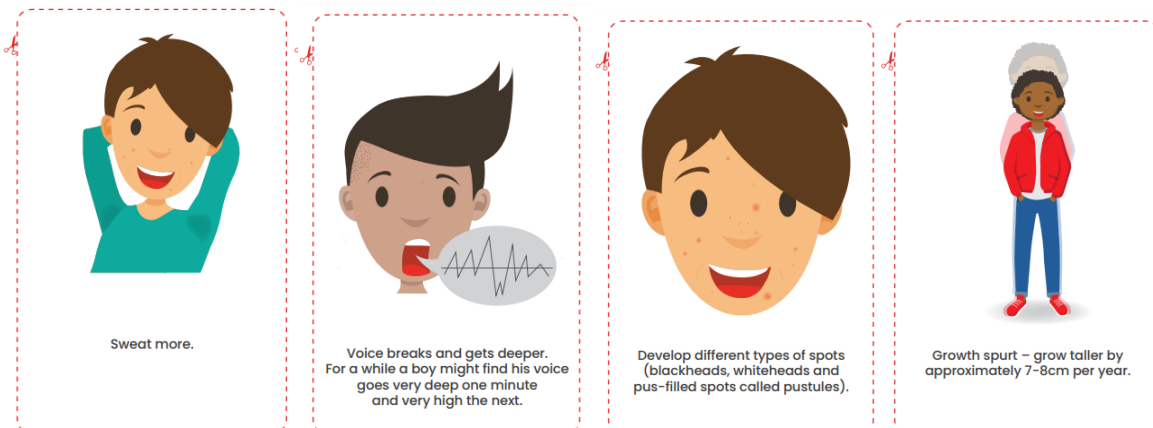


## The Male Body - How might puberty cause the male body to change?

Displaying a life size body outline of a Year 5 child (and maybe naming him... 'Jim'!), children are encouraged to suggest answers to the question posed, which will then be written on the body. In another colour the teacher will write other changes not suggested by pupils. Responses to the question are:

- The penis and testicles grow and the scrotum gradually becomes darker
- Pubic hair grows: underarm; legs; arms; chest; back and around the penis
- Start to sweat more
- Breasts can temporarily swell slightly
- May have erections and wet dreams (involuntary ejaculations of semen as they sleep)
- Voice breaks and gets deeper. For a while a boy might find his voice goes very deep one minute and very high the next.
- The Adam's apple may begin to stick out
- Facial hair begins to grow
- Develop different types of spots (blackheads, whiteheads and pus-filled spots called pustules)
- Growth spurt - grow taller by approx. 7-8cm per year
- Body shape changes as shoulders broaden and the body becomes more muscular.

## What do you think will be the hardest physical change of puberty to cope with?



In pairs, pupils look at a set of boy puberty cards, ranking them in order of what they think will be the hardest change for males to cope with.

## Erections and wet dreams explained factually

Uncontrollability of the penis is a natural part of puberty for boys. When it becomes stiff and stands upright this is called an erection. An erection can happen if the penis is touched. It can also happen for no reason at all, including when you don't want it to, such as when you are asleep. It is known as a wet dream. A wet dream is caused because the male body has started to produce

sperm, which is stored in the testicles. The body sometimes releases the sperm (known as ejaculation) at night. Some boys may find a sticky wet patch on clothes or bed sheets. Children are reassured that they do not need to feel embarrassed about this. Wet dreams are a natural part of growing up and a sign that the body is preparing for becoming an adult. It is also natural to never experience a wet dream. Rather than considering themselves amongst peers, pupils consider what 'Jim' might do if he experienced an unwanted erection or a wet dream.

## Understanding and naming male body parts

### Bladder

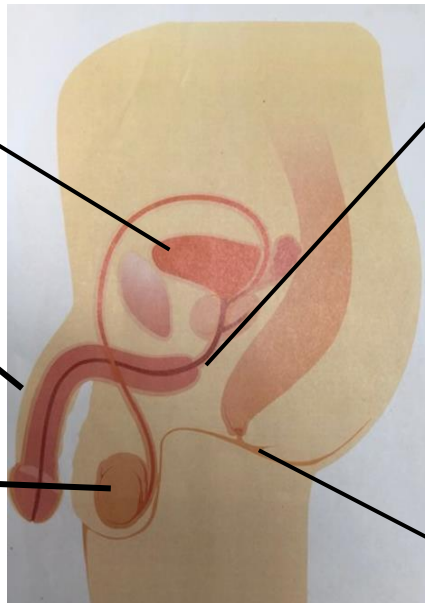
Urine is collected here inside the body.

