

# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR MUSLIM CHILD



ABOUT TOPICS IN THE  
ONTARIO MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION'S  
HEALTH EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM, 2015

**Farrah Marfatia**

M.Ed. (Candidate), Honors B.Sc., RAQC, TESL,  
Principal (Maingate Islamic Academy)

1<sup>st</sup> Edition

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**Design:** Identify – Brand Deployment Agency

**Author:** Farrah Marfatia M.Ed. (Candidate), Honors B.Sc., RAQC, TESL

**Editors:**

- Sheikh Zahir Bacchus
- Sheikh Omar Subedar
- Imam Belal Ahmad, B.Ed., OCT
- Omar Zia, B.Sc., B.Ed., M.Ed., OCT
- Bushra Tobah, Ph.D. (candidate), M.Sc., B.Sc.
- Rizwan Wadhera, B.Ed., B.A, OCT

Please contact [farrah.marfatia@live.ca](mailto:farrah.marfatia@live.ca) if you would like to purchase printed copies of this document.

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*In the name of Allah the most beneficent the most merciful.*

*This book is dedicated to all parents who, like myself, are grappling with how best to approach sensitive topics that seem to be bombarding our children on a daily basis.*

*I ask that Allah guide us all and keep us on the straight path, it is from him alone that we seek help.*

# Introduction

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This guide was prepared to help parents talk to their children about sensitive issues in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum released by the Ontario Ministry of Education in February 2015 (effective September 2015). This document is by no means a discussion of what is age-appropriate from an Islamic point of view, rather it is a response to what is going to be discussed across public schools from an Islamic perspective. Each family and each child's situation is different so parents may, at their own discretion, choose to cover topics when they feel their child is ready. For example, social media or pornography may become topics to cover earlier if a parent realizes that the child has already become aware of them. Although Islamic Schools do not need to teach this curriculum, an Islamic school parent may wish to speak to their children as well. Inevitably, students in Islamic schools will be exposed to this content, either from members of their family or other friends that are attending public schools.

The guide below is set up as follows: Each chapter is broken up by grade, beginning at Grade 1 and ending at Grade 8. Each chapter is meant to be stand alone. A parent with a child in Grade 1, need only read the Grade 1 chapter. Although, it is suggested that parents take the time to read the entire document. Relevant sections of previous chapters are repeated in each grade. Each chapter is divided into 2 sections. The first is a summary of the curriculum expectations and teacher prompts. The second is a 'parent talk' section which provides guidance for parents on how to approach the curriculum from an Islamic perspective. The very last chapter of this document is a list of resources to help parents engage in further discussions with their children.

The following book is intended to provide basic information regarding topics that may be important to parents. It is not professional advice. This guidebook is a working document and is subject to change without notice. This guidebook has been provided for informational purposes only and has not been reviewed by an curriculum or medical professionals. This guidebook is not to be relied upon as professional advice and has not been approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education or any Public School Boards.

In creating this document we have tried to stay true to authentic Hadith and passages from the Quran, Allah knows best. If there are any questions of comments regarding this document please contact Farrah Marfatia at [farrah.marfatia@live.ca](mailto:farrah.marfatia@live.ca).

# Communicating with your Child

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The ongoing advances in technology are transforming the ways in which we learn; as a result, our children have access to a plethora of information at their fingertips. We must work towards equipping Muslim youth with the knowledge and skills they need to cope in the Western world, taking into consideration our highly sexualized climate and without jeopardizing their religion or identity. This requires approaching the Ministry's sexual education curriculum from an Islamic perspective. It is only through dialogue and learning that we can prepare our children for the challenges of this life. We urge parents to talk to your children before somebody else does.

The question is, how do we begin talking to our children about topics that we ourselves are uncomfortable with? First and foremost, we must educate ourselves and reading this document is the first step in the process. Hina Mirza of ISNA Lanterns has excellent advice for parents on opening the dialogue with children about sensitive and uncomfortable topics. Mrs. Mirza says that the best solutions are always found at home. She says:

## START TALKING TO YOUR KIDS

You need to start an open dialogue between you and your kids today. Ask them questions, listen carefully and show interest in their life and their troubles. By making that early connection, you will open the doors to having more serious conversations later on.

## DON'T DODGE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Children are not as complex or layered as we are. They are usually satisfied with a simple, clear answer. Don't overcomplicate it with long explanations or extreme reactions. If your child asks you an uncomfortable question, don't make a big deal out of it by losing your calm. Just take a breath, collect your thoughts and give them a simple and true answer. You might also want to include your own personal and family beliefs and gently remind your child that while your family feels a certain way, others may not. We all have to learn to respect others for their thoughts too!

## AGE IS ON YOUR SIDE

If you are parenting little children, then you are already at an advantage. The younger your child, the more they love and admire everything you say. There's no one in the world as amazing as you. Now is the best time to have those difficult conversations and instill good values and explain how your family does things. Try saying the same thing to a teenager and you'll get a lot of pushback! The best time to teach your child about beliefs is at a young age. They will absorb the information better, and coming from you, they will happily accept anything you say.

To add to Ms. Mirza's point, if your child is older it's not too late to begin having these discussions. It may be uncomfortable at first and youth may resist but continue pushing the dialogue and they will respond.

## BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE

You know what challenges are coming, so prepare for them now. Allow yourself to build a loving environment at home that is open to conversation and safe to discuss things. Be an involved and concerned parent who knows what's happening in the world around us. Show your child that you are concerned, long before there is anything to be concerned about.

Mrs. Mirza's full article can be accessed at: [A Quick Guide to Coping with the New Curriculum \[http://goo.gl/DtP7pN\]](http://goo.gl/DtP7pN).

# Religious Accommodations and Opting out in Public Schools

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Parents with children in public schools should be aware that Public Boards have a duty to provide religious accommodation to students and have committed to removing any bias or system barriers by promoting fairness, equity and inclusion as principles of their system. This should be reflected in all their policies, programs, operations, practices and curricula. As such, parents can have their children opt-out of the sexual health portions of the curriculum. Principals have begun to receive ‘catch all’ form letters asking that their children be exempted from a variety of classes within the Human Development and Sexual Health portions of the curriculum. These form letters are NOT considered valid by Principals because a number of them violate the Ontario Human Rights Code. Instead, parents should download a copy of the Religious Accommodation Policy available on all school board websites for free, read it and understand their rights and the rights of others. In September, parents should book an appointment with the Principal and write a short letter to their child’s Teacher and Principal asking that they be informed when the curriculum will be taught and clearly stating that their child opt-out of the curriculum. A sample letter is shown in [Appendix 1](#).

Parents be advised, while the School Board works to create a school system free from religious discrimination, this freedom is not absolute. Parents CANNOT opt-out of the same-sex families’ portion of the curriculum because this contravenes the Ontario Human Right Code as it relates to the LGBTQ community.

# Grade 1

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- to identify body parts by their proper names, including genitalia
- about their senses and how they function
- basic good hygiene habits (e.g. washing your hands, using tissues)
- Understand family structure, some have two moms, some have two dads.

## PARENT TALK

### Technology and the Internet

The American Academy of Pediatrics has developed guidelines that recommend limiting children's total entertainment screen time to no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality programming per day. Active parental supervision is critical for children interacting with media platforms. Much of the exposure our children have with sensitive material happens outside of the classroom. In today's age, the television and internet are central in connecting people with ideas. Parents are encouraged to actively supervise what their children watch and monitor what they do on the internet. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. Some steps we can take to help achieve this goal are:

- i) Having the television in a highly visible area
- i) Opt for a desktop as opposed to a laptop
- i) Placing the desktop in a highly visible area

In addition, parents should work towards fostering an environment that promotes good values and decision making by creating opportunities to do good. This can include, but is not limited to, making trips to the mosque as a family, joining Muslim sports leagues, and volunteering within the community.

