

# Parent Event: Supporting Your Child Through Puberty

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DATE & TIME: FRIDAY 26TH JUNE, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

# Introductions

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Family Support and Safeguarding:

❖ Tracey Senior

Specialist School Nursing Service:

❖ Jordan Spalding

# Supporting your child through puberty and talking about public and private things

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Supporting your child through puberty requires **explicit, highly visual, and literal rules** to help them distinguish between public and private spaces, body parts, and behaviours. Because abstract social norms are difficult to grasp, concepts must be grounded into concrete categories and maintain strict consistency across all family members and school staff.

# Public vs. Private:

## Understanding spaces, topics, and behaviours.

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### "Public vs. Private"

Break everything down into strict, non-negotiable concrete categories using consistent language.

- ❖ **Private Places:** Your child's bedroom (with the door shut) and the bathroom.
- ❖ **Public Places:** Everywhere else, including the kitchen, living room, school, shops, and parks.
- ❖ **Private Body Parts:** Parts of the body covered by underwear/a swimsuit.
- ❖ **Public Body Parts:** Hands, arms, face, and feet.
- ❖ **Private Behaviours:** Undressing, showering, wiping, and masturbation (touching private parts).
- ❖ **Public Behaviours:** Waving, high-fives, eating, and talking about everyday topics.

# Concrete Teaching Strategies

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- ❖ **Visual Sorting Activities:** Create a board divided into "Public" and "Private". Use laminated photos or symbols of rooms, body parts, and actions, and have your child sort them regularly.
- ❖ **Social Stories:** Write short, personalised, literal stories using simple illustrations. For example: *"When I am in the living room, my clothes stay on. If I want to take off my clothes, I walk to my bedroom and close the door."*
- ❖ **Bathroom Transition Rules:** Establish clear physical rules to bridge public and private spaces. For instance, teach a strict sequence: you must be fully dressed *before* opening the bathroom door to step into the hallway.
- ❖ **Use Literal Vocabulary:** Avoid euphemisms like "down there" or "front bottom." Use correct anatomical names (like penis or vulva) to ensure clarity and support safeguarding.

# Managing Sexual Behaviours & Masturbation

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Sexual urges are natural, but public expression poses major safety and social challenges.

- ❖ **Do Not Shame:** Do not scold, yell, or react with high emotion if they touch themselves publicly, as this causes anxiety or can inadvertently reinforce the behavior through attention.
- ❖ **Redirect Immediately:** Use a calm, neutral voice to give an explicit instruction: *"Hand out of trousers. Private touching is for your bedroom."* Directly guide them to their private space.
- ❖ **Provide Alternative Sensory Input:** Sometimes public rubbing is a stimming response to sensory overload or uncomfortable clothing seams. Offer deep pressure toys, a heavy lap pad, or textured objects to keep their hands occupied.

# Safeguarding & Consent

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Your children are highly vulnerable and need direct instruction on body autonomy.

- ❖ **Teach the Rule of 'No'**: Actively practice saying or gesturing "No" or "Stop". Ensure they know they have the right to refuse unwanted touch from anyone, including familiar adults or family members.
- ❖ **Define Allowed Touching**: Use visuals to show who is allowed to help with hygiene tasks (e.g., Mum, Dad, or specific school carers) and emphasise that doctors or carers must always explain what they are doing first.

# Professional Resources & Support Networks

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- ❖ **NSPCC Learning:** Provides specialised, symbolised booklets designed for learning-disabled youths covering erections, periods, and masturbation. Access them via NSPCC: Navigating puberty and sexual development.
- ❖ **Autism Central:** This peer education programme provides funded coaching, regional hubs, and parent guidance sessions. Learn more on Autism Central Guidance.
- ❖ **School & Speech Therapy Collaboration:** Request a meeting with your child's class teacher. Our school utilises the exact same symbols, communication boards (AAC), and verbal prompts that can be used at home to avoid confusing the child.

