

# PERIOD DIGNITY POLICY/GUIDANCE

(updated following Year 1)

May 2022

## Period Dignity Policy/Guidance Updated May 2022

### Index

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Background .....  | 3  |
| Period Poverty Survey Results (August 2021).....  | 4  |
| What Schools Need to Do.....  | 5  |
| Budget – What you will get (up to 31 March 2022) and how this has been calculated ..... | 5  |
| Allocation of Budgets by the EA.....  | 6  |
| Ordering Procedure .....  | 7  |
| Teacher Professional Learning .....   | 8  |
| Classroom Resources .....   | 9  |
| Frequently Asked Questions .....  | 9  |
| Useful Contacts .....   | 14 |
| Annexes.....  | 15 |
| Annex 1: Case Studies of Good Practice .....  | 15 |
| Annex 2: Key Considerations.....  | 17 |
| Annex 3: Findings from other Pilot Projects.....  | 19 |
| Annex 4: Framework for Developing a Period Dignity School Policy.....                   | 20 |

## Background

### What is period dignity?

1. 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.
2. The pilot scheme to address period dignity in schools aims to promote period dignity and tackle period poverty, helping learners who menstruate to reach their potential.
3. Period poverty generally refers to poor menstrual knowledge and/or access to period products.
4. [Plan International](#)<sup>1</sup> describes what it calls a toxic trio of:
  - the cost of sanitary products;
  - a lack of education about periods; and,
  - shame, stigma and taboo.
5. Period dignity is a cross-cutting issue and, if addressed, has the capacity to impact positively on a range of sectors including schools, further and higher education, health, communities and justice. It is therefore repercussive in nature with significant potential for cross-cutting impact to the benefit of thousands of people.
6. There have been significant developments in the rest of the UK in relation to schemes to provide free period products and promote period dignity through education programmes in schools and other educational establishments.
7. On the 17 December 2020, the NI Executive agreed to fund a pilot programme to provide free period products to all schools in Northern Ireland with effect from September 2021.
8. The pilot scheme addresses the specific needs of the school sector and is supported with curriculum materials and an online Teacher Professional Learning programme for schools, thereby improving period dignity through addressing all three elements of Plan International's toxic trio.
9. The free products are not aimed at providing a blanket provision, but the scheme aims to ensure products are available to menstruating learners where and when they need them.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://plan-uk.org/act-for-girls/girls-rights-in-the-uk/break-the-barriers-our-menstrual-manifesto>

## Period Poverty Survey Results (August 2021)

10. CCEA's Data Science and Statistics and Research Unit sought to gain an insight into the frequency and extent of period poverty and other issues relating to period dignity in Northern Ireland.
11. Online questionnaires were made available to pupils and teachers in primary and post-primary schools from 15 June to 2 July 2021.
12. 1,711 pupils and 770 teachers responded to the surveys.
13. A summary of the responses is listed below.

### Pupil Survey – Responses received: 1,711

- **Almost all pupils (98.2% N=1,681) who responded to this questionnaire supported the new government scheme that supplies free period products to schools.**
- Over a quarter of pupils (27.5% N=382) who have a period have had difficulty accessing period products.
- 83.2% (N=318) of pupils who have had difficulty accessing period products experienced this because they didn't have what they needed with them in school.
- 11.8% (N=45) had difficulty accessing period products because their parents couldn't afford them, while 6.5% (N=25) said they themselves could not afford them.
- 8.12% (N=113) of pupils with a period have missed school because they didn't have access to sufficient period products.
- 9.7% (N=11) pupils have missed school many times because they did not have sufficient period products.
- Over half of pupils (56.7% N=789) who menstruate have had to ask a friend or teacher for period products while in school.
- 44.2% (N=756) of pupils' schools provide some period products at present, with 48.9% (N=318) having to use these at some point.
- Over half of pupils (53.0% N=737) were embarrassed when buying period products.
- Almost a quarter of pupils who responded (24.4% N=417) agree that eco factors are important when choosing period products.

