



Grade 5 Sexual Health Education Program Parent Information Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We would like to inform you that all Grade 5 students will soon participate in approximately 3 hours of sexual health education, delivered by a trained sexual health education teacher from our school district. Your child's classroom teacher will also be present during these lessons. Please review *Important Notes About Participation* at the bottom of this document for information about participating in sexual health education lessons.

To help your child feel more confident and comfortable, we encourage you to begin conversations at home about sexual health topics. The curriculum is based on the [BC Physical and Health Education Curriculum](#) and the [Supporting Student Health Guides](#) from the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Below is an overview of the key topics covered. Please note that additional age-appropriate discussions may arise based on student questions. If you have questions after the lessons, your child's teacher should be able to answer them.

Grade 5 Topics:

- Physical changes during puberty
- Reproductive systems and their functions
- Hygiene during puberty
- Consent for touch
- Respecting individual differences

Visit our website for more information on:

- [Grade 5 sexual health lessons](#)
- [Grade 4-7 resources for parents and students](#)
- [Age-based examples of sexual behaviour in children and adolescents](#)

Talking to children and teens about digital safety is more important than ever as young people face increasing risks online – from privacy concerns to cyberbullying and inappropriate content. Please check out our [website](#) for a list of resources or [Media Smarts](#) for tip sheets on how to talk to children about making safer, smarter choices in the digital world.

Suggested Questions to Discuss with Your Child Before the Lessons:

What is puberty?

Puberty is the stage of life when a child's body begins to change and develop into an adult body. These changes are a normal and healthy part of growing up.

When does puberty usually begin?

Puberty can start as early as age 8 or 9, or as late as 14 to 16. Every person's body is different, and all timelines are normal.

Why do some children mature earlier than others?

Puberty is triggered by hormones released by the brain. Since everyone's body is on its own schedule, some children



may begin these changes earlier or later than their peers. Sharing your own experiences with puberty can help your child feel more comfortable and supported.

What hormones are involved in puberty?

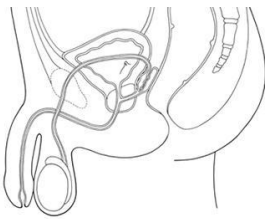
All people have both estrogen and testosterone. Typically, individuals with ovaries and a vulva produce more estrogen, while those with testicles and a penis produce more testosterone.

What changes happen to all children during puberty?

Common changes include growth spurts, weight gain, body hair (in the armpits, genital area, and legs), oily skin and hair, acne, body odour, and changes in voice.

What personal hygiene habits should be encouraged during puberty?

Talk to your child about the importance of regular bathing, changing clothes and underwear daily, using deodorant, brushing and flossing teeth, and caring for their skin. Encourage healthy routines like getting 10–12 hours of sleep, staying active, limiting screen time, and eating nutritious foods to support their growing body.

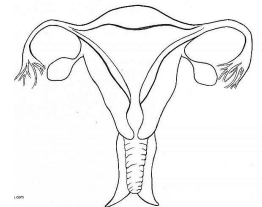


What physical changes occur for individuals with a penis and testicles?

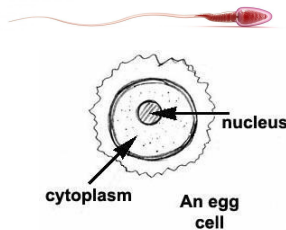
During puberty, they may develop broader shoulders and chest, a deeper voice, facial hair, and growth of the penis and testicles. The testicles are sensitive and should be protected during sports using a jock strap or athletic cup. Hormonal changes may lead to more frequent erections, which happen when blood flows into the penis, making it firm. Erections may be spontaneous (without an obvious reason), or may occur with feelings of attraction. The body will also begin producing sperm, and ejaculation may occur, sometimes during sleep (known as a wet dream). This is a normal part of development.

What physical changes occur for individuals with a vulva and ovaries?

Puberty may bring breast development, wider hips, and hair growth under the arms and around the genital area. Vaginal discharge may appear in underwear, which is normal. The body will begin releasing egg cells (ovulation), and menstruation (periods) will begin—typically about two years after breast development starts.



What are the main parts of the reproductive system and how do they function?

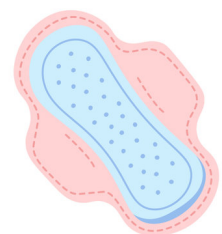


It's helpful to talk about the penis, testicles, scrotum, and foreskin, as well as the vulva, vagina, uterus, and ovaries. Some families choose circumcision, which involves removing the foreskin. Once puberty begins, bodies with testicles produce sperm, which carries genetic information used to create a baby when it fertilizes an egg. Bodies with ovaries begin releasing eggs monthly. If the egg is not fertilized, the uterine lining is shed through the vagina—this is menstruation. It typically continues until around age 50. Urine exits through a separate opening called the urethra, which is part of the vulva.

How do I keep track of periods? What if a period happens at school?

Menstrual periods typically last between 3 to 7 days and occur approximately every 28 days. It's common for the first few cycles to be irregular — for example, a first period may be followed by a gap of several months before the next one. Tracking the first day of each period using a calendar or app can help predict when future periods might begin.

If a student gets their period while at school, they can access supplies from the office or carry them in their backpack. This is a great time to talk with your child about different





menstrual products, such as pads and leak-proof underwear, and consider purchasing size-appropriate options. Many students feel nervous about asking parents or guardians about this topic, so it is best for adults to initiate the conversation. Many students are also curious about tampons or menstrual cups, which we will discuss further in future grades.

Why is consent for touch important?

Understanding safe and unsafe touch is essential for your child's safety. Talk about how to recognize and communicate boundaries. For guidance on how to start this conversation, check out this [video](#).

Follow-Up Questions to Ask After the Lessons:

- How did the lessons go?
- What is something new that you learned that might help you during puberty?
- Do you have any questions?
- Is there anything you need to feel prepared for puberty?
- How can I help with that?
- How are you feeling about these changes?
- Do you have a trusted adult you can talk to?

Important Notes About Participation:

Sexual health education is a mandatory part of the BC Physical and Health Education curriculum. While students cannot opt out of learning this content, families may choose to deliver the lessons at home. If you prefer this option, please contact your school's principal or vice-principal to request a Home Learning Package. Parents and guardians are responsible for reviewing the materials and ensuring their child can demonstrate understanding of the content.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care states:

"The alternate delivery policy does not allow students to 'opt-out' of learning about these topics. It is expected that students will, in consultation with their school, demonstrate their knowledge of the learning standard(s) or learning outcomes they have arranged to address by alternative means."

Your school's principal or vice-principal can guide you on how your child will be expected to demonstrate their learning.

Thank you for preparing your child for their sexual health lessons.

The Sexual Health Education Program Team