

Period Dignity

A Quick Guide



Period dignity is about providing inclusive education to increase knowledge about the menstrual cycle, periods and menstrual wellbeing. By promoting respect, understanding and open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating, we can challenge negative attitudes, stereotypes and gender inequality around periods.

Legislation

The Act
The Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 came into effect in May 2024.

The Regulations
The Period Products (Department of Education Specified Public Service Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

Through the Regulations, the legal duties lie with these school managers:

- Boards of Governors of voluntary and grant-maintained integrated schools;
- proprietors of independent schools; and
- the Education Authority for all controlled schools.

Requirements

The Act requires that a reasonable choice of free period products be made available for use on all premises by the following product users:

- pupils, staff and visitors in schools and EA EOTAS settings;
- young people, staff and visitors in EA youth settings; and
- staff and visitors in the administrative accommodation of EA and other public bodies.

Classroom Resources

CCEA has developed teaching resources, posters and films for primary and post primary settings. These will support the delivery of effective period dignity education and are available at www.ccea.org.uk/period-dignity

Provision

To meet specific requirements of the Act, settings must:

- ensure reasonable access;
- ensure reasonable choice; and
- respect dignity, privacy and confidentiality.

Individual Needs
The Act requires that:

- those with legitimate cause to be on the premises have their needs met while there (not take-home provision);
- no judgement is made about need;
- free products are available at all times; and
- the availability of free products is **publicised** on the premises.

Key Actions

This means that schools and youth settings must ensure the following:

- Period products are available at all times by maintaining stock levels and regularly restocking products at all locations, for example science labs, off-site sports facilities and detached canteen buildings.
- There is a reasonable choice by providing pads and tampons in various absorbencies. Unbranded is fine, but settings may wish to offer branded, environmentally friendly and reusable lines, bags, wipes and panty liners.
- There is easy access to products in each toilet cubicle or, if necessary, at the communal sinks in all toilets. Settings could also consider other locations, for example the school nurse's office, common rooms and reception.
- Period products are easily visible, for example in a basket or a clear bag attached to the back of the toilet door.
- Dignity and privacy are respected by:
 - allowing pupils out of class to access free period products;
 - pupils not having to ask for products; and
 - making products available in discreet locations.
- Period Dignity is promoted through CCEA posters, school assemblies and the school website. These should explain that products are free and how all users can access them.
- Period products are ordered on the EA iProcurement portal or, for schools who do not use iProcurement, directly with the appointed supplier. (See the EA website.)

Best Practice Tips

- Nominate Period Dignity key contact(s) to implement the scheme in your school.
- Nominate a School Governor with oversight of the Period Dignity Programme.
- Key contact(s), and other relevant staff, attend training.
- Develop a Period Dignity School Policy. See the framework available at www.ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/period-dignity/support-schools