### Teacher Questionnaire – Responses received: 770

- **Almost all teachers who responded (98.8% N=761) agreed with the new government scheme to provide free period products to schools.**
- The majority of teachers (96.8% N=745) have heard of period poverty.
- 70% (N=539) of teachers who responded had noted a pupil asking another pupil or member of staff for period products.
- Over half of teachers' (55.3% N=426) schools already provide free period products.
- 40.6% (N=313) felt that pupils considered eco factors when buying period products.
- 67.0% (N=516) of teachers agreed they would find training on menstrual wellbeing and period poverty useful.

14. The full Period Poverty Survey Report is [available online](#).

### Follow-up survey

A follow-up survey was issued to schools in January 2022 regarding the operation of the scheme and will be published soon.

### What Schools Need to Do

- If you haven't already done so, nominate Period Dignity key contact(s) to implement the scheme in your school and/or attend training. Larger post-primary schools may wish to nominate two members of staff. These key contacts should be from the school senior leadership team where possible to ensure implementation of a whole-school approach and cascade relevant training to other staff members. Thank you to those who have already provided contact details.
- A form to submit the details of [Period Dignity key contact\(s\)](#) is available online.
- A list of school budgets for Post Primary, Special Schools and EOTAS settings has been published on the [DE website](#) and accompanies this policy.
- Please note that Primary Schools and Prep schools will be supported through a stock allocation in September 2022 instead of being allocated a budget. These schools can still order further products in the usual way and their own school budget will be charged.
- Post Primary and Special Schools should familiarise themselves with their earmarked budget for Period Products for the Financial Year April 2022- March 2023.
- Period products are available to order now on the EA iProcurement portal or directly with the appointed supplier for schools who do not use EA iProcurement.
- Details on how to place an order are provided in paragraphs 27–29.
- The delivery timeframe for receipt of your goods is five working days from the placement of your order.
- Educational professionals (male and female), support staff and pupils, all need to understand:
  - the policy behind this initiative;
  - how it links to Relationships and Sexuality Education within the curriculum;
  - the processes involved in ordering products; and
  - how the products are utilised.
- We will continue to collect information to evaluate if the period products and processes involved are meeting your needs and those of your pupils.

### Budget

#### What you will get (up to 31 March 2023) and how this has been calculated

15. The Department of Finance has approved the continued funding of this scheme, subject to ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness in meeting its objectives.
16. Based on the experience of similar schemes elsewhere, we have estimated a modest 20% overall uptake in this, the second year of the scheme, rising to 30% in the third year, as the scheme becomes established. By uptake we mean percentage of pupils using the scheme for all their needs throughout the academic year, including taking products home.

17. Provision does not include school holidays; however, if their budget allows schools may wish to consider providing for pupils for whom this is essential. Of course, uptake is likely to vary between pupils and schools depending on affordability. See paragraph 18.
18. It is not the policy intention to make blanket provision of period products for all pupils. The scheme aims to ensure products are available to learners when they need them. Affordability will be more of a factor for some learners than others, and they may wish to avail of the scheme to meet their needs throughout the academic year, in school and by taking products home. Other learners may need to access the scheme because they have started their period in school unexpectedly or have forgotten to bring period products with them. Many learners will of course sit somewhere between these two scenarios.
19. Budget has been set aside for a Primary School stock allocation exercise, based on numbers likely to be menstruating (calculated at 12.5% of Year 6 and Year 7).
20. The remaining total available budget has been allocated between schools, based on total number of learners enrolled in the school who are likely to be menstruating, based on their age.
21. A weighting has also been applied based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Therefore all pupils who menstruate will have access to the scheme, regardless of socio-economic status, but the increased need due to affordability has also been taken into account.
22. A small amount of budget has been allocated to 'Boys only' schools to support pupils from other schools who may be attending for lessons under the Entitlement Framework.
23. A full list of schools and budgets for free period products can be found on the [DE website](#). The budget is earmarked for spending on Period Products with the appointed supplier for the scheme (John Preston Ltd) and schools should plan to spend their budget by March 2023.

### **Allocation of Budgets by the EA**

24. The budget is specifically set aside for purchasing period products through iProcurement (or directly with the supplier for schools not using iProcurement) and these will be allocated by the EA through the budget allocation process.

