

Masturbation

Learning together about Masturbation

Welcome to the unit called **Masturbation**. This unit is part of our programme of learning called Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education. When we do our RSHP education we focus on the needs of each and every learner in the classroom. We want to develop their communication, cognitive, physical and self-help and independence skills.

It is a normal part of a child's development that they find it soothing or comforting to touch their genitals. When children are young we usually try to divert them from this behaviour if it is done in sight of others, or in public places. For typically developing children there will be opportunities to pick up messages about this behaviour directly or indirectly from adults or from peers. As children grow, when they reach puberty, it is also normal for them to continue to find touching their genitals to be pleasurable, and so we might begin to think of this behaviour as masturbation.

For children and young people with complex additional support needs the messages about what is acceptable or not when it comes to touching one's genitals are not so easily understood. While this might be a difficult or embarrassing topic for adults to talk about, or to support the young person to learn about, it is an important part of helping protect children and young people.

The learning activities in the unit called **Masturbation** suggest ways that adults can divert children and young people from soothing behaviours that include touching their genitals. Then, when young people are older and they masturbate for pleasure, the activities will help them learn where and when it is okay to do so. We will help them learn that the only place they should do this is in their own bedroom, in private. This learning will help keep them safe from abuse and also from any misunderstanding that their behaviour is a danger to others.

It is important for learners that there is a close relationship between school and home when it comes to learning about masturbation. This will help make sure everyone works together to promote independence and wellbeing. While we can plan some of this learning a lot of learning also happens in what people sometimes call 'teachable moments', so in situations such as when a young person touches their genitals when they are not in their own bedroom/their private place.

With the right level of support and resources children and young people who take part in activities as part of the **Masturbation** unit will learn:

- To accept redirection when they self-soothe/masturbate in an inappropriate place.
- That masturbation is okay and should only be done in a private place.
- That a private place is the young person's bedroom.
- That no one else should watch them when they masturbate.
- To indicate to an adult if they are upset.

You will find the unit on **Masturbation** here <https://rshp.scot/complex-asn-draft/>