See also [Tips from parents at Google \[http://goo.gl/kXdfBp\]](http://goo.gl/kXdfBp).

## Prayer and Cleanliness

The first school of any child is their home. The Prophet ﷺ said that children should be made to pray at the age of 7. Parents are encouraged to show their children the value of various religious obligations by having them present during acts of worship. By having our children present when we make wudu or perform Salah we begin to show them the importance of these acts to our daily lives through modelling. By age 6, parents should begin teaching their children how to correctly wash themselves after using the washroom without lingering longer than necessary at the private areas because playing with one's private parts is not allowed in Islam. Parents are advised to offer encouragement to their children when they participate and/or correctly perform an act of worship so that these acts are associated with happiness and reward in their hearts. By the age of 10 children should be consistent in their prayers and be lightly admonished if they are incomplete.

## Gender and Relationships

The parent should highlight, encourage, and celebrate the differences between girls and boys and discourage boys and girls from acting like the opposite sex, avoiding close personal contact, and hugging and kissing across genders.

## Modesty

The saheeh Sunnah indicates that it is obligatory to separate children in their beds once they reach the age of 7. Abu Dawood (418) narrated – in a report which was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani – from ‘Amr ibn Shu’ayb from his father from his grandfather who said: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “*When your children reach the age of 7 then separate their beds*”. The scholars of Islam have outlined that if this is not possible, and they need to sleep altogether in one bed, there is nothing wrong with that so long as each one of them has her own cover or blanket. To reinforce this concept of modesty (haya) parents should avoid changing in front of their children and discuss the importance of keeping their bodies covered. Note that for a boy, the navel to knee is a private area which should neither be shown nor viewed.

## Personal Space and Private Parts

According to the Canadian Center for Child Protection parents should begin talking to their children about personal safety and what the difference is between ‘good touch’ and ‘bad touch’. Some child offenders will test a child’s personal safety awareness and whether there is a risk that the child will tell an adult. They often desensitize a child through boundary breaking behaviour, thereby normalizing inappropriate interactions. Offenders are less likely to victimize a child if they think the child will tell. Talk to children regularly about personal safety (see the [Seven Root Safety Strategies \[www.kidsintheknow.ca\]](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca)). Parents should advise children to

never allow anyone to touch their private parts and to immediately their parents if someone does. For parents whose children have been taught the correct names of the genitalia in school, parents should advise their children to use these words (penis, testicles, vagina, vulva) only with a ‘trusted adult’ when someone other than their parents have touched their private area, in the case of an emergency and/or when they feel pain or have been hurt in that area. A parent should explain that these words are ‘private words’ because they are used to describe ‘private parts’. They should not be used ‘for fun’ or as a joke.

### **Same-Sex Families**

For those parents whose children have learned about same sex families you may have the following discussion with your children. Allah is the creator (al-Khaliq). Allah created men and women as complements of one another, each with their own special qualities, so that they could help one another live happily. Since Allah created us, he knows what is best for us. Allah has shared this guidance with us through the Qur’an and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ so we can be successful in this life and the next. Allah wants us to be upright and spread goodness through the world. When a man and woman get married and have children together, they create another life that can help spread the teachings of Allah. In this sense, we are not fully complete without our special companion.

You might notice that there are some families that have 2 moms or 2 dads. Although we should treat everyone with kindness, this type of relationship is displeasing to Allah. In Islam only a man can marry a woman and only a woman can marry a man—we are not allowed to marry people of the same gender. The gender we should marry was chosen for us by Allah when he created us. Allah has created guidelines for us so we can make the right decisions, please Him, and enter Jannah. For example, when we buy a computer it comes with an instruction manual. It tells us what to do so our computer works smooth and what to avoid so it doesn’t break. The Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the instruction manual for our lives.

### **Gender Identity**

When speaking to your child about gender identity you may say, if Allah created you as a girl, you cannot be a boy and vice versa because Allah is all-knowing and does not make mistakes. We cannot go against what Allah wants for us because Allah knows what is best for us.

### **Homophobic Remarks**

It is important to advise your child not to engage in discussions with others regarding families with same-sex parents until they are old enough to understand all the complexities of this topic from a religious and social perspective.

# Grade 2

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- the importance of being able to say no to exploitative behaviors (e.g., improper touching), and describe how to seek help
- the basic stages of human development (e.g., infant, child, adolescent) and related body changes
- good hygiene habits for oral health (e.g., brushing your teeth, flossing, visiting the dentist regularly)

## PARENT TALK

### Video Games and Technology

At this age children tend to become interested in video/computer games or iPad Apps. Parents should be advised that these games usually have an online component that is easily accessible by children. Parents should make a concerted effort to teach their children about online stranger danger. In addition, ‘pop-ups’ are common in free downloaded games on the computer or iPad. Please ensure that you have an excellent firewall and that you do not download free games that allow advertisements to display on screen while your child is playing. These ads can often be inappropriate and at times pornographic.

Active parental supervision is critical for children interacting with media platforms. Much of the exposure our children have with sensitive material happens outside of the classroom. In today’s age, the television and internet are central in connecting people with ideas. Parents are encouraged to actively supervise what their children watch and monitor what they do on the internet. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. Some steps we can take to help achieve this goal are:

- i) Having the television in a highly visible area
- i) Opt for a desktop as opposed to a laptop
- i) Placing the desktop in a highly visible area

In addition, parents should work towards fostering an environment that promotes good values and decision making by creating opportunities to do good. This can include, but is not limited to, making trips to the mosque as a family, joining Muslim sports leagues, and volunteering within the community. See also [Tips from parents at Google \[http://goo.gl/kXdfBp\]](http://goo.gl/kXdfBp).

### **Prayer and Cleanliness**

Sabrah bin Ma'bad Al-Juhani (RadhiAllahu 'anhu) reported, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “*Teach a boy Salah (the prayer) when he attains the age of seven years, and punish him (if he does not offer it) at ten*”. [Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi]. Parents are encouraged to show their children the value of various religious obligations by having them present during acts of worship. By having our children present when we make wudu or perform salah we begin to show them the importance of these acts to our daily lives through modelling. By age 6, parents should begin teaching their children how to correctly wash themselves after using the washroom. A parent should talk to their children generally about growing up. Parents should explain that Allah wants children to begin learning to pray by the age of 7 so they are prepared for their lives as Muslims. Parents are advised to offer encouragement to their children when they participate and/or correctly perform an act of worship so that these acts are associated with happiness and reward in their hearts. By the age of 10 children should be consistent in their prayers and be lightly admonished if they are incomplete.

### **Modesty**

The saheeh Sunnah indicates that it is obligatory to separate children in their beds once they reach the age of 7. Abu Dawood (418) narrated – in a report which was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani – from ‘Amr ibn Shu’ayb from his father from his grandfather who said: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “*When your children reach the age of 7 then separate their beds*”. The scholars of Islam have outlined that if this is not possible, and they need to sleep altogether in one bed, there is nothing wrong with that so long as each one of them has her own cover or blanket. To reinforce this concept of modesty (haya) parents should avoid changing in front of their children and discuss the importance of keeping their bodies covered. Parents should advise children to never allow anyone to touch their private parts and to immediately tell their parents if someone does. The parent should highlight, encourage, and celebrate the differences between girls and boys and discourage each from acting like the opposite gender. Additionally, parents are encouraged to advise their children to avoid close personal contact (i.e. hugging and kissing) across genders.