## Period Dignity Policy/Guidance Updated May 2022

### LMS Schools

- Will receive the funding directly into their LMS Budget and when ordering period products schools should use their cost centre.

### VG/GMI Schools

- VG/GMI Schools will receive their allocated payment for period products and should procure products directly with the supplier by emailing [orders@johnpreston.co.uk](mailto:orders@johnpreston.co.uk).

### Special Schools

- Special Schools will receive the funding centrally and should use their school cost centre and the project-specific function code when ordering period products.

### EOTAS

- EOTAS Centres will receive the funding centrally and should use their cost centre and the project-specific function code when ordering period products.
- Special schools and EOTAS will be advised directly of the correct function code to use when ordering period products

25. Should schools spend all their 2022/23 budget before the end of March 2023, they may, if they wish, purchase products using their own school budget.
26. To ease the administrative burden, Primary schools will be allocated stock in September 2022. They may, if they wish, purchase further products through I Procurement and these will be charged to their own school budget.

## Ordering Procedure

27. All schools who use iProcurement must create orders on Oracle iProcurement and pick from the iProcurement store. A valid purchase order is required to place an order with the contractor.
28. Schools can search for specific items by entering the Contractor Item Reference "FMM-21-002" into the search bar in the main store, on iProcurement.
29. Further details on how to place an order and useful links are provided in the FAQ below.

Information on placing an order can be found in the [Procurement Requisitioner User Guide](#) on [EANI](#) website. EANI also provides a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

A copy of the schedule for Feminine Hygiene Products is available on [EA Procure](#). This schedule is commercially sensitive information and must not be shared with any supplier. You will require login details for EA Procure to have access to the contract schedule.

The FAQ document above explains how you can request login details or simply email [EAProcure@eani.org.uk](mailto:EAProcure@eani.org.uk). Schools must ensure they receipt the products once received to ensure prompt payment of the contractor.

**Note - Schools who do not use iProcurement**, such as Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated Schools, can use the instructions in Paragraph 29 to obtain the schedule and prices and then email the supplier [orders@johnpreston.co.uk](mailto:orders@johnpreston.co.uk). Ordering with the appointed supplier will allow these schools to benefit from competitive pricing and ensure demand data is captured during monitoring of the pilot.

### **Teacher Professional Learning**

30. Teaching staff involved in teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education, Pastoral staff and, potentially, school nurses may want to undertake training for the implementation of the scheme, period dignity, period poverty and menstrual wellbeing, as well as gain an understanding of what advice should be given to all pupils, regardless of gender.
31. Topics covered will include:
  - Overview of the Period Dignity Pilot Scheme in Northern Ireland schools;
  - The toxic trio and its impact on menstruating pupils;
  - Challenging negative attitudes, stereotypes and gender inequality around periods;
  - Facts about menstruation;
  - Menstrual wellness – physical and emotional wellbeing, leading up to and during periods;
  - Menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations; and
  - Challenges – pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, myths;
  - How Period Dignity links to Relationships and Sexuality Education within the curriculum;
  - Developing a *Period Dignity School Policy*.
32. The sessions will be recorded so that teachers can avail of them at a convenient time if they have been unable to participate in a live session. Dates, times, and content of the TPL sessions will be communicated to Period Dignity key contacts in schools. Registration will be available through Eventbrite.
33. Teacher Release is available for participating teachers.
34. Schools are expected to develop their own internal Period Dignity Policy using this document as a base. A framework is available to schools (see Annex 4) and the content covered in the school policy can be discussed during the online Teacher Professional Learning session(s).
35. Non-teaching staff involved in the ordering of period products will also wish to familiarise themselves with the ordering process, budget limits and promotion and managing of products in school.

## Classroom Resources

36. CCEA is developing new teaching resources on these topics, which will be added to the [CCEA website](#) over the academic year. Examples of the resources will be explored through the TPL sessions.

These include:

### Primary Schools

- Changes in their body during puberty
- Menstruation, the facts
- Menstrual wellness – physical and emotional wellbeing, leading up to and during periods
- Menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations
- Challenges – pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, myths.

