Scripts for Teachers and Support Staff

These are examples of scripts and strategies that can be used for addressing the problem of a student with body odor. You can adapt these to fit your situation.

To Call Parents:

Script 1

“Hello, Mrs. Smith I am calling to discuss a sensitive issue. I’ve noticed your child has an odor and that it has been consistent, not a one time thing. This is not real comfortable for me either, but I wanted you to know before other kids start to notice. We want to be proactive and don’t want your child to be teased or have other children avoid him due to this. (Pause…….). Are you noticing anything at home or have any ideas about what this could be?”

Try and make a plan with the parent to include them, the child, and any other staff member that seems appropriate.

Script 2

“Hello, Mrs. Smith, this is Ms. ____________, ________ (child’s name) teacher, and this is no emergency, but something that is important. Do you have a few minutes to talk? I have noticed that ____________ (the child’s name) has some body odor. This is very common in this age (use this for 4th grade and above) and I see someone every so often for this issue at school. Have you noticed anything at home? (Pause and let parent talk). To my knowledge, no one is teasing your child here at school about this, but we don’t want that to happen. We are trying to be proactive. I offer a service to families to sit down with children a few times and discuss this issue. I have a grab bag of samples which the kids like and usually it goes well. Would you like me to do this with your child?

(Be upbeat and POSITIVE….you are offering a SERVICE to them. Act like it is no big deal).

Teacher Scripts…..for the classroom:

Strategy 1

One teacher often starts the morning with a smile and says “Good morning class, hope everyone got their shower in, teeth brushed, deodorant on and are ready to go for the day –laugh”. She does this randomly in a fifth grade classroom to keep it light and loose and to keep it out their in front of the kids. Many kids laugh. It can be adapted to younger grades
Strategy 2: At conferences or when parents stop in…
(General chat about 4th/5th grade and how the kids are all starting to get BO after PE. Also mention to the parent how we are talking in the classroom about the need for daily showers.)
“Is that something that _________does? It’s kind of difficult on him when he has body odor because the other students don’t want to play with him or be with him.”

Strategy 3: One on one with students & teachers (mostly for 4th and 5th grades, possibly 3rd)
(Brief teacher interaction in a quiet tone)
“Do you have deodorant at home? At your age, hormones are going crazy and we want to keep the room smelling good so try to remember to use some tomorrow, ok?”

Strategy 4: One on one with student & teacher
(Pull kids aside at an alone time)
“I’ve noticed that you really want other people/kids to like you and notice the good things about you. One of the things you need to do to have this happen is to keep yourself clean and fresh. Let me ask you some questions. Do you wash your hair every day? Do you shower everyday? Change your clothes every day? Wear deodorant or carry it with you?”

Strategy 5: One on one with School Therapist or School Nurse
(Pull child aside in a quiet place)
“I know you don’t know me very well, but your teacher asked me to talk to you about your body. I am used to talking about bodies, how they work, and how to keep them healthy. We talk to many kids in the health office about that. Your teacher has noticed a smell on your body. Do you notice one? We have to thank her/him for bringing this up because your teacher does not want other kids to tease you because you are such a nice person. I am going to call your parents, get more information from the teacher and touch base with you again so we can figure this out. Does that sound good to you? It is really no big deal and don’t worry about it because it is really an adult job to fix. Your parents and I will figure it out, ok??”