### **Personal Space and Private Parts**

According to the Canadian Center for Child Protection parents should begin talking to their children about personal safety and what the difference is be-

tween ‘good touch’ and ‘bad touch’. Some child offenders will test a child’s personal safety awareness and whether there is a risk that the child will tell an adult. They often desensitize a child through boundary breaking behaviour, thereby normalizing inappropriate interactions. Offenders are less likely to victimize a child if they think the child will tell. Talk to children regularly about personal safety (see the [Seven Root Safety Strategies \[www.kidsintheknow.ca\]](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca)). Parents should advise children to never allow anyone to touch their private parts and to immediately tell their parents if someone does.

### **Same-Sex Families**

For those parents whose children have learned about same sex families you may have the following discussion with your children. Allah is the creator (al-Khaliq). Allah created men and women as complements of one another, each with their own special qualities, so that they can help one another live happily. Since Allah created us, he knows what is best for us. Allah has shared this guidance with us through the Qur’an and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ so we can be successful in this life and the next. Allah wants us to be upright and spread goodness through the world. When a man and woman get married and have children together, they create another life that can help spread the teachings of Allah. In this sense, we are not fully complete without our special companion.

You might notice that there are some families that have 2 moms or 2 dads. Although we should treat everyone with kindness, this type of relationship is displeasing to Allah. In Islam only a man can marry a woman and only a woman can marry a man—we are not allowed to marry people of the same gender. The gender we marry was chosen for us by Allah when he created us. Allah has created guidelines for us so we can make the right decisions, please Him, and enter Jannah. For example, when we buy a computer it comes with an instruction manual. It tells us what to do so our computer works smooth and what to avoid so it doesn’t break. The Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are the instruction manuals for our lives.

### **Gender Identity**

When speaking to your child about gender identity you may say, if Allah created you as a girl, you cannot be a boy and vice versa because Allah is all-knowing and does not make mistakes. We cannot go against what Allah wants for us because Allah knows what is best for us.

### **Homophobic Remarks**

It is important to advise your child not to engage in discussions with others regarding families with same-sex parents until they are old enough to understand all the complexities of this topic from a religious and social perspective.

# Grade 3

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- about healthy relationships with peers and family (e.g., accepting differences, listening, mutual respect, honesty, open communication)
- how to overcome unhealthy aspects of relationships with others (e.g., bullying, peer pressure, being left out)
- about factors and habits that can affect physical and emotional development (e.g., safe environment, caring adults, feeling like you belong, sleep, food, physical activity)
- how visible differences (e.g., skin, hair and eye colour, clothing, physical ability) and invisible differences (e.g., learning abilities, cultural values and beliefs, gender identity, different family types such as one-parent, two-parent, two-mom or two-dad, grandparents, caregivers) make each person unique
- ways of showing respect for differences in others

## PARENT TALK

### Social Media and Technology

At this age children begin becoming interested in social media. Parents should be aware that the minimum age for a child to be eligible to sign up for Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat Twitter and most other social networking apps is 13. Parents should exercise caution when allowing their underage children to use social media. Ensure that you know your child's password and monitor them if they are using these sites. It's important to keep the lines of communication with your kids as open as possible and work together to figure out what's appropriate for them, in terms of safety, privacy, reputation and time management. Talk with your kids about their favorite tools—with genuine interest, not fear or anger—because they will be able to approach you when they need help.

Active parental supervision is critical for children interacting with media platforms. Much of the exposure our children have with sensitive material happens

outside of the classroom. In today's age, the television and internet are central in connecting people with ideas. Parents are encouraged to actively supervise what their children watch and monitor what they do on the internet. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. See also [Tips from parents at Google \[http://goo.gl/kXdfBp\]](http://goo.gl/kXdfBp).

## **Same-Sex Families**

Homosexuality is considered to be a sin in all major monotheistic religions including Islam. This must be communicated to your child in a way that is age appropriate bearing in mind that the rights of homosexuals are protected by law just as our rights to freedom of religion are as well. For Grade 3 it can be discussed as follows:

Allah created men and women as complements of one another, each with their own special qualities, so that they could help one another live happily. Since Allah created us, he knows what is best for us. Allah has shared this guidance with us through the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ so we can be successful in this life and the next. Allah wants us to be upright and spread goodness through the world. When a man and woman get married and have children together, they create another life that can help spread the teachings of Allah. In this sense, we are not fully complete without our special companion.

You might notice that there are some families that have 2 moms or 2 dads. Although we should treat everyone with kindness, this type of relationship is displeasing to Allah. In Islam only a man can marry a woman and only a woman can marry a man—we are not allowed to marry people of the same gender. The gender we should marry was chosen for us by Allah when he created us. Allah has created guidelines for us so we can make the right decisions, please Him, and enter Jannah. For example, when we buy a computer it comes with an instruction manual. It tells us what to do so our computer works smooth and what to avoid so it doesn't break. The Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the instruction manual for our lives.

## **Gender Identity**

If you are born a boy, your gender identity is Male. If you are born a girl, your gender identity is Female. You cannot be a boy if you are born a girl and you cannot be a girl if you are born a boy. Allah does not make mistakes. We cannot go against what Allah wants for us because Allah knows what is best for us. When we do go against what Allah wants, our lives are going to be sad. In the Quran, Allah shares a story of a people who did not follow His guidance. These

people wanted to have relationships with their same gender. Allah sent Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) to warn these people that these relationships were not pleasing to Allah because he wanted the best for His creation. These people did not listen to Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) and did not want to follow Allah's guidance so they were punished for their disobedience.

### **Homophobic Remarks**

It is important to advise your child not to engage in discussions with others regarding families with same-sex parents until they are old enough to understand all the complexities of this topic from a religious and social perspective. Instead, if your child is prompted to speak about the issue by a friend or a teacher. A parent can advise their child to say, *"You have your beliefs and I have mine. I do not want to discuss what happens in your private life because it is none of my business"*. See also: [7 tips on talking to kids about homosexuality \[http://goo.gl/ZhfWYF\]](http://goo.gl/ZhfWYF).

# Grade 4

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- the physical changes that happen during puberty, and the emotional and social impact that changes can have on a developing child
- how personal hygiene needs may change during puberty (e.g., the increased importance of regular bathing)
- Identify risks associated with communications technology such as individuals asking for sexual pictures online.
- The various types of bullying and abuse.

## PARENT TALK

### Digital Addictions and Technology

By this grade most young people have their own devices such as iPods, iPads and/or cell phones. Parents must be cognisant about the growing trend of digital addictions. A study conducted in youth ages 14 – 21 published in PLoS1 in 2012 showed that electronic devices are addictive and that this addiction might cause the same brain changes that are seen in alcoholics and drug addicts. Parents must actively help their children manage how much time they are on their electronic devices. In addition, Active parental supervision is critical for children interacting with media platforms. Much of the exposure our children have with sensitive material happens outside of the classroom. In today's age, the television and internet are central in connecting people with ideas. Parents are encouraged to actively supervise what their children watch and monitor what they do on the internet. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. In regards to online safety a parent should read the following links and talk to their child: [QUICK FACTS FOR PARENTS - Learning about Online Safety, Including Risk of Sexting](http://goo.gl/TMNwCI) [<http://goo.gl/TMNwCI>] (PDF, 127 KB) and [Tips from parents at Google](http://goo.gl/kXdfBp) [<http://goo.gl/kXdfBp>].

