



BELIEVING
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PERIOD DIGNITY and MENSTRUAL WELLBEING POLICY

September 2026

BELFAST
ROYAL
ACADEMY

Title	Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Policy
Development	Consultation with Pastoral staff and Pupil Council. Cross referenced with DE publication, 'Period Dignity Guidance Updated May 2023'. Informed by Equality Act NI 2006, relevant sections of UNRC and the Children and Young Peoples' Strategy for N.I..
Summary	Guidance for all stakeholders regarding: The delivery, management, and education around period dignity and menstrual wellbeing in school.
Purpose	To ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of the issues involved in educating all pupils about period dignity and menstrual wellbeing.
Operational Date	September 2022
Next Review Date	August 2028
Author and Contact for comments/feedback	Mrs C Hughes
Dissemination	School website, Staff folder, Pupil friendly version on Pastoral Google Classroom
Date and version posted (if applicable)	September 2026

PERIOD DIGNITY AND MENSTRUAL WELLBEING

AIM

Period dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a period, in conjunction with the removal/breaking of stigma and taboo around periods. Education is a key factor in breaking the stigma surrounding periods and promoting respect, understanding and open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating.

Period poverty refers to poor menstrual knowledge and/or access to period products.

The aim of our policy is to ensure that as a school we promote period dignity, tackle period poverty and, in so doing, ensure our menstruating learners reach their potential. It is our intention to ensure that all learners within school receive education and information surrounding menstrual issues so that they leave school with important knowledge to benefit them in their everyday lives. Menstrual health and wellbeing of our pupils is a key priority within our school.

OBJECTIVE

The period dignity scheme, which has been running in school since 2020, is called 'The Pink Paper Bag Project' and it seeks to provide all menstruating pupils, staff and visitors with the products, additional help, and support that they may need. All interactions within this project take place in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in tune with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities.

The education and awareness around period dignity and menstrual wellbeing will take place in an inclusive and equitable manner with age-appropriate content being delivered to mixed classes across the school.

Pupil and staff wellbeing is an area of focus within the School Development Plan and there are opportunities for pupils to have a voice and a platform on the implementation of the period dignity scheme.

We seek to deliver effective teaching around the issues involved whilst ensuring that all menstruating pupils and staff feel supported. It is our intention to break down and reduce any stigma or embarrassment of these issues.

POLICY FORMATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

This policy was developed following consultation with parents and pupils via online surveys. Pupil friendly and parent friendly versions will be made available online through the school website. Pupils will also be able to access their version of the policy through the Google Classroom created for the Pink Paper Bag Project.

Evaluation and review will be conducted in May and June 2027 using online surveys to inform the policy for 2027/28.

For questions, feedback or comments Mrs C Hughes, the nominated member of staff should be contacted through the school office.

This policy, given the nature of its content is closely linked to:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Pastoral Care Programme
- RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Policy on vetting and using outside agencies
- Confidentiality Policy

KEY STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Governor –

Pastoral Care Lead – CMC

Period Dignity Key Contact – CAH

SENCO – KEB

SEN Staff – JMN

Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead – CMC

WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO PERIOD DIGNITY

The Pink Paper Bag Project was initiated in September 2020 by Mrs C Hughes in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result of her recognition and understanding of the issue of period poverty within Northern Ireland.

Since 2020 a team of pupils have been volunteering and promoting the importance of the project within school.

The project seeks to:

- Visibly promote the importance of period dignity through the use of: information posters in all appropriate toilet areas within school, videos for assemblies and registration groups and the provision of free sample packs for any person who wishes to have one.
- Challenge negative views, stereotypes, gender inequality and stigma around periods by generating a positive dialogue with all pupils. All issues are talked about openly, sensitively and using fact.
- Communicate about period dignity and related issues whole-school, particularly in Biology lessons where there is a natural context for discussion.
- Introduce education for our male pupils which will cover period dignity, period poverty, equality and menstrual wellbeing in mixed class settings.
- Complement our provision of free products with education for all menstruating pupils.

From the inception of the project in 2020 we have aimed for a child-centred approach;

- We address issues that affect young people in relation to periods or period dignity by providing changes of underclothes, skirts and leggings in addition to the period products.

- We provide for children with SEN sensitively by including them in all aspects of our teaching and by using accessible language.
- Gender, culture, religion and age are respected, and education is sensitive and age appropriate.
- We engage with pupils via online surveys, through feedback in Google Classroom and face to face on a daily/weekly basis. Mrs Hughes has taken steps to ensure that all pupils have visual recognition of her in order that they can make contact with her when necessary.
- The project is evaluated by pupils on an annual basis.
- Pupils are actively involved in the project by volunteering for the management committee and working group.