### Post-Primary Schools

- Facts about menstruation
- Menstrual wellness – physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing, leading up to and during periods
- Period products – the different types, advantages, and disadvantages, how to dispose of them
- Menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations
- Challenges – pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, myths
- Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS)
- Endometriosis – symptoms, support and treatment
- Other menstrual cycle issues, for example Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) or Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD).

The resources will also include approaches to challenging negative attitudes, stereotypes and gender inequality around periods.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### School budgets

#### How do I find out my school budget for free period products?

37. School budgets for the purchase of period products are available on the [DE website](#).

#### How has my school budget for free period products been calculated?

38. The total available budget has been shared between schools, based on total number of learners enrolled in the school who are likely to be menstruating, based on their age. A weighting has also been applied based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Therefore, all pupils who menstruate will have access to the

scheme, regardless of socio-economic status, but the increased need due to affordability has also been taken into account.

**My school budget seems too low/high, what do I do?**

39. This budget is to cover the period to 31 March 2023. Budgets will continue to be adjusted as the pilot scheme becomes embedded and we begin to understand levels of demand, based on school ordering levels and survey feedback. There are range of products at variable prices, and each product has availability to order either individual packs or large supplier pack size (which will include a number of the individual pack sizes). Schools can order either, depending on their individual needs.
40. If you still have queries on the budget that has been calculated for your school, you can contact the Department (see contact list).

**My Primary school has not been allocated a budget – why is this?**

41. Feedback from the first year of the scheme was that the effort of ordering products was not commensurate with the level of funding made available to Primary Schools. Budgets were small because of the low numbers likely to be menstruating. A successful stock allocation exercise took place in February 2022 to bring Primary Schools on board and the Steering Group agreed that we should proceed on this basis for 2022/23. Primary Schools will receive an allocation of stock in September. Should you wish to order stock in the meantime, you can do so in the normal way and the products will be charged to your school budgets.

**Ordering products**

**How do I order period products?**

42. Schools can search for specific items by entering the Contractor Item Reference “FMM-21-002” into the search bar in the main store, on iProcurement.
43. Further details on how to place an order and useful links are detailed in the FAQ below. Orders must be created on Oracle iProcurement before you receive any products and picked from the iProcurement store.

Information on placing an order can be found in the [iProcurement requisitioner user guide](#) and further help is available in [iProcurement Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Both of these documents are available on the EANI website at [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)

44. A copy of the schedule for Feminine Hygiene Products is available on [EA Procure](#). This Schedule is commercially sensitive information and must not be shared with any supplier. You will require login details for EA Procure in order to have access to the contract schedule and the FAQ above details how you can request login details.

Schools must ensure they receipt the products once received to ensure prompt payment of the Contractor.

45. **Schools who do not order using iProcure can still request a log on so they can view pricing by emailing [EAProcure@eani.org.uk](mailto:EAProcure@eani.org.uk).** Orders can then be placed directly with the appointed supplier by emailing [orders@johnpreston.co.uk](mailto:orders@johnpreston.co.uk). Ordering with the appointed supplier will allow these schools to benefit from competitive pricing and ensure demand data is captured during monitoring of the pilot.

**Which period products should I order?**

46. Schools should decide which combination of products are most suitable for the pupils in their setting and within their available budget. As a guide however, in the first year of a similar scheme in Scotland, 73% of products ordered were towels with 27% being tampons and other products. 75% of products ordered in the first year of the scheme in Northern Ireland were towels.

***For primary schools***

47. We do not recommend tampons for primary schools and would suggest that the TSL Ultra-Thin Towels without wings would be most suitable for this age group. This is the line that will be allocated to Primary Schools in September.

***Tampons versus towels***

48. Towels accounted for over 70% of products ordered during the first year of a similar scheme in Scotland. In Northern Ireland 75% of products ordered by schools were towels in the first year of the scheme. CCEA's recent survey of schools 76.6% of pupils and 71.9% of teachers said tampons should also be made available.

**Toxic shock – potential risk**

49. Tampon use can be associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). This is a rare but serious disease that can be fatal. If you decide to make tampons available in your setting you should ensure good stock rotation, that instructions for use are visible and available and that tampons are kept in their original packaging, for protection against damage.