## Gender Relationships

Parents should ensure that their children have positive friends and influences surrounding them. It is good practice to begin speaking with your children about segregation at this grade. Boys should play with boys and girls should play with girls. Parents are encouraged to model this for children by maintaining segregation in their social settings. This concept of segregation should extend into the world of social media and electronics; children should avoid texting or building online relationships with persons of the opposite sex.

## Puberty and Maturation

Parents are encouraged to begin speaking with their children about puberty. The age of puberty varies from child to child. If your child is not showing signs of puberty it is still advisable to introduce the topic as they may be noticing that others around them are beginning to change; it is important to note that the Ministry curriculum begins discussing these changes extensively at this grade level. Remind children that once they reach puberty they are responsible for fulfilling their religious obligations such as fasting, praying, and covering their awrah in front of strangers. Furthermore, it is important that parents speak to their children about cleanliness and ghusl. The following resource has some excellent tips: [Muslimah's Guide to Puberty: How to talk to your daughter about Adolescence \[http://goo.gl/MU5sIs\]](http://goo.gl/MU5sIs).

The following link can be used to discuss what happens in detail for boys and girl during puberty: [Puberty 101 for Parents \[http://goo.gl/f58c6d\]](http://goo.gl/f58c6d). In addition, a parent may wish to purchase 'Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Parenting: Part 1 (Drs. Ekram & Mohamed Rida Beshir). Amana Publication, 2005. Pages 99 – 132' and 'The Miracle of Life, a guide on Islamic family life and sexual health education for young people. (Fatima M. D'Oyen) The Islamic Foundation, 2000'. Both are excellent resources to discuss with your child and are available online.

# Grade 5

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- to identify parts of the reproductive system, and how the body changes during puberty
- how personal hygiene needs may change during puberty (e.g., the increased importance of regular bathing)
- about the process of menstruation and sperm production
- to describe emotional and interpersonal stresses related to puberty
- to identify strategies to manage stress and enhance their emotional well-being and mental health
- Strategies to use in a situations of harassment because of sex, gender identity, race, religion, gender expression, body shape, weight, or ability.
- Things students cannot control such as gender identity and sexual orientation.
- How to defend against homophobic remarks
- Changes in girl boy relationships, ‘liking someone in a special way’

## PARENT TALK

### **Pornography and Technology**

At this age children begin having questions about sexuality, puberty and relationships. Often times they find it easier to search for answers online to save themselves the embarrassment of asking others. Therefore, they begin accessing explicit content online. If kids are finding good and accurate information about sexual health or healthy relationships that’s a positive thing, but if the bulk of their exposure is to pornography, then they may be receiving distorted – or even violent and deviant – messages about relationships and sexual behaviour.

A Media Smarts survey of 5,436 students nationwide in 2014 of students in grades 4-11 revealed a disturbing numbers of boys searching out pornography online. The survey, which provided anonymity for the students, showed 1 in

10 Grade 7 boys, one in three eighth graders, half those in Grade 9 and close to two-thirds of grade 10 and 11 boys clicked regularly onto online porn. Given the high probability that youth are going to come across or seek out online pornography at one point or another, not to mention the many messages they receive about sex through other media, it is important that parents take an active role in their kids' Internet use and start talking to them about healthy relationships and sexuality at early ages to help them contextualize and make decisions about what they're seeing online. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. For additional resources related to pornography please see [Resources for Parents - Pornography \[http://goo.gl/DEX3oT\]](http://goo.gl/DEX3oT) and [Tips from parents at Google \[http://goo.gl/kXdfBp\]](http://goo.gl/kXdfBp). Please also watch: [Porn Will Violate Your Soul | illustrated | Nouman Ali Khan \[https://youtu.be/nE\\_9ufkIXms\]](https://youtu.be/nE_9ufkIXms) (Youtube, 11:19)

## **Puberty**

Parents are encouraged to begin speaking with their children about puberty. The age of puberty varies from child to child. If your child is not showing signs of puberty it is still advisable to introduce the topic as they may be noticing that others around them are beginning to change; it is important to note that the Ministry curriculum begins discussing these changes extensively beginning in Grade 4. Remind children that once they reach puberty they are responsible for fulfilling their religious obligations such as fasting, praying, and covering their awrah in front of strangers. Furthermore, it is important that parents speak to their children about cleanliness and ghusl. The following resource has some excellent tips: [Muslimah's Guide to Puberty: How to talk to your daughter about Adolescence \[http://goo.gl/MU5sIs\]](http://goo.gl/MU5sIs).

The following link can be used to discuss what happens in detail for boys and girl during puberty: [Puberty 101 for Parents \[http://goo.gl/f58c6d\]](http://goo.gl/f58c6d). In addition, a parent may wish to purchase 'Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Parenting: Part 1 (Drs. Ekram & Mohamed Rida Beshir). Amana Publication, 2005. Pages 99 – 132' and 'The Miracle of Life, a guide on Islamic family life and sexual health education for young people. (Fatima M. D'Oyen) The Islamic Foundation, 2000'. Both are excellent resources to discuss with your child and are available online.

## **Sexual Orientation**

In terms of Homosexuality, it is considered to be a sin in all major monotheistic religions including Islam. For Grade 5 it can be discussed as follows: Allah created men and women as complements of one another, each with their own special qualities, so that they could help one another live happily. Since Allah

created us, he knows what is best for us. Allah has shared this guidance with us through the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ so we can be successful in this life and the next. Allah wants us to be upright and spread goodness through the world. When a man and woman get married and have children together, they create another life that can help spread the teachings of Allah. In this sense, we are not fully complete without our special companion. You may have heard the term 'sexual orientation'. Sexual orientation means which gender you feel like marrying. The gender we should marry was chosen for us by Allah when he created us. In Islam, only men and women can get married. Men and men cannot get married and women and women cannot get married. Allah has created guidelines for us so we can make the right decisions, please Him, and enter Jannah. For example, when we buy a computer it comes with an instruction manual. It tells us what to do so our computer works smooth and what to avoid so it doesn't break. The Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the instruction manual for our lives. We cannot go against what Allah wants for us because Allah knows what is best for us. When we do go against what Allah wants, our lives are going to be sad. In the Quran, Allah shares a story of a people who did not follow His guidance. These people wanted to have relationships with their same gender. Allah sent Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) to warn these people that these relationships were not pleasing to Allah because he wanted the best for His creation. These people did not listen to Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) and did not want to follow Allah's guidance so they were punished for their disobedience with a shower of stones.

### **Homophobic Remarks**

It is important to advise your child not to engage in discussions with others regarding families with same-sex parents until they are old enough to understand all the complexities of this topic from a religious and social perspective. Instead if prompted to speak about the issue by a friend or a teacher. A parent can advise their child to say, *"You have your beliefs and I have mine. I do not want to discuss what happens in other family's private life because it is none of my business. I don't discuss what my parents do in their private life so please don't discuss what your parents do in their private life with me"*. More advice for parents can be viewed at: [7 tips on talking to kids about homosexuality \[http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj\]](http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj).

