

St Finian's Primary School



Period Dignity Policy 2024

Principal: Mr B Coulter

Coordinators: Mrs Oorlagh Dalzell

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1.0 Background

Period Dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a period, in conjunction with the removal of stigma 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.

Feedback collated from CCEA's online Period Poverty surveys (June 2021) forms the basis of the project and falls under three main themes known as the **Toxic Trio**:

1. the cost of period products
2. accessibility of period products; and
3. shame, stigma, and taboo

The Period Dignity Scheme aims to promote period dignity and tackle period poverty, helping learners who menstruate to stay in school and reach their full potential.

2.0 Policy Formation and Consultation Process

This policy has been drawn up following guidance by CCEA.

All staff and governors have been involved in the consultation

Points to note –

- The policy will be made available to all teaching, non-teaching staff and CAs.
- The Policy will be made available on the school app for parents.
- The policy will be reviewed annually by senior leadership staff and the Period Dignity coordinator contact.
- The school principal is the contact for comments and feedback on the policy.
- The Period Dignity policy supports current school policies such as Pastoral Care, Child Protection/Safeguarding, Intimate Care, Anti-bullying, RSE, PDMU, SEN, Well-Being, First Aid and Positive Behaviour.

This policy has been developed in line with the following guidance: -

- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 www.legislation.gov.uk
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (www.unicef.org.uk)
- Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement and Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy (www.deni.gov.uk)
- Menstrual Well-being in the RSE Curriculum <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse/menstrual-wellbeing>
- CCEA Period Dignity Policy Guidance (September 2021)

3.0 Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to set out how we promote Period Dignity and how it complements other aspects of the wider school life.

The overall aims of the policy are to:

- reflect our school ethos by promoting the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of pupils. Our school endeavours to provide a positive and caring learning environment, where pupils feel secure and free to discuss their problems, confident that they will receive a supportive response.
- educate and promote awareness around Period Dignity/Menstrual Wellbeing in an inclusive and equitable manner by providing strategies to ensure all pupils regardless of age, ability, gender, religion, or culture realise their full potential
- ensure implementation of the Period Dignity scheme by highlighting its importance in the School Development Plan.
- take account of The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations Northern Ireland 2006 by ensuring the needs of all pupils are met equally regardless of sexual orientation
- promote every child's right to a free primary education (UNCRC Article 28)
- take account of the guidance set out in Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement, Community Relations, and Equality and Diversity in Education Policy.
- support children and young peoples' strategy for Northern Ireland.

4.0 Key Staff Roles and Responsibilities

School Governor: Mrs Barbara Walker (Safeguarding Governor)

Period Dignity Key Contacts: Mrs Oorlagh Dalzell & Mrs Brenda Russell.

Period Key Coordinators: Mrs Dalzell

CCEA Contact: Education Manager for Period Dignity:

Deirdre Coffey: dcoffey@ccea.org.uk

5.0 Whole School Approach to Period Dignity

5.1 School Ethos

The staff of St Finian's PS are highly committed to the care and well-being of each child, have a deep sense of pride in our school and community and work together to contribute to the holistic development of all children entrusted to our care. We seek to provide a safe environment to break the stigma surrounding periods and promoting respect, understanding and open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating.

St Finian's PS supports Period Dignity through:

- taking a whole school approach to communicate about period dignity and related issues.
- promoting the importance of period dignity
- challenging negative views, gender inequality, stereotypes, and stigma around periods.
- educating all pupils on period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing.
- complementing the provision of free products with education around periods, period dignity and menstrual wellbeing.

5.2 Child-Centred Provision

St Finian's PS supports pupils by:

- providing Pastoral Care to address issues that affect young people in relation to periods or period dignity
- providing appropriate support for pupils with SEN.
- considering gender, culture, religion, and age range when planning and implementing the scheme
- engaging with pupils when determining how and where period products are available
- evaluating the impact of period dignity scheme through pupil feedback

6.0 The Period Dignity Scheme

Free products are not aimed at providing a blanket provision for all pupils, rather the scheme aims to ensure products are available to menstruating pupils when they need them. This may include pupils who struggle to afford products, those who have forgotten to bring products in and those who have unexpectedly started their period in school.

6.1 Engagement with Pupils

Through our excellent RSE and PDMU programme, female pupils in Years 6 & 7 are informed about the scheme. Research shows that pupils are embarrassed to ask members of staff for products; this is also addressed through the RSE programme. The scheme is for the pupils and their concerns should be listened to so as to protect dignity and to avoid anxiety, embarrassment, and stigma. If pupils are invested in the project, they are more likely to support it rather than misuse it.

6.2 Promotion

Relevant staff should inform all pupils (male and female) and parents about the project. All lesson content will avoid stereotypes around girls and use language which reflect the diversity of school, avoiding words associated with periods that may cause embarrassment or sound negative e.g., 'sanitary/hygiene' as learners may associate with being unclean and 'poverty/affordability' as this may imply products are only for those who cannot purchase products.

Parents, staff and children should all be informed where products can be accessed and that pupils are aware of the key staff involved.

6.3 Free Period products (term time)

We have chosen to supply a range of free period products as required. Products will be sourced by the coordinators on an annual basis although the EA have delivered towels in September 2022 to all schools without ordering. Pupils are initially provided with relevant advice on how to use the products safely and dispose of them correctly.