**How often should I order?**

50. Schools need to balance available storage space with the need to consider environmental footprint (for example ordering once or twice a year). Where budgets are very small, it is recommended that one order, for the full amount, is placed.

**Can I use my Period Dignity budget to buy related items like wet wipes, spare pants and spare tights?**

51. DE and EA are working with the appointed supplier John Preston to investigate if these items can be made available to order by schools. We will advise schools as soon as these products are available.

**Teacher Professional Learning**

**How will the TPL be delivered?**

52. Teacher Professional Learning on developing a school Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Policy will be delivered as online sessions. Other topics may be covered as the need arises or as new resources become available.

**How will we be notified about the dates and content of the TPL sessions?**

53. The dates and content of the sessions will be notified to key contacts within each school via email.

**Will there be separate sessions for primary and post-primary schools?**

54. Yes – primary and post-primary schools will have tailored sessions.

**Who should attend the sessions?**

55. Participants should be from the school senior leadership team where possible to ensure implementation of a whole-school approach and cascade relevant training to other staff members. Teaching staff involved in teaching Relationships and Sexuality Education, pastoral staff and, potentially, school nurses may wish to undertake training. Larger post-primary schools may wish to nominate two members of staff

**How do we register?**

56. Period Dignity key contacts within each school will be notified of the registration details and links to the appropriate Eventbrite page via email.

**What will be covered?**

57. Topics covered will include:

- Overview of the Period Dignity Pilot Scheme in Northern Ireland schools;
- The toxic trio and its impact on menstruating pupils;
- Challenging negative attitudes, stereotypes and gender inequality around periods;
- Facts about menstruation;
- Menstrual wellness – physical and emotional wellbeing, leading up to and during periods;
- Menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations;
- Challenges – pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, myths;
- How Period Dignity links to Relationships and Sexuality Education within the curriculum; and
- Developing a *Period Dignity School Policy*.

**How long will they last?**

58. The online sessions will be available as 2 or 3-hour sessions:

**What if none of the dates suit our nominated key Period Dignity staff?**

59. We will endeavour to ensure key staff from as many schools as possible can participate in the live online teacher professional learning sessions as they will provide opportunities for discussion and questions. However, if some teachers are unable to participate in the live sessions, they can access recorded sessions on the CCEA website at their convenience. Once available, links to these recordings will be sent out to Period Dignity key contacts.

**Is there teacher release available and how do we claim for this?**

60. Teacher release is available for those attending Period Dignity training. Contact CCEA for more information. (See contact list).

**Are nominated key Period Dignity staff expected to cascade the training to others in the setting?**

61. Yes, key Period Dignity staff can use the Teacher Professional Learning PowerPoint presentations and supporting materials (which will be shared following the sessions) to

cascade learning to other members of staff, ensuring a whole-school approach to the implementation of the scheme.

## Useful Contacts

**The following contacts can assist with queries, should they not be addressed in the policy document and FAQs.**

### EA

Operational queries should be addressed to EA.

Queries regarding pricing and ordering should be directed to [facilities.procure@eani.org.uk](mailto:facilities.procure@eani.org.uk)

Contract specific queries and queries on budget allocation method by school type, codes, switching to draw from main school budget, or day to day operation of the contract, please contact [peroddignity@eani.org.uk](mailto:peroddignity@eani.org.uk)

### CCEA

CCEA will answer questions on relevant curriculum materials and support to embed the Period Dignity Pilot Scheme within schools and teacher professional learning on the scheme.

**Deidre Coffey: Education Manager – Period Dignity Project** [dcoffey@ccea.org.uk](mailto:dcoffey@ccea.org.uk)

**Roisin Radcliffe: Programme Manager** [rradcliffe@ccea.org.uk](mailto:rradcliffe@ccea.org.uk)

### DE

DE will answer wider policy questions about the overall purpose and funding of the pilot scheme, including how the available budget to March 2023 has been calculated and shared between schools.