# Grade 6

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- about factors that may affect the development of a person’s self-concept or personal identity (e.g., body image, stereotypes, self-awareness, cultural and gender identity)
- the physical, social and emotional changes that may occur in adolescence after the initial onset of puberty (e.g., body growth, skin changes, increasing influence of peers, increased intensity of feelings) and how this impacts healthy relationships
- to make decisions in their personal relationships that demonstrate respect for themselves and others, including the importance of consent and clear communication
- how stereotypes, such as homophobia and assumptions about gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture and abilities, can affect a how a person feels about themselves, their feelings of belonging and relationships with others
- appropriate ways to respond to and change assumptions and stereotypes
- Male/female relationships.
- Wet Dreams as normal changes during puberty
- Vaginal Lubrication as normal changes during puberty
- Masturbation as normal

## PARENT TALK

### **Pornography and Technology**

At this age children begin having questions about sexuality, puberty and relationships. Often times they find it easier to search for answers online to save themselves the embarrassment of asking others. Therefore, they begin accessing explicit content online. If kids are finding good and accurate information about sexual health or healthy relationships that’s a positive thing, but if the bulk of

their exposure is to pornography, then they may be receiving distorted – or even violent and deviant – messages about relationships and sexual behaviour.

A Media Smarts survey of 5,436 students nationwide in 2014 of students in grades 4-11 revealed a disturbing numbers of boys searching out pornography online. The survey, which provided anonymity for the students, showed 1 in 10 Grade 7 boys, one in three eighth graders, half those in Grade 9 and close to two-thirds of grade 10 and 11 boys clicked regularly onto online porn. Given the high probability that youth are going to come across or seek out online pornography at one point or another, not to mention the many messages they receive about sex through other media, it is important that parents take an active role in their kids' Internet use and start talking to them about healthy relationships and sexuality at early ages to help them contextualize and make decisions about what they're seeing online. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. For additional resources related to pornography please see [Resources for Parents - Pornography \[http://goo.gl/DEX3oT\]](http://goo.gl/DEX3oT) and [Tips from parents at Google \[http://goo.gl/kXdfBp\]](http://goo.gl/kXdfBp). Please also watch: [Porn Will Violate Your Soul | illustrated | Nouman Ali Khan \[https://youtu.be/nE\\_9ufkIXms\]](https://youtu.be/nE_9ufkIXms) (Youtube, 11:19)

## **Dating and Liking the Opposite Sex**

In our society, everything is permeated by sex: on TV, billboards, on the streets, buses, in movies, etc. A Muslim youth facing this is in a tough position: succumb to the temptations or try very hard not to. Parents will have to speak to their children about dating. The following article provides some excellent insight on how to do so: [Have You Spoken to Your Kids About Dating Yet? \[http://goo.gl/Zk5Gnh\]](http://goo.gl/Zk5Gnh).

As an Ummah we must begin rethinking the notion that children need to grow up, finish school, obtain multiple degrees, have an excellent job and then get married. By that point, our youth have probably succumbed to a number of temptations given our pornographic society. Parents should consider getting their children married earlier which will ease this pressure. Youth will not have to stop their studies to do this. Remember, as a parent you will also be partly responsible if your son or daughter wanted to marry, you stopped them and they ended up having sex outside of marriage. You should also remember when undertaking this step not to force your son or daughter to marry someone they do not like.

## **Abstinence and Consent**

At this grade you child may be experiencing considerable peer pressure at school to engage in behaviour that may be negative. From a religious point of view, it

is important that you begin talking to your child about abstaining from dating relationships and intercourse. It is not enough just to tell your child not to engage in impermissible behaviour, you must teach them how to say no. Think up various scenarios that they may be presented with and role play how they would say 'no'. This concept of choosing 'no' is part of 'consent'. Consent for a Muslim child should be about gaining the confidence to assert their own bodily autonomy and say NO to any sexual advances so that their bodies are not exploited or harmed by someone else.

## **Masturbation**

Parents are encouraged to begin speaking to their children about masturbation. Parents should bear in mind that these urges do exist and should approach the situation in a manner that builds parental trust. This requires parents to engage in an open dialogue with their children and avoid shaming their children. Masturbation is not encouraged in Islam and should therefore be discouraged. In the Qur'an Allah says, "*The believers are... those who protect their sexual organs except from their spouses... whosoever seeks more beyond that [in sexual gratification], then they are the transgressors.*" (23:5-6). Parents should encourage their children to perform voluntary fasts if they feel their sexual urges are strong. This will help curb their sexual appetite. Here it should be noted that there are differing religious opinions on the subject of Masturbation. Some scholars believe that if it keeps a person from committing sexual acts before marriage it may be permissible in moderation. Other Ulama, believe firmly that it is not permissible. It is up to each parent to do their research and speak to an imam if necessary to come to a family conclusion regarding this topic.

Wet dreams and vaginal discharge are normal occurrences and are nothing to be ashamed of according to a number of authentic Hadith. For an excellent discussion of these topics please refer to: [Rules Regarding Ghusl and Wet Dreams for Men and Women \[http://goo.gl/62vTBE\]](http://goo.gl/62vTBE) and [Female Wet Dreams: Islamic Perspectives & Regulations \[http://goo.gl/eV5cpx\]](http://goo.gl/eV5cpx).

## **Sexual Orientation**

In terms of Homosexuality, it is considered to be a sin in all major monotheistic religions including Islam. This must be communicated to your child without hate and in a way that is age appropriate bearing in mind that the rights of homosexuals are protected by law just as our rights to freedom of religion are as well. For Grade 6 it can be discussed as follows:

You may have heard the term 'sexual orientation'. Sexual orientation means which gender you feel like marrying. You might notice that there are some men who engage in sexual relationships with men they are called 'gay'. Women who

engage in these relationships with other women are called ‘lesbians’. This is not permissible in our religion. Although we should treat everyone with kindness, this type of relationship is displeasing to Allah. In Islam only a man can marry a woman and only a woman can marry a man—we are not allowed to marry people of the same gender. The gender we should marry was chosen for us by Allah when he created us. Allah has created guidelines for us so we can make the right decisions, please Him, and enter Jannah. The Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the instruction manual for our lives.

## **Gender Identity**

If you are born a boy, your gender identity is Male. If you are born a girl, your gender identity is Female. You cannot be a boy if you are born a girl and you cannot be a girl if you are born a boy. Allah does not make mistakes. We cannot go against what Allah wants for us because Allah knows what is best for us. When we go against what Allah wants, our lives are going to be sad. In the Quran, Allah shares a story of a people who did not follow His guidance. These people wanted to have relationships with their same gender. Allah sent Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) to warn these people that these relationships were not pleasing to Allah because he wanted the best for His creation. These people did not listen to Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) and did not want to follow Allah’s guidance so they were punished for their disobedience with a shower of stones.

## **Homophobia**

It is important to advise your child not to engage in discussions with others regarding families with same-sex parents until they are old enough to understand all the complexities of this topic from a religious and social perspective. Instead if prompted to speak about the issue by a friend or a teacher. A parent can advise their child to say, “*You have your beliefs and I have mine. I do not want to discuss what happens in other family’s private life because it is none of my business. I don’t discuss what my parents do in their private life so please don’t discuss what your parents do in their private life with me*”. More advice for parents can be viewed at: [7 tips on talking to kids about homosexuality \[http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj\]](http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj).

# Grade 7

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- The importance of having a shared understanding with a partner about: delaying sexual activity until older, reasons for not becoming sexually active, the concept of consent and how to communicate consent, and the need to clearly communicate and understand decisions about sexual activity in a healthy relationship regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation.
- how to identify common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and describe their symptoms
- how to prevent STIs (including HIV) and unintended pregnancy, including delaying first intercourse and other sexual activities such as anal and oral sex until they are older, and using condoms consistently if and when they become sexually active
- physical, emotional, social and psychological factors to consider when making sexual health decisions (e.g., STIs, pregnancy, side effects of contraception, social labelling, cultural teachings, gender identity, sexual orientation, and impact on other relationships)
- how relationships with others and sexual health may be affected by physical and emotional changes in puberty and adolescence
- How to handle bullying such as homophobia.

