



PUPIL PERIOD DIGNITY AND MENSTRUAL WELLBEING POLICY

Belfast High School

Date: May 2024

Date Ratified: 29 May 2024

Ratified by: Board of Governors

Responsibility: Board of Governors

Author: Vice Principal

Review Date: May 2027

Ethos

At Belfast High School we aim to create a caring environment in which the needs of each pupil are considered. Central to this aim is the desire to support our pupils throughout a formative time in their physical, mental and emotional development. This includes supporting pupils who are menstruating.

Rationale

Period Dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a pupil during their menstrual 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.

This policy is designed to outline how the School supports pupils who are menstruating through promoting Period Dignity and tackling period poverty.

Aims and Objectives

- To raise awareness of the “toxic trio” of inaccessibility to period products, lack of menstrual education and period stigma.
- To provide education and awareness around Period Dignity in an inclusive and equitable manner.
- To ensure that products are available to pupils where and when they need them.
- To help reduce barriers to learning that pupils may face due to menstrual periods.
- To provide a supportive learning environment for all.
- Support good health and wellbeing.

A Rights Respecting School

Belfast High School is a Rights Respecting School, recognised through the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award.

A Rights Respecting School teaches and actively promotes awareness of child rights and models rights and respect in all its relationships – between adults and pupils, between adults and between pupils. Pupils are aware of their rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the importance of ensuring that their behaviours uphold their rights and those of their peers.

https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/12/RSSA_Good_Practice_Review.pdf

Policy Guidance and Context

The policy has been developed whilst considering the following:

- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. This is available at www.legislation.gov.uk
- Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2022/25/enacted>
- The relevant sections of UNCRC, available at www.unicef.org.uk
- Every School a Good School <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/every-school-good-school-policy-school-improvement>

- Together Towards Improvement <https://www.etini.gov.uk/together-towards-improvement>
- Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy <https://www.educationni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/cred-policy.pdf>
- CCEA Period Dignity resources: <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/period-dignity>
- Children and Young peoples' strategy for Northern Ireland: <https://www.educationni.gov.uk/publications/children-and-young-peoples-strategy-2020-2030>
- CCEA RSE Hub: <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexualityeducation-rse>
- Northern Ireland Curriculum: <https://ccea.org.uk/about/what-we-do/curriculum>
http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stage_3/statutory_curriculum_ks3.pdf
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/statutory-curriculum>

Supporting Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Amongst Pupils in Belfast High School

The Period Dignity scheme in Belfast High School is led by the Teacher with Responsibility for Pupil and Staff Health and Wellbeing and a group of pupil Wellbeing Ambassadors. 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-raising around Period Dignity and menstrual wellbeing takes place through the School's preventative curriculum in an inclusive manner with age-appropriate content being delivered across the school so that our young people are equipped with the skills, attitudes and behaviours to recognise, understand and respect the different challenges and difficulties that people may experience when menstruating, irrespective of religious belief, race, disability, age or sexual orientation.

When delivering teaching around the issues involved with Period Dignity and menstrual wellbeing, it is our intention to break down and reduce any stigma or embarrassment of periods and the associated issues. At all times we seek it to be effective whilst ensuring that all menstruating pupils feel supported.

Pupil Wellbeing Ambassadors have been involved in the consultation on the choice of products available in School and they also take an active role in the replenishment of supplies. Pupils are informed of the Period Dignity scheme during Assemblies, Form Period classes and when other opportunities arise. Pupil Wellbeing Ambassadors also create and display posters with the aim of further enhancing the knowledge and awareness of pupils about different period products, Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), hygiene, body image, endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).

The Teacher with Responsibility for Pupil and Staff Health and Wellbeing also oversees education for our male pupils which covers Period Dignity, period poverty, equality and menstrual wellbeing.

Teaching resources are carefully selected to the age and learning needs of the pupils. Resources used, including images, videos and language do not include inappropriate or explicit content. All resources are inclusive and consistent with the ethos and values of the School as well as ensuring that they are factually accurate and up to date.

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.

Products Available to Pupils

The School address issues that affect young people in relation to periods and Period Dignity by providing changes of underclothes, tights, skirts and leggings in addition to period products.

A selection of period products (sanitary towels and tampons; and, when available, reusable period pants) are available in the toilets and are stored in discreet baskets which are regularly replenished. There are also clear instructions in toilets as to where additional period products are kept.

In addition to the above, full packets of sanitary products are available before each holiday period and can be collected from a discreet location adjacent to girls' changing facilities. Pupils can collect enough products to last them for the forthcoming holiday.

Pupil Wellbeing Ambassadors and staff help to monitor and replenish the period products. This includes checking dates on products. A yearly order is placed and stored in School.

The Role of Staff

All staff should be aware of the importance of promoting Period Dignity. Staff are asked to be alert to signs of physical and emotional distress that a pupil may be experiencing in relation to periods, for example, discomfort, pain, lack of concentration, leaking, anxiety or being unable to sit still. Staff manage such situations sensitively in line with our school values and ethos by helping the pupil to manage the situation. Key staff roles and responsibilities:

- The Period Dignity Lead in the School is the Teacher with Responsibility for Pupil and Staff