**Ashleigh Mitford: Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team** [Ashleigh.Mitford@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Ashleigh.Mitford@education-ni.gov.uk)

**Dale Heaney: Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team** [Dale.Heaney@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Dale.Heaney@education-ni.gov.uk)  
[attendance@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@education-ni.gov.uk)

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Case Studies of Good Practice

These case studies in this section are from schools in another region of the UK. As the Period Dignity Pilot Project becomes embedded in schools in Northern Ireland, local examples of good practice will be shared through the [CCEA website](#)

#### Importance of the Period Dignity Pilot Scheme

Access to free products can:

- promote equality;
- help keep young people in school;
- increase concentration in class through not having to worry about lack of period products or leaking;
- increase confidence to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities;
- support good health; and
- prevent menstruating young people from having to make decisions to either wear the wrong product, substitute a poor-quality product or toilet roll, or wear a product for longer than is safe.

#### Case Study 1 – Primary School (600 male and female pupils)

- Conversations held with all female Year 4–Year 7 pupils to launch the programme.
- Education about menstruation with all pupils in Sexual Health and Relationships Education (SHRE).
- Letters sent to parents to inform them of the programme.
- Period pads and baby wipes were made available in drawers in Year 4–Year 7 toilets with extra products available at Pupil Support.
- Pupils in Year 4–Year 7 who needed them were given period products home for the holiday periods.
- Parental communications of vital importance especially for parents of younger pupils.
- Basic education for pupils below Year 4 may be necessary if toilets are shared across several years.
- Close liaison between primary and post-primary schools allows for a smooth transition.

#### Case Study 2 – High School (945 male and female students)

- The school engaged with students to agree the best method to distribute period products during a pilot project.
- A steering group was formed from pupils from lower and upper schools to decide how to roll out the free products. The steering group has grown to include new members, including many male students.

## Period Dignity Policy/Guidance Updated May 2022

- A gender-neutral mascot was adopted to raise awareness of the fact that not everyone who has a period identifies as female.
- Assemblies and a high-profile poster campaign using the mascot accompanied the launch of free product provision.
- A whole-school approach was implemented with a focus of removing the stigma associated with periods and making access fun.
- Period products were placed in drawered storage units in all female toilets, PE changing rooms, pupil support offices and in a named classroom on each corridor.
- To help destigmatise access to the storage boxes, they are also stocked with wipes, cotton pads, bobbles, deodorants, body spray, nail files and tissues.
- Before and after surveys found that 84% of students felt more comfortable talking about their periods after the pilot.
- The pilot project created strong leadership opportunities for students who have grown in confidence.

### **Case Study 3 – High School (880 male and female students)**

- The school engaged with students to determine the best method of distribution and a steering group of senior students was formed. This group decided how and where to place the products.
- The scheme was announced in an all-female assembly delivered by the student steering group.
- They framed the scheme in terms of period equality and dignity rather than period poverty.
- The steering group also raised awareness of the scheme and established a rota to monitor stock levels.
- They decided to make the period products available in each toilet cubicle rather than in the public areas of bathrooms. They felt that privacy and student-ownership was key to a successful uptake and student buy-in.
- Student buy-in has also reduced vandalism and misuse of the period products with only one instance of pads down a toilet.
- The steering group also received training to deliver period education and hosted a conference for other local schools on period poverty.
- New students were recruited to take over leadership roles in the steering group the following year.
- The school plans to involve male students more formally in the scheme.

## **Annex 2: Key considerations**

When setting up the scheme in your school, think about the following actions:

### **1. Consult with your students at an early stage**

- The scheme is for them, and their ideas and concerns should be listened to.
- They are best placed to say which period products they would like to see provided as well as how they would like them distributed and accessed.
- Student toilets have their own unique social dynamics. Listening to your students can reveal hidden barriers to access.
- This project creates leadership opportunities for young people. Creating a student steering group empowers young people and ensures student buy-in.
- If students are invested in the project, then they are more likely to support it.
- Engaged groups of young people monitor each other and help prevent abuse and vandalism.

### **2. Ordering and practicalities – keep the needs of your menstruating students at the forefront**

- Make a range of products and different qualities available, giving students choice about the products they want to use.
- Ensure:
  - there are sufficient period products available, and they are routinely restocked;
  - period products are easily accessible; and
  - anyone who menstruates can access products, including transgender men or non-binary individuals, and that language is gender neutral.
- Allow students, where possible, to lead on the roll out of the pilot scheme, raising awareness, monitoring provision and restocking.
- Above all, protect students' dignity, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma.