### Penis

External male body part.

### Testicles

Two oval organs that produce sperm in males. They are in the **scrotum**, which is behind the Penis.



### Urethra

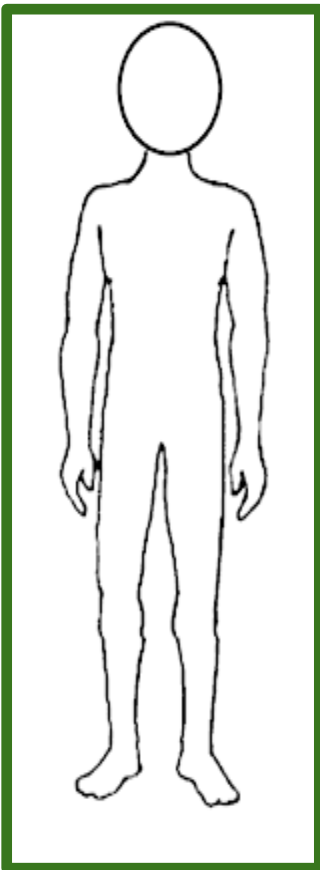
Tube that connects the bladder to the penis.

### Sperm

Produced in the testicles that may be released from the penis in a white fluid called **semen**.

### Anus

Opening where solid matter (poo) leaves the body.

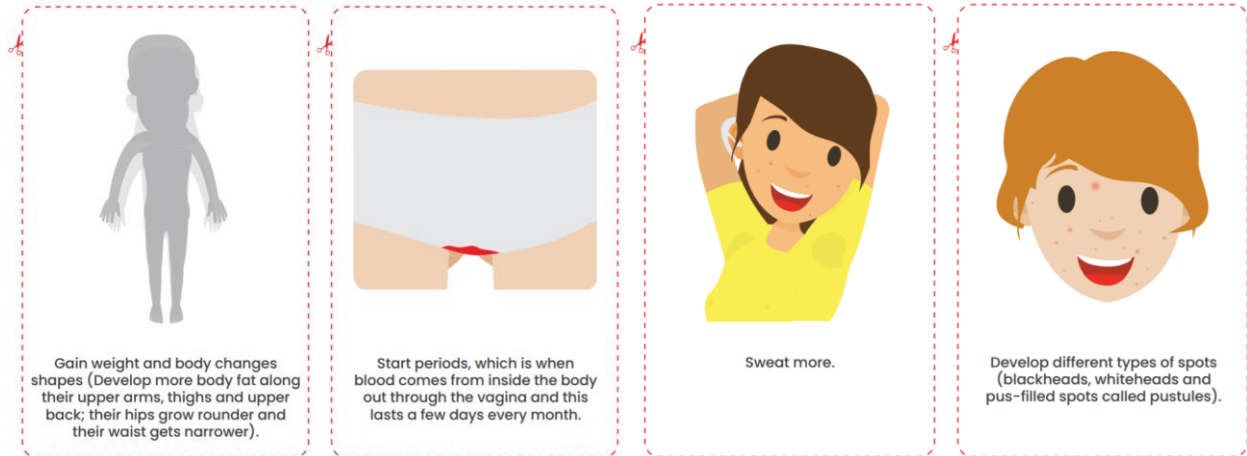


## The Female Body - How might puberty cause the female body to change?

Just as with the question posed about the male body, the female body (maybe 'Julia' in this instance!) and responses to the question are considered in the same way. Responses will include:

- Breasts grow and become fuller (it is normal for one breast to grow larger than the other and for the breasts to feel painful, lumpy or uncomfortable at this time)
- Pubic hair grows: under arms; legs and around the vulva. May also notice hair growing on the top lip
- Sweat more
- Develop different types of spots (blackheads, whiteheads and pus-filled spots called pustules)
- White, sticky vaginal discharge
- Growth spurt - growing taller by approx. 5-7.5cm every year for the next two years
- Gain weight and body changes shapes (Develop more body fat along their upper arms, thighs and upper back; their hips grow rounder and their waist gets narrower)
- Start periods, which is when blood comes from inside the body out through the vagina and this lasts a few days every month.

