

## Puberty

Level: Seconde

### Specific Objectives:

- For students (both male and female) to understand and accept the physical, mental, and emotional changes they will experience during puberty
- They should be able to cope with these changes based on the information that has been provided

### Expected Behaviours:

- Demonstrate empathy for themselves and for their friends as they go through these changes by being kind and not making fun of or laughing at others
- To display responsible behaviour

### Information:

For both boys and girls, puberty is the transition from childhood to adulthood and includes a series of changes that make reproduction possible (to get pregnant).

In the body, there is something called hormones. These hormones are responsible for the appearance of secondary sex characteristics (boys start growing a beard and their Adam's apple will get bigger, while both boys and girls grow pubic hair, armpit hair and more hair on their legs). Hormones can influence things like emotions (for example; being very irritable, angry, plaintive or weepy), hunger levels, and even the way people smell. Hormones also control girls' monthly cycles and ability to have a baby.

The age of puberty differs from one individual to another, but is usually between the ages of 10 and 16 years old. During this time, students will also experience physical changes that make them look more like an adult than a child, and will help them to reproduce when they are ready. Boys will notice their voice getting deeper and shoulders getting wider. Girls begin to develop breasts and their hips widen. This happens so that her body can give birth to a baby later in life. Both boys and girls will start experiencing mutual sexual attraction.

During puberty, girls start having vaginal discharge. This is a moist substance they will start to see in their underwear, usually 1-2 years before they start their period. Unless there is a sudden change in colour, texture, or smell, this discharge is completely normal and means the vagina is healthy. When girls start menstruating (get their period), this means they can become pregnant. For boys, the penis and testicles will start to grow and they will experience erections. An erection can happen when a boy is sexually aroused, or sometimes for no reason at all. Most men wake up with an erection almost every morning and experience wet dreams, which is also completely natural.

### Summary and Key Messages:

- Puberty is a normal part of growing up that includes many physical changes, as well as emotional and mental changes.
- These changes may not be noticeable at the same time as friends, and that is okay.
- Puberty happens for different people at different times, and does not mean anything is wrong.
- If the students have questions about what they are experiencing, they should ask a doctor or an adult they trust.