

Understanding Hygiene

Key stage 2

Keeping clean can be a sensitive subject to discuss in a class, as some children may have problems with their personal hygiene that are beyond their control – for instance in cases of poverty or neglect. It is important to revisit the working agreement before this session to ensure that all children are treated with respect and courtesy by their peers.

Learning Intention:

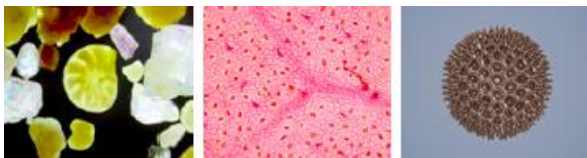
- To learn why it is important to keep clean.

Learning Outcome:

- To describe how to look after particular parts of the body.
- To explain why it is important to keep clean.
- To be able to describe and carry out basic hygiene routines.
- To know what they can take responsibility for and know when they need help.

Resources:

- “The Smelly Book” by Babette Cole, “Dirty Bertie” or “Pooh! Is that you, Bertie?” by David Roberts
- Glitter
- Printed images of items as seen under a microscope, such as sand, hairs, a snail shell and pollen, plus images of the same items at normal magnification
- Paper, pens, paints for creative art work



Teacher Introduction:

Start by saying: “We’ve been learning all about our wonderful bodies and today we are going to think about ways in which we can take care of them so they don’t get ill or damaged.

First of all, though, I am going to do something that will seem a bit mysterious. I’ll explain later on...”

Sprinkle some glitter onto each child's hands. Do not explain why you have done this. Make sure there is enough to be visible, but not so much that it will interfere with activities. A small pinch should be plenty. Alternatively, flour or similar could be used – anything that will leave a trace on children's hands and things they touch.

Activity 1:

Read "The Smelly Book" or "Dirty Bertie/Pooh! Is that you, Bertie?" Introduce the idea that we need to think about how our behaviour can affect our bodies and the people around us.

Ask the children for a list of things that make us smell good, and to identify any things that we use to stop a particular smell (such as deodorant being used to stop us smelling of sweat or mouthwash to make our breath smell nice). Scribe these for the class.

Ask the children why people might want to smell nice. Add their ideas to the list, encouraging them to think of things like giving a good impression – for instance, what would they think about a doctor who was dirty and smelly?

Go back to the list of things that make us smell nice. Ask the children to think of things that make us smell bad and scribe their answers. Encourage them to think of sweat as a source of body odour.

Also useful for: PH & HE, NCS

Activity 2:

Show the images of magnified objects such as a snail shell, sand, hair and skin, and ask the children to guess what the pictures show. Show the same item at its actual size.

Explain that things look different because the microscope/magnifying glass makes them look bigger. This means we can see things which are too small for us to see with just our eyes. Some of these are very small creatures that live in and on our bodies. These have lots of different names but we can call them germs. Some germs are good for us because they do things like help us digest our food.

Some germs are all right on the outside but if they get into our tummies they can make us ill. Other germs can make us smelly. Explain that sweat on its own does not smell, and that this only happens when it starts to decay due to bacterial (germ) action. We all have germs on our skin, and when these get into our sweat they make it smell. If we wash off the germs and the sweat we won't get smelly.

(Note: some children may be alarmed at the idea that they have small things living on their bodies; "Bugs" by Sam McBratney explains the beneficial role of microorganisms. Alternatively, some children may be fascinated and want to know more about micro-organisms and bodily functions. "Grossology" by Sylvia Branzei (for older readers) gives detailed and lively explanations of things like sweat, ear wax and flatulence).

Also useful for: PH & HE, NCS

Activity 3:

Ask the children to work in pairs. Give them a piece of paper and ask them to draw a mind map with “keeping clean” as the starting point, showing as many ways to keep clean as they can think of.



Ask the children to identify those activities that they can do by themselves and those activities that they will need help with.

Ask the children to explain their mind maps to the pair working next to them.

Ensure all aspects of keeping clean have been considered.

Discuss when the activities they have identified should be done and who could help with the things the children cannot do for themselves. Ask the children to add these ideas to their mind maps

Also useful for: PH & HE, NCS

Activity 4:

Explain that as they are so much more grown-up, you are going to ask them to help younger children learn about keeping clean.

Put the class into small groups and ask each group to design a poster for the reception class(es), giving advice on why it is important to keep clean, how to keep clean at school, and who they can ask for help. Ask the class to include ideas on how they can make the posters suitable for very young children who might not yet be able to read.

Invite the reception children in so that the class can show them their posters and explain the hygiene messages. Display the finished posters near or in the reception classrooms.

Also useful for: PH & HE, NCS

Activity 5:

Remind the children about the glitter or flour that was put on their hands at the beginning of the lesson.

Ask them to look around the room and make a list of everywhere they can now see glitter – the carpet, the door handle, the desks and so forth. Ask them to think about how the glitter got into these places. Also note if any of the children have got glitter in their hair or on their faces.

Help the children to see that glitter has been transferred from their hands to everything they have touched. Ask if they can think of anything else that might get transferred in this way, encouraging the answers “dirt” and “germs.”

Note: if time and resources allow, use different colours of glitter – for example green for girls and orange for boys. Note if boys pick up green glitter and girls pick up orange. This will allow teachers to demonstrate how transfer can take place between people as well as objects.

Also useful for: PH & HE, NCS

Activity 6:

Reassure the children that glitter and germs can be washed off and tell them that you are going to all learn a good hand washing routine:

- Wet your hands under running water (as a class, mime turning on the tap and putting hands in the water)
- Scrub your hands for a count of five (mime rubbing soap all over the hands, including the backs and between the fingers).
- Rinse your hands under running water for a count of five (mime rinsing).
- Dry your hands with a clean towel or use a hand dryer (the children can make the whooshing noise of a hand dryer).

Remind the children that sometimes we might not be able to find a sink so we can use wipes or hand gel, but these are not as good as soap and water.

Also useful for: PH & HE, NCS

Plenary:

Remind the children what they have learnt:

- That unless we keep clean we might end up getting smelly.
- That germs are easily transferred between our hands, objects and other people.
- The importance of keeping clean.
- How they can keep clean.

Debriefing activity:

Reassure the children that washing our hands is a good way to get rid of germs. Either in small groups or as a class, take the children to wash the glitter off their hands, with each group counting to five for soaping and rinsing.

Cheer when each child has clean hands.

Some children may become highly anxious about germs, and in some cases repetitive hand washing can be a manifestation of conditions such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. It is important that teachers do not exaggerate the risks posed by germs, and that children understand that exposure to dirt is not something they should fear. If teachers are concerned about a child's mental health they should speak to their safeguarding lead or wellbeing practitioner with a view to suggesting to parents that they consult their GP. For more information on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in children and young people see <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/conditions-and-treatments/conditions-we-treat/obsessive-compulsive-disorder>

Differentiation for SEND:

Children with learning disabilities may struggle with the idea of micro-organisms and may in fact be fearful of magnified images, not being able to recognise that they are actually pictures of things with which the child is familiar. If this is the case then helping the child to use a magnifying glass or microscope to view the object can be helpful.

Children with physical disabilities may have specific hygiene needs such as continence care that requires them to seek help in ways their peers have outgrown. This should be handled sensitively and teachers may wish to focus the lesson on other aspects of hygiene such as cleaning teeth or putting clothes in the laundry.