## PARENT TALK

### **Pornography and Technology**

At this age children begin having questions about sexuality, puberty and relationships. Often times they find it easier to search for answers online to save themselves the embarrassment of asking others. Therefore, they begin accessing explicit content online. If kids are finding good and accurate information about sexual health or healthy relationships that is a positive thing, but if the bulk of their exposure is to pornography, then they may be receiving distorted – or even violent and deviant – messages about relationships and sexual behaviour.

A Media Smarts survey of 5,436 students nationwide in 2014 of students in grades 4-11 revealed a disturbing numbers of boys searching out pornography online. The survey, which provided anonymity for the students, showed 1 in 10 Grade 7 boys, one in three eighth graders, half those in Grade 9 and close to two-thirds of grade 10 and 11 boys clicked regularly onto online porn. Given the high probability that youth are going to come across or seek out online pornography at one point or another, not to mention the many messages they receive about sex through other media, it is important that parents take an active role in their kids' Internet use and start talking to them about healthy relationships and sexuality at early ages to help them contextualize and make decisions about what they're seeing online. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. For additional resources related to pornography please see [Resources for Parents - Pornography \[http://goo.gl/DEX3oT\]](http://goo.gl/DEX3oT) and [Tips from parents at Google \[http://goo.gl/kXdfBp\]](http://goo.gl/kXdfBp). Please also watch: [Porn Will Violate Your Soul | illustrated | Nouman Ali Khan \[https://youtu.be/nE\\_9ufkIXms\]](https://youtu.be/nE_9ufkIXms) (Youtube, 11:19)

## Dating and Liking the Opposite Sex

In our Society today everything is permeated by sex: on TV, billboards, on the streets, buses, in movies, etc. A Muslim youth facing this is in a tough position: succumb to the temptations or try very hard not to. Parents will have to speak to their children about dating. The following article provides some excellent insight on how to do so: [Have You Spoken to Your Kids About Dating Yet? \[http://goo.gl/Zk5Gnh\]](http://goo.gl/Zk5Gnh).

As an Ummah, we must begin rethinking the notion that children need to grow up, finish school, obtain multiple degrees, have an excellent job and then get married. By that point, our youth have probably succumbed to a number of temptations given our pornographic society. Parents should consider getting their children married earlier which will ease this pressure. Youth will not have to stop their studies to do this. Remember, as a parent you will also be partly responsible if your son or daughter wanted to marry, you stopped them and they ended up having sex outside of marriage. You should also remember when undertaking this step not to force your son or daughter to marry someone they do not like.

## Sex and Reproduction

A parent may discuss sex and the process of reproduction as follows: Allah created men and women as complements of each other, to help each other. Allah says in the Quran: *“It is He who has created you from dust then from a sperm-drop, then from a leech-like clot; then does he get you out (into the light) as a child: then lets you*

*(grow and) reach your age of full strength; then lets you become old, - though of you there are some who die before; - and lets you reach a Term appointed; in order that ye may learn wisdom.” [40:67]. Sex is a beautiful, pleasurable, and permissible act only for those who are married. For a comprehensive discussion please see: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Parenting: Part 1 (Drs. Ekram & Mohamed Rida Beshir). Amana Publication, 2005. Pages 99 – 132.*

## **Abstinence and Consent**

At this grade your child may be experiencing considerable peer pressure at school to engage in behaviour that may be negative. From a religious point of view it is important that you begin talking to your child about abstaining from dating relationships and intercourse. It is not enough just to tell your child not to engage in impermissible behaviour, you must teach them how to say no. Think up various scenarios that they may be presented with and role play how they would say 'no'. This concept of choosing 'no' is part of 'consent'. Consent for a Muslim child should be about gaining the confidence to assert their own bodily autonomy and say NO so that it is not exploited or harmed by someone else.

## **Sexual Orientation**

In terms of Homosexuality, it is considered to be a sin in all major monotheistic religions including Islam. The Prophet ﷺ told us that homosexuals are displeasing to Allah as are the men who imitate or dress up like women. This must be communicated to your child in a way that is age appropriate bearing in mind that the rights of homosexuals are protected by law just as our rights to freedom of religion are as well. For Grade 7 and 8 it can be discussed as follows:

Each gender has its own special qualities. If you are born a boy your gender identity is Male. If you are born a girl, your gender identity is Female. You cannot be a boy if you are born a girl and you cannot be a girl if you are born a boy because Allah created you perfectly just the way you are. Each gender has its own special qualities. You might notice that there are some families that have 2 moms (lesbians) and 2 dads (gay). They are homosexuals. Homosexuality is not permissible in Islam.

You may also have heard the term 'sexual orientation'. Sexual orientation means which gender you feel like marrying. The gender we should marry was chosen for us by Allah when he created us. We should not go against what Allah wants for us because Allah knows what's best for us. Although we should treat everyone with kindness, this type of relationship is displeasing to Allah. In Islam only a man can marry a woman and only a woman can marry a man—we are not allowed to marry people of the same gender. When people engage in same-sex relationships they go against the natural disposition (fitrah) of human beings

and are unable to reproduce together. Sexual activity such as anal sex is not allowed for Muslims because it is an act committed by homosexuals and leads to sickness and is one of the deadly sins in Islam. Having sex before marriage and homosexual relationships may lead to STDs. In the Quran, Allah shares a story of a people who did not follow His guidance. These people wanted to have relationships with their same gender. Allah sent Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) to warn these people that these relationships were not pleasing to Allah because he wanted the best for His creation. These people did not listen to Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) and did not want to follow Allah's guidance so they were punished for their disobedience with a shower of stones.

## **Homophobia**

It is important to advise your child not to engage in discussions with others regarding families with same-sex parents until they are old enough to understand all the complexities of this topic from a religious and social perspective. Instead if prompted to speak about the issue by a friend or a teacher, a parent can advise their child to say, *“You have your beliefs and I have mine. I do not want to discuss what happens in other family's private life because it is none of my business. I don't discuss what my parents do in their private life so please don't discuss what your parents do in their private life with me”*. More advice for parents can be viewed at: [7 tips on talking to kids about homosexuality \[http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj\]](http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj).

# Grade 8

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM, SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS AND PROMPTS:

Students will learn:

- Factors that could affect someone’s ability to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity.
- sources of support regarding sexual health (e.g., parents, health professionals, in-school resources, local community groups, religious leaders, an elder)
- Gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, and to identify factors that can help all young people to develop positive self-concepts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender identity (e.g., male, female, two-spirited, transgender, transsexual, intersex), gender expression, and sexual orientation (e.g., heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual), and identify factors that can help individuals of all identities and orientations develop a positive self-concept.

## PARENT TALK

### Technology

At this age children begin having questions about sexuality, puberty and relationships. Often times they find it easier to search for answers online to save themselves the embarrassment of asking others. Therefore, they begin accessing explicit content online. If kids are finding good and accurate information about sexual health or healthy relationships that’s a positive thing, but if the bulk of their exposure is to pornography, then they may be receiving distorted – or even violent and deviant – messages about relationships and sexual behaviour.

