

Period Dignity Policy Parent Version



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.
- 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 that our menstruating learners, reach their potential.

Objective

- The period dignity scheme which has been running in school since 2020 is called 'The Pink Paper Bag Project'.
- We seek to provide all menstruating pupils 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.
- The education and awareness around period dignity and menstrual wellbeing will take place in an inclusive 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 periods and the associated issues.

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.



The Pink Paper Bag Project

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.

Period Products in School

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 pupil 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.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

To support our menstruating learners we value the support of their parents/carers. Where a pupil is struggling with their periods, communication from parents/carers is vital in ensuring that school can support that pupil throughout the day. To that end;

- 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/pupil notes.
- 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.

Since 2020 the support that we have received from families has exceeded all expectations and we actively work to ensure that these positive relationships can continue.

The full policy document is available through the school website.



If you have any comments or questions please contact Mrs Hughes via the school office.