THE PERIOD DIGNITY SCHEME

1. Consultation

Consultation carried out in;

2020 with Form V cohort before project was rolled out

2021 with all pupils via online survey

2022 with Form IV pupils

2023 with 400 pupils enrolled in Period Dignity Google Classroom

2024 with 400 pupils enrolled in Period Dignity Google Classroom

2025 with 376 pupils enrolled in Period Dignity Google Classroom

2. Choice and Purchase of Products

Products are chosen based on their chemical content, plastic content and the ethos of the company. Plastic free and chemical free products are currently provided to ensure that pupils health and wellbeing are respected and that we respect the environment by reducing the plastic waste produced within school.

The ethical credentials of the companies used to source the products is an important element of ensuring that the project supports the values, ethos and ethical framework of the school. The companies that supply us all have links with charities that support women and girls all over the world with access to education and menstrual wellbeing.

3. Types of Products

Following consultation with pupils a variety of products are available:

- Day pads made with organic cotton
 - Night pads made with organic cotton
 - Day pads made with bamboo
 - Night pads made with bamboo
 - Light flow tampons
 - Heavy flow tampons
 - Heat pads
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- Underwear in sizes from Age 10 to size 20
 - Tights in sizes from Age 10 to Extra Large
 - School skirts in sizes extra small to extra large

4. Availability

The full range of products is available in a small pink paper bag in each female toilet cubicle and in each 'all access' toilet across the school site. These bags are refreshed on a weekly basis.

The full range of products is also available from Matron's Office.

During school and public examinations, bags of products are also stocked in the toilets adjacent to the examination hall.

5. School Holidays

Holiday bags are available on request. Pupils can send a private note via Google Classroom and they will receive a bag containing a variety of products for that holiday.

6. Storage

All products are stored in recyclable packaging or in large storage boxes in the store adjacent to BB0 – the classroom of Mrs C Hughes.

7. Management

A group of pupil volunteers collect and replenish every pink bag on the school site. The supplies left are counted and new products are refilled.

This process happens each week throughout the academic year.

8. Staff

Pupils can approach Mrs C Hughes in BB0 with any issues that they may have. They can also contact Mrs Hughes privately via Google Classroom using their C2K log in.

9. Pupil and Parental Involvement

Parents have been involved since 2020 when they donated the products needed for the project to begin. Parents are kept informed of the project and relevant information via Pupil Notes.

Pupils are informed via videos in assemblies, registration and through posters and Pupil Notes. Pupils can also sign into the Google Classroom for the project.

PERIOD DIGNITY AND MENSTRUAL WELLBEING EDUCATION AND LEARNING

All teaching of the designated topics outlined in the DE Guidance Document 2022 will be done so in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in tune with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities. Factual information will be used and references made to the KS3 Biology scheme of work and the CCEA Biology examination specification. When available, resources will be sourced from the Period Dignity hub. CCEA's resources are currently still in development (Sept 2022).

The main objective of education is to create a positive dialogue within which sensitive issues can be discussed and understood by all pupils. Each pupil should be aware of the school's objective that they should all be aware of period dignity and period poverty. Through assemblies and workshops all pupils will receive education in mixed classes.

Co-ordination and management of education will be delivered by Period Dignity Key Contact Mrs C Hughes. Materials used will be cross referenced with CCEA material and due diligence will be undertaken to ensure that content is factually accurate.

Where appropriate we will seek to educate pupils in mixed class settings. When this is deemed to be inappropriate due to the sensitivity of the content education will be delivered in single gender settings. Consultation with pupils and/or parents may be undertaken prior to certain educational activities being delivered. Research carried out by CCEA has shown that teaching methodologies such as videos and discussions have been successful in the delivery of period dignity education. Appropriate methodologies will be employed and the Magenta Principles and Solihull Approach will be embedded within the teaching schemes. Pupils with SEN will be included and differentiation will be employed to ensure that their needs are met. A learner-centred approach will be adopted to ensure that lessons are meaningful and engaging for pupils.

As previously stated, resources used will be in harmony with the ethos of the school and in tune with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities. Factual information will be used and references made to the KS3 Biology scheme of work and the CCEA Biology examination specification. When available, resources will be sourced from the Period Dignity hub. The websites provided by CCEA and websites endorsed by official menstrual wellbeing organisations will be referenced when necessary.

The natural inquisitiveness of young people often results in many questions being asked. There will be occasions when the teacher will have to use their own discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular questions raised by a pupil or a group of pupils. Teachers should show empathy and understanding and employ the Solihull Approach to engage with pupils. Teachers should exercise their professional judgement as to whether it is appropriate to deal with the question in a whole-class forum. It may be more appropriate to respond on an individual basis or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. The teacher may also wish to discuss the questions posed with a senior member of staff to ascertain how they would like the matter to be handled. The teacher can approach the relevant Head of Year, Key Stage Leader, Senior Teacher or Vice Principal for pastoral care should they need advice or help with any matter.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Mrs C Hughes is a qualified teacher of Biology.

In addition to the training received during her studies in Biology she is also up to date with all training provided by CCEA which covered:

- The toxic trio and its impact on menstruating pupils
- Challenging negative attitudes, stereotypes and gender inequality
- Facts about menstruation
- Menstrual wellness – physical and emotional leading up to and during periods
- Menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations
- Challenges – pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and myths
- The link between period dignity and RSE within the curriculum
- Developing a period dignity school policy

Training will continue to be provided by CCEA.

To obtain data for monitoring and evaluation purposes a weekly count of all products used is carried out by the pupil volunteers. Annual surveys of parents and pupils will be carried out via Google Forms. Additional feedback received from comments on Google Classroom will be taken into consideration at the appropriate time.

PLANNING

The CCEA online hub is accessible for resources. Material that is gathered from other sources should be factual, unbiased, age-appropriate, inclusive, sensitive and from reliable sources. The Pastoral Vice Principal will meet with the course coordinator on a regular basis and for a final review at the end of the academic year in order to oversee the planning, content and relevance of the material.

PROCEDURES FOR INVOLVING AND CONSULTING WITH PARENTS OR CARERS

- Parents/carers have the responsibility to inform school if their child has previously experienced an allergic reaction to period products or their materials.
- Parents/carers should be encouraged to assist with the education of period dignity by having supportive and informative conversations with their own children.
- Parents/carers will be informed of the scheme via letter/email. Parent/carer friendly information leaflets may also become available.
- Parents/carers should be encouraged to contact the school if further information or support is required.
- Parents/carers should be happy with the way products are being supplied and their concerns listened to.

It is important that parents are involved in, and fully informed about, the School's programme on Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing and its approaches to particularly sensitive issues. The teaching offered by the School reinforces and strengthens the role of parents. The counselling and advice available to individual pupils complements and supports the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PERIOD DIGNITY EDUCATION

Parents or carers have a right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Therefore, in line with the RSE Policy whilst 'there is no legislative provision permitting parental withdrawal from sex education', schools can grant these requests on an individual basis (Lundy, Emerson, Lloyd, Byrne and Yohanis, 2013, page 25).

School will consider how we can support parents or carers who choose to withdraw their child from all or part of period dignity education on a case-by-case basis. If a parent or carer chooses to withdraw a child from all or part of the period dignity education, the potentially detrimental effect that this can have on the pupil will be discussed with the parent/carer. Parents/carers will be asked to consider the social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood that the pupil will hear their peers' version of what happened or what was said in the classes, rather than the safe and reliable source of the teacher's.

Ultimately, School will respect the wishes of the parent or carer and seek to provide appropriate support to the pupils.

LINKS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AND TO THE WIDER LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The following areas of the curriculum and wider life of the school are closely linked to period dignity and menstrual wellbeing education:

- Biology KS3
- GCSE Biology
- Pastoral Care
- Relationships and Sexual Education
- Pupil health and wellbeing
- Personal development
- PE and Games

MANAGING ISSUES

Staff will ensure that pupils are aware that they are in a safe space and will use the Solihull Approach when interacting with a pupil who may be experiencing emotional or physical distress due to having a period.

Staff will be supportive and non-judgemental.

The school will respond to absences due to period issues on a case by case basis.

Additional items such as changes of clothes, heatpads and pain relief are available to all pupils on request.

LINKS TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

1. Anti-bullying Policy – specific reference should be made to sexual harassment and bullying for other reasons relating to sex, gender, or relationships
2. Policy on using outside agencies and vetting arrangements Section 5 Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidance 26.
3. Pastoral Care Policy
4. Confidentiality Policy
5. Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
6. Behaviour Policy

DOCUMENTATION

The School will endeavour to signpost relevant and useful documentation to both pupils and parents via Pupil Notes which are disseminated on a weekly basis. The School will aim to provide, at the appropriate time:

- Parent or carer-friendly summary of Period Dignity Policy
- Pupil-friendly summary of Period Dignity Policy
- Pupil-friendly list of contacts, websites and organisations related to the Period Dignity Policy to supplement the list already provided in the Pupil Diary
- Relevant DE Circulars
- Outline programme across the Key Stages
- Independent counselling service/support services
- Brief details of outside agencies/individuals the school uses to support the delivery of Period Dignity Education and an outline of the session(s)
- Northern Ireland Curriculum link.