### Pornography

A Media Smarts survey of 5,436 students nationwide in 2014 of students in grades 4-11 revealed a disturbing numbers of boys searching out pornography online. The survey, which provided anonymity for the students, showed 1 in 10 Grade 7 boys, one in three eighth graders, half those in Grade 9 and close to

two-thirds of grade 10 and 11 boys clicked regularly onto online porn. Given the high probability that youth are going to come across or seek out online pornography at one point or another, not to mention the many messages they receive about sex through other media, it is important that parents take an active role in their kids' Internet use and start talking to them about healthy relationships and sexuality at early ages to help them contextualize and make decisions about what they're seeing online. This gives parents greater control in filtering unwanted content. Children are encouraged to avoid shows, cartoons, movies, and advertisements that allude, even subtly, to mixed gender relationships. For additional resources related to pornography please see [Resources for Parents - Pornography \[http://goo.gl/DEX3oT\]](http://goo.gl/DEX3oT). Please also watch: [Porn Will Violate Your Soul | illustrated | Nouman Ali Khan \[https://youtu.be/nE\\_9ufkIXms\]](https://youtu.be/nE_9ufkIXms) (Youtube, 11:19)

## **Sexting**

Sexting is sending sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones. It can also include sending naked photos or sexual photos to other via the phone or internet. Studies show that sexting has become a common practice among teens and young people. Even if your child is not one to send these type of images or texts to peers, they may receive them. It is important that you talk to your child and ensure that they understand that this is not something that is permissible in Islam. This is also another very important reason for you to monitor your child's cell phone and internet use. Parents must understand that other than the religious and moral implications of this act, there can be very real legal ramifications as well. Sexting that involves minors sending or receiving or possessing an explicit photograph of themselves to their peers has led to a legal gray area in countries that have strict anti-child pornography laws, such as the United States and Canada. Some teenagers who have texted and received photographs of themselves, or of their friends or partners, have been charged with distribution of child pornography, while those who have received the images have been charged with possession of child pornography. Please see: [QUICK FACTS FOR PARENTS - Learning about Online Safety, Including Risk of Sexting \[https://goo.gl/Hc6mFL\]](https://goo.gl/Hc6mFL) (PDF, 127 KB)

## **Dating and Liking the Opposite Sex**

In our Society today everything is permeated by sex: on TV, billboards, on the streets, buses, in movies, etc. A Muslim youth facing this is in a tough position: succumb to the temptations or try very hard not to. Parents will have to speak to their children about dating. The following article provides some excellent insight on how to do so: [Have You Spoken to Your Kids About Dating Yet? \[http://goo.gl/Zk5Gnh\]](http://goo.gl/Zk5Gnh).

As an Ummah, we must begin rethinking the notion that children need to grow up, finish school, obtain multiple degrees, have an excellent job and then get married. By that point, our youth have probably succumbed to a number of temptations given our pornographic society. Parents should consider getting their children married earlier which will ease this pressure. Youth will not have to stop their studies to do this. Remember, as a parent you will also be partly responsible if your son or daughter wanted to marry, you stopped them and they ended up having sex outside of marriage. You should also remember when undertaking this step not to force your son or daughter to marry someone they do not like.

## **Sex and Reproduction**

A parent may discuss sex and the process of reproduction as follows: Allah created men and women as complements of each other, to help each other. Allah says in the Quran: *“It is He who has created you from dust then from a sperm-drop, then from a leech-like clot; then does he get you out (into the light) as a child: then lets you (grow and) reach your age of full strength; then lets you become old, - though of you there are some who die before; - and lets you reach a Term appointed; in order that ye may learn wisdom.”* [40:67]. Sex is a beautiful, pleasurable, and permissible act only for those who are married. For a comprehensive discussion please see: *Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Parenting: Part 1* (Drs. Ekram & Mohamed Rida Beshir). Amana Publication, 2005. Pages 99 – 132.

## **Abstinence and Consent**

At this grade you child may be experiencing considerable peer pressure at school to engage in behaviour that may be negative. From a religious point of view it is important that you begin talking to your child about abstaining from dating relationships and intercourse. It is not enough just to tell your child not to engage in impermissible behaviour, you must teach them how to say no. Think up various scenarios that they may be presented with and role play how they would say ‘no’. This concept of choosing ‘no’ is part of ‘consent’. Consent for a Muslim child should be about gaining the confidence to assert their own bodily autonomy and say NO so that it is not exploited or harmed by someone else.

## **Sexual Orientation**

In terms of Homosexuality, it is considered to be a sin in all major monotheistic religions including Islam. The Prophet ﷺ told us that homosexuals are cursed by Allah as are the men who imitate or dress up like women. This must be communicated to your child in a way that is age appropriate bearing in mind that the rights of homosexuals are protected by law just as our rights to freedom of religion are as well. For Grade 7 and 8 it can be discussed as follows:

Each gender has its own special qualities. If you are born a boy your gender identity is Male. If you are born a girl, your gender identity is Female. You cannot be a boy if you are born a girl and you cannot be a girl if you are born a boy because Allah created you perfectly just the way you are. Each gender has its own special qualities. You may also have heard the term ‘sexual orientation’. Sexual orientation means which gender you feel like marrying. The gender we should marry was chosen for us by Allah when he created us. We should not go against what Allah wants for us because Allah knows what’s best for us. Although we should treat everyone with kindness, this type of relationship is displeasing to Allah. In Islam only a man can marry a woman and only a woman can marry a man—we are not allowed to marry people of the same gender. When people engage in same-sex relationships they go against the natural disposition (fitrah) of human beings and are unable to reproduce.

### **Intersex and Transgender**

“Intersex” is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which Allah created a person born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types—for example, a girl may be born without a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that it has formed more like labia. Or a person may be born with the chromosomes of both males and females. Essentially, People who have intersex conditions have anatomy that is not considered typically male or female. Being intersex is a medical condition. Islam accepts intersex individuals because Allah created them anatomically that way and there is no sin on them for being this way.

On the other hand, people who identify as transgender or transsexual are people who are born with typical male or female anatomies but ‘feel’ as though they’ve been born into the “wrong body.” For example, a person who identifies as transgender or transsexual will have typical female anatomy but ‘feel’ like a male and sometimes seek to become male by taking hormones or electing to have sex reassignment surgeries. Being transgender is not permissible in Islam because choosing to imitate the opposite sex in movements and speech is not permissible in Islam according to saheeh hadeeths.

Parents, here there is a very important distinction to be discussed with youth. Often in the West, we hear that homosexuals or members of the ‘Trans’ community are ‘born’ that way. Youth should understand that only intersex people are truly ‘born’ anatomically that way and for them there is no sin in Islam to be Intersex and there are clear rules and regulations to help them choose their

correct sex. Islam accepts them. However, all other members of the LGBTQ community make a choice to ‘feel’ that way despite the fact that Allah did not create them that way. This is why it is not permissible. If you have any questions regarding this topic, the best approach would be to talk to a religious scholar as the Islamic rules surrounding intersex individuals are complex.

### **Anal Sex**

Sexual activity such as anal sex is not allowed for Muslims even after marriage, it can lead to sicknesses such as higher incidences of STDs and is also displeasing to Allah. In the Quran, Allah shares a story of a people who did not follow His guidance. These people wanted to have relationships with their same gender and were also engaging in anal sex. Allah sent Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) to warn these people that these relationships were not pleasing to Allah because he wanted the best for His creation. These people did not listen to Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) and did not want to follow Allah’s guidance so they were punished for their disobedience with a shower of stones.