## What do you think will be the hardest physical change of puberty to cope with?



Using the puberty cards describing changes for girls, pupils have time to consider, rank cards in order of what they think will be the hardest change for females to cope with.

### Facts about menstruation

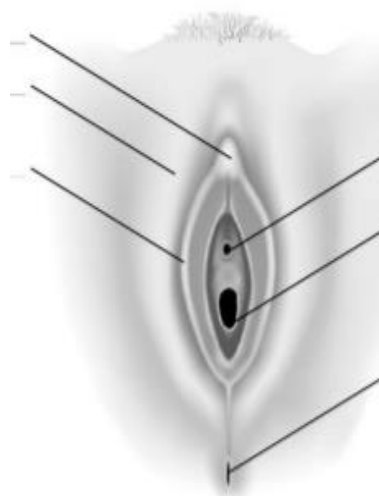
Historically periods have not been spoken about openly. As well as this leaving many young people ill-prepared for the time they experience periods, there has also been an environmental impact. Informing pupils about what to expect and how to responsibly and confidently manage their experiences of periods will help to dispel misunderstandings and, hopefully, lead to healthier, more knowledgeable members of our society.

A period happens when the body releases an egg from the ovary each month. The egg travels down the fallopian tube, passing through the womb which sheds its lining and leaves the body with the egg through the vagina. Not everyone has a 28-day cycle and not everyone loses the same amount of blood. Young people can start periods as early as 8 years old or as late as 15 years old.

### Understanding and naming female body parts

**Knowing external female body parts and their function.** Pupils know that each of them is unique with different facial features, body types and personalities. The same applies to female body parts.

Reassure your child that once most people start their periods, they soon find it is nothing to be concerned about and that they do not need to feel embarrassed about having periods as it is a natural part of growing up.



- Urethra the opening where urine leaves the body.
- Vagina the opening from which people lose blood during a period.
- Anus the opening where solid matter (poo) leaves the body.

### Ovary

Eggs are produced in the two ovaries inside the body.

### Fallopian tube

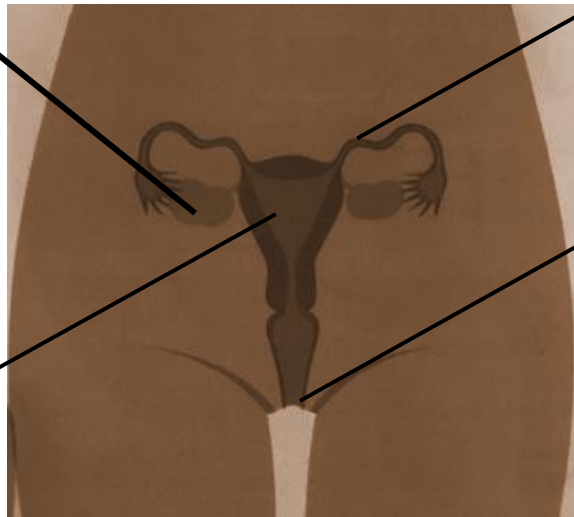
Two tubes along which eggs travel from the ovaries to the womb.

### Womb

Also known as the uterus. The lining thickens and leaves the body as blood with the egg through the vagina.

### Vagina

The opening from which people lose blood during a period.



Rather than considering themselves amongst peers, pupils consider what ‘Julia’ might do if she started her period at school or what she might do to help blood loss during a period.

### Period products

Being prepared to manage periods will be reassuring for both young people and their parents & carers, so learning about which products are available is an important part of period education. With sample products available for children to see at school, there are opportunities for discussion and questions, as outlined on page 3 of this booklet. Examples of the many period products now available include pads (both disposable and washable varieties are available), period pants and tampons. How to wear them as well as how to dispose of them responsibly - or if washable, how to pack them away - will also be discussed.

**There are always pads available in school should any child need them, with bins provided for safe disposal.**

### OTHER QUESTIONS THAT MAY ARISE DURING PUBERTY EDUCATION ...

- How would you feel if you were the first / last person in your class to start puberty?
- What can someone do if they have questions related to puberty?
- What do you think is good about puberty changes to the body?

We hope that this information goes some way to helping you understand Eastcote’s approach to preparing pupils for puberty and provides you with guidance to further support your child. If you have further questions do not hesitate to ask us.