### **3. Raise awareness**

- Inform all students (male and female) about the project.
- Inform parents and all staff about the project.
- Ensure everyone knows what period products are available and where they can be accessed.
- Students should be aware of the school's Period Dignity key contact (member of staff).

### **4. Education**

- Complement free period product provision with education about periods, period dignity and menstrual wellbeing.
- Awareness raising and education should:
  - promote the availability of free period products;

## Period Dignity Policy/Guidance Updated May 2022

- increase knowledge about the menstrual cycle, periods and menstrual wellbeing; and
- **challenge negative attitudes, stereotypes and gender inequality around periods.**
- Consider opportunities for peer-led learning.

**Annex 3: Findings from other pilot projects**

- Young people in schools do not want to ask staff for products – in the classroom, in the school office, in pastoral care. It is embarrassing.
- Young people can find using the toilet at school embarrassing – many will avoid going to the toilet altogether. Changing a pad can be noisy, and pupils in neighbouring stalls might hear the rustling, and know they have their period.
- Locking toilet doors during lesson times prevents pupils from changing their period products in privacy.
- Young people often feel unable to collect products from communal sinks and public areas for fear someone sees them take one.
- Sometimes products are stocked in some toilets but not others, resulting in a long walk to fetch products from the opposite side of the school site.

**Annex 4: Framework for Developing a Period Dignity School Policy**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Contextual information</b>   |  |
| School Details   |  |
| Date of policy   |  |
| Overall school aims and objectives of the Period Dignity policy  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the aims of the Period Dignity/Menstrual Wellbeing policy support the values, ethos, and moral and ethical framework of the school</li> <li>• How this will inform education and awareness around Period Dignity/Menstrual Wellbeing in the school in an inclusive and equitable manner</li> <li>• How the policy links to the School Development Plan</li> </ul>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the policy takes account of <a href="#">The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006</a>. This is available at <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk">www.legislation.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• Reference to the relevant sections of <a href="#">UNCRC</a>, available at <a href="http://www.unicef.org.uk">www.unicef.org.uk</a></li> <li>• How the policy contributes to <a href="#">Every School a Good School</a>, <a href="#">Together Towards Improvement</a> and <a href="#">Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy</a>. These documents are available at <a href="http://www.deni.gov.uk">www.deni.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• How the policy supports children and young peoples' strategy for Northern Ireland</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>2. Policy formation and consultation process</b>  |  |
| How the policy was drawn up – who was consulted (for example staff, governors, pupils and/or parents) and how  |  |

**Period Dignity Policy/Guidance Updated May 2022**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>How the policy will be disseminated – who will receive it and where it can be accessed</p>  |  |
| <p>How and when it will be reviewed</p>  |  |
| <p>Contact person for comments or feedback on policy</p>   |  |
| <p>How the policy is linked to other school policies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection policy or Safeguarding policy</li> <li>• Pastoral Care Programme</li> <li>• RSE policy</li> <li>• SEN policy</li> <li>• Positive Behaviour policy</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying policy</li> <li>• Environmental policy</li> <li>• Policy on using outside agencies and vetting arrangements</li> <li>• Confidentiality policy</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p><b>3. Key staff and roles and responsibilities</b></p>  |  |
| <p>School Leader with responsibility for Period Dignity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Governor with oversight of the Period Dignity Programme</li> <li>• Pastoral Care lead</li> <li>• Period dignity key contact</li> <li>• SENCO</li> <li>• SEN staff</li> <li>• Safeguarding and Child Protection lead</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>4. Whole-school approach to period dignity</b></p>   |  |
| <p><b>i. School Ethos</b><br/>         How the school supports period dignity through its provision, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visibly promotes the importance of period dignity</li> <li>• challenges negative views, stereotypes, gender inequality and stigma around periods</li> <li>• communication about period dignity and related issues is through a whole-school approach</li> <li>• how the school approaches education for young males on period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing</li> </ul> |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>education around periods, period dignity and menstrual wellbeing complements the provision of free products</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>ii. Child-Centred Provision</b><br/>How the school supports pupils through its provision, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral Care – addressing issues that affect young people in relation to periods or period dignity</li> <li>how the school provides for pupils with SEN</li> <li>considering the gender, culture, religion and age range of pupils in the school</li> <li>engaging with pupils when determining how and where period products are made available</li> <li>evaluating the impact of the period dignity scheme through pupil feedback</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>5. The period dignity scheme</b></p>  |  |
| Early consultation carried out with pupils on the period dignity scheme   |  |
| How free period products are chosen and purchased for use within the school   |  |
| Types of products available for menstruating pupils   |  |
| How free period products are made available to those that need them during the school term  |  |
| Arrangements for period products to be available to those that need them during school holidays   |  |
| Where period products are stored  |  |
| Process and people involved in monitoring and replenishing period product supplies including checking expiry dates  |  |
| Identity of staff member(s) who pupils can approach with any issues they may have.  |  |
| Pupil and parental involvement in the period dignity scheme.  |  |