### **Homophobia**

It is important to advise your child not to engage in discussions with others regarding families with same-sex parents until they are old enough to understand all the complexities of this topic from a religious and social perspective. Instead if prompted to speak about the issue by a friend or a teacher, a parent can advise their child to say, “*You have your beliefs and I have mine. I do not want to discuss what happens in other family’s private life because it is none of my business. I don’t discuss what my parents do in their private life so please don’t discuss what your parents do in their private life with me*”. More advice for parents can be viewed at: [7 tips on talking to kids about homosexuality \[http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj\]](http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj).

# Resources

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## RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

1. <http://www.naseeha.org/>, The Muslim Kids Help Phone 1-866-Naseeha
2. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Parenting: Part 1 (Drs. Ekram & Mohamed Rida Beshir). Amana Publication, 2005. Pages 99 – 132
3. I Love Islam Textbook Levels 1 – 5 (Aimen Ansari, Nabil Sadoun, Ed.D and Majida Yousef). Islamic Services Foundation, 2005. Various pages.
4. Learning Islam Textbook Levels 1 – 3, corresponding to grade 6 – 8 curriculum (Nabil Sadoun, Ed.D and Majida Salem) Islamic Services Foundation, 2007. Various pages.
5. Sex Education: The Muslim Perspective (Ghulam Sarwar). The Muslim Education Trust, 1996. Whole book.
6. [Puberty 101 for Parents \[http://goo.gl/f58c6d\]](http://goo.gl/f58c6d)
7. [7 tips on talking to kids about homosexuality \[http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj\]](http://goo.gl/Wd12Pj)
8. [“I Vowed to Never Put My Kids in Islamic Schools” | Farrah Marfatia \[https://youtu.be/bvDUXrK5I\]](https://youtu.be/bvDUXrK5I) (Youtube, 13:04)
9. [Sex Ed: An Islamic Perspective | Farrah Marfatia \[https://youtu.be/437drjZwQaw\]](https://youtu.be/437drjZwQaw) (Youtube, 19:10)
10. [Gender Interactions... Are We Too Strict? \(+Video\) \[http://goo.gl/YDFFvs\]](http://goo.gl/YDFFvs)

## RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

1. <http://www.naseeha.org/>, The Muslim Kids Help Phone 1-866-Naseeha
2. The Miracle of Life, a guide on Islamic family life and sexual health education for young people. (Fatima M. D'Oyen) The Islamic Foundation, 2000. Whole book.
3. A Muslim Boys Guide to Life's Big Changes (Sami Khan). Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, 2007. Whole book for kids (its ok but not very comprehensive)

4. A Muslim Girls Guide to Life's Big Changes (Rehana Khan). Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, 2007. Whole book for kids (its ok but not very comprehensive)
5. 2. What you should avoid during Menstruation (Menses, Periods) | Islamic Rulings | Shawana A. Aziz [https://youtu.be/mLcmBcRJWdE] (Youtube, 12:36)
6. 3. Can I cut Nails, remove Hair & read Quran during Menstruation (Period, Menses) | Shawana A. Aziz [https://youtu.be/aagS48KG6os] (Youtube, 7:17)
7. 4. Signs your Menstruation (Period) is Over | Spotting? Yellow / Brown Discharge? | Shawana A. Aziz [https://youtu.be/XJQGbt-kTgQ] (Youtube, 4:04)
8. How to take Ghusl : Ritual bath in Islam | Shawana A. Aziz [https://youtu.be/EI]WCVFxAI] (Youtube, 5:44)
9. Must Know Q&A on Ghusl | Missed Spot? | touching Private parts? | enough for Salaat? Shawana A. Aziz [https://youtu.be/VyTWAezC5Vw] (Youtube, 5:11)
10. Q&A on Ghusl (Bath) after Menstruation (Periods) | Clothes Impure? Stains? Wash Feminine Pads? more! [https://youtu.be/Gw-Pa0-HUIE] (Youtube, 5:29)
11. Feminine Q&A Ghusl | Musk? | Hair & Shampoo? | I'm shy... the Sneaky Ghusl | Shawana A. Aziz [https://youtu.be/1-MHPmAJvYk] (Youtube, 4:37)
12. Porn Will Violate Your Soul | illustrated | Nouman Ali Khan [https://youtu.be/nE\_9ufkIXms] (Youtube, 11:19)

## RESOURCES FROM MINISTRIES IN ONTARIO

(Has not been updated to reflect new curriculum yet. This provides an idea of what is being taught currently in public schools based on old 1998 curriculum).

1. The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1 – 8. Health and Physical Education. Revised 2015 [http://goo.gl/6qOHTJ]
2. Changes in me: A resource on puberty and adolescent development Grade 4 – 6 Second Edition Peel Public Health Ontario [https://goo.gl/spvUPF]
3. Talk to me: A comprehensive sexuality education resource intermediate edition Grades 7 – 8 Peel Public Health Ontario [https://goo.gl/dOFdgd]
4. Ministry of Education. Policy and Procedure Manual for Private Schools. September 2013. Page 7 [http://goo.gl/E1KxpZ] (PDF, 1.8 MB).

# Appendix 1:

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## Sample “Opt Out” letter parents can use to ask school Principals/teachers about specific lessons related to the Sex-ed portion of the curriculum

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, (Address to Teacher)

My Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for all that you do for our children each day.

With regards to the revised Health and Physical Education curriculum, I would like to be notified when specific segments regarding, “Human Development and Sexual Health” will be taught to my child(ren).

This would allow me to request that my child(ren) be withdrawn from those specific lessons as we would like to engage in these conversations at home, as a family.

Once again, we appreciate all that you do to make our school an accommodating space inclusive of all children and families.

We look forward to working together to continue making our school the best it can be.

With thanks,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent’s name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

# Acknowledgements

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All praise belongs to Allah the most Gracious, Most Merciful, Who, Alone, brings forgiveness and light and new life to those who call upon Him; and to Him is the ultimate acknowledgement of this book.

All praise belongs to Allah for His masterful plan of bringing me together with my special group of reviewers and all those whom I have consulted informally. I would especially like to thank an unnamed reviewer who did not want to be listed as a reviewer because he felt he had no place as a college drop-out. It is he who gave me some of the most constructive advice.

My wonderful husband deserves a paragraph of his own. He has quietly, happily and whole-heartedly taken care of me and 'mothered' my children so that I could complete this very important project.

Together I hope that in creating this document we have added to the growing body of work by Muslims, for Muslims - Insha-Allah.

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# About the Author

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Farah Marfatia is the Principal of Maingate Islamic Academy, an elementary and junior school in Mississauga, Ontario.

Farah received her Honors Bachelor of Science from the University of Toronto, a certification in Regulatory and Quality Assurance and in teaching English as a Second Language. She is currently completing her Master's in Education.

In her free time, Farah enjoys working with the Muslim youth and for the community. To this end, she has had the pleasure of partnering with a number of Muslim organizations on community projects.

This guide was written by Farrah Marfatia, Principal of Main-gate Islamic Academy, and reviewed by a number of religious and academic experts to help parents talk to their children about sensitive issues in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum released by the Ontario Ministry of Education in February 2015 (effective September 2015). This guide is by no means a discussion of what is age-appropriate from an Islamic point of view, rather it is a response to what is going to be discussed across public schools from an Islamic perspective.

This guide includes sections on how to communicate with children, religious accommodations in Canadian public schools, grade by grade synopsis of the sensitive portions of the Ministry Curriculum, corresponding guidance from an Islamic perspective, and valuable resources for parents.



The guide has tried to stay true to authentic Hadith and passages from the Quran, Allah knows best. If there are any questions or comments regarding this document please contact Farrah Marfatia at [farrah.marfatia@live.ca](mailto:farrah.marfatia@live.ca).