6.4 Storage of Period Products and Practicality

Period products are stored sensitively and made available either directly from either coordinator or by via the class teacher who will liaise with a coordinator. Research shows that including other items such as wet wipes, bobbles and tissues may help to destigmatise access to storage.

All products remain individually wrapped and any expired products are disposed of.

6.5 Free period products during the holidays

Provision does not include school holidays, however if budget allows, then arrangements can be set in place to provide for pupils for whom this is essential.

6.6 Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education and Learning

The teaching of Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing is a key part of the RSE programme (for both boys and girls). It supports the school's ethos and reflects moral and religious principles of parents/carers and school management by promoting not only the intellectual, but also the moral, personal, and social development of the child. The teaching of Period Dignity is inclusive and focuses on equality, health and hygiene, self-esteem, respect and understanding. It complements the St Finian's PS ethos through encouraging the provision of a safe and secure learning environment to assist **all** children, including menstruating pupils, to reach their full potential.

7.0 Teaching Arrangements

All male and female pupils from will be educated about Personal Development and Mutual Understanding with the focus on respect and understanding. Lesson content will be guided mainly by CCEA and The Flourish Programme and will include a mixture of child-centred teaching resources relevant to primary level. Parental consent is sought. The timing of lessons may vary dependant on the maturity of children. Puberty and body changes will be taught through the Love for Life programme in P7.

Teaching staff evaluate planners and pupils have an opportunity to give feedback on their learning throughout the sessions and the availability of period products in school. The programme will also be monitored and reviewed by all staff.

7.1 SEN Provision

Required support for children with SEN should be addressed and an appropriate plan drawn up between SENCO, class teacher and parent/carer. Reasonable adjustments may be set in place to alleviate disadvantage and ensure pupils with SEN are given appropriate provision.

7.2 Inclusive Learning

- Our school will ensure inclusive learning by considering gender, culture, religion, ability and the age of learners when planning lessons and rolling out the scheme.

- Provision for transgender and non-binary pupils who may have periods will be considered if necessary so as not to discriminate when planning lessons, accessing products and implementing the practicalities of the scheme. The disabled toilet is available should this be required.
- Consider how learning provision can be inclusive through images/language e.g. a gender-neutral mascot, the term 'period products' as opposed to 'feminine hygiene products'.

7.3 Through educational activities related to Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing, St Finian's PS aims to:

- inform pupils on the facts of menstruation
- break the negative stigma/taboo surrounding periods and promote respect and understanding
- address challenges such as pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and myths
- inform pupils on menstrual wellness (physical and emotional)
- allow open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating.
- support good health and prevent young people wearing the wrong product, substituting for a poor-quality product or toilet roll, or wearing a product that is no longer safe.
- encourage the uptake of free period products in school when needed
- help keep young people in school and increase concentration in class through not having to worry about lack of period products or leaking
- promote confidence to participate in sports and other extra-curricular activities when menstruating by having access to products
- build general self-esteem and self-confidence of menstruating pupils
- provide advice/care for pupils with sensitive period related issues.

8.0 Staff Training

The Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education Key Contact will attend training by CCEA and use recordings of the Teacher Professional Learning and/ or PowerPoint presentations to cascade learning to other members of staff, ensuring a whole-school approach to the implementation of the scheme.

Teachers shall have access to resources from CCEA's website as they are added over the incoming academic year. Teachers will be able to explore resources via the TPL sessions.

Educational professionals and support staff (male and female) all need to understand the policy behind the scheme, how it links to RSE within the curriculum, the processes involved in ordering products and how the products are utilised.

9.0 Managing Issues

9.1 Staff will -

- Encourage positive behaviour to help ensure products are not misused or tampered with.
- Encourage all pupils to be respectful and watch out for and address signs of possible bullying (e.g. negative remarks, making fun of a menstruating pupil)
- Watch out for warning signs that indicate a pupil may be experiencing emotional or physical distress due to having a period.
- Be supportive, caring, sensitive and non-judgemental
- Store a clean set of clothes and have somewhere for a pupil to lie down in case needed.
- Ensure the Ladies' toilet and staff room store are kept well stocked.
- Work alongside parents, to ensure that absences are not caused by children unable to manage periods or lacking confidence.
- Work alongside parents to ensure that the necessary documentation/permissions are in place should a child require medication e.g. pain killers

10.0 Involving and consulting with parents/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.
- As part of wider RSE teaching, relevant parents/carers will be informed of the scheme/lessons via Seesaw.
- 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.
- Parents may withdraw their child from period dignity/menstrual lessons by writing to the Principal and/or class teacher.

11.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing provision should be monitored on an ongoing basis by key contact, staff and pupils. Staff should report any concerning issues promptly to the coordinator to find a quick and effective solution. Pupil feedback will provide a vital insight into the success of the roll out the scheme. Feedback regarding the operation of the scheme should include questions such as:

- The merits of the scheme
- The extent to which is being used by pupils and teachers
- How it is being rolled out within the school
- How it is being integrated with RSE
- The utilisation of the budget
- The perceived impact if the scheme on pupil's confidence, wellbeing, attendance, and attainment

The PDMU coordinator will be responsible for an annual evaluation and review of the scheme for the school's own records.

P6/7 children and parents who have participated in the lessons/scheme will have opportunities to provide essential feedback.

The policy will be reviewed in January September 2026 by the Principal and Coordinators.

12.0 Linked Policies

There is considerable crossover between this Policy and other policies for:

- Pastoral Care;
- Safeguarding;
- PDMU;
- RSE;
- Addressing Bullying;