| 6. Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education and Learning  |  |
|---|--|
| How the teaching about period dignity/menstrual wellbeing supports the school's ethos and reflects the moral and religious principles held by parents or carers and school management |  |
| The objectives of education about period dignity/menstrual wellbeing within the school – what the school is setting out to achieve  |  |
| How the school will ensure inclusive learning for <b>all pupils</b> through education about period dignity/menstrual wellbeing  |  |
| The management and co-ordination of period dignity/menstrual wellbeing education in the school  |  |
| Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education co-ordinator   |  |
| Classroom or teaching arrangements, for example single-gender classes, mixed gender classes or both   |  |
| Approaches to learning and teaching – teaching methodologies that will be used  |  |
| Provision for pupils with SEN   |  |
| Period dignity/menstrual wellbeing resources used and criteria for selection (to ensure they are inclusive and consistent with the school's moral and values framework)               |  |
| Strategies for gathering and disseminating the most current and relevant information and related research to inform planning and ensure relevance                                     |  |
| How to deal with sensitive issues and respond to pupils' questions  |  |
| Teacher Professional Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who</li> <li>• How</li> <li>• When</li> <li>• How often</li> </ul>   |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Monitoring and evaluation of period dignity/menstrual wellbeing education provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tools for gathering data</li> <li>• Who will be involved</li> <li>• How often evaluation takes place</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p><b>7. Involving and consulting with parents or carers</b></p>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents' or carers' rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Engagement with parents or carers, for example policy consultation, information, support sessions or providing materials for home use</li> <li>• Parents or carers with learning difficulties</li> <li>• Withdrawal from lessons on period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>8. Links across the curriculum and to the wider life of the school</b></p>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the learning and teaching about period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing links across the curriculum to other areas of learning in the different key stages</li> <li>• How elements of the wider pastoral programme support and complement education about period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing, for example school assemblies</li> <li>• How other school initiatives support and complement education about period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing, including RSE, Health and Wellbeing, Personal Development and the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>9. Managing issues</b></p>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warning signs that staff will watch for which may indicate a pupil may be experiencing emotional or physical distress due to having a period</li> <li>• Ensuring staff are supportive and non-judgemental</li> <li>• How the school responds to absences due to period issues</li> <li>• What additional items and facilities are available to menstruating pupils should they be needed,</li> </ul>  |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>for example heat pads, somewhere to lie down or a change of clothes</p>   |  |
| <p><b>10. Possible appendices</b></p>  |  |
| <p>Relevant documentation could be signposted, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent- or carer-friendly summary of the Period Dignity/Menstrual Wellbeing policy</li> <li>• Pupil-friendly summary of the Period Dignity/Menstrual Wellbeing policy</li> <li>• Pupil-friendly and/or parent-friendly list of contacts, websites and organisations related to period dignity or menstrual wellbeing (CCEA website)</li> <li>• Relevant Department of Education circulars</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Curriculum link</li> <li>• Outline programme across the key stages</li> <li>• Brief details of outside agencies or individuals the school uses to support the delivery of period dignity or menstrual wellbeing and an outline of the session.</li> </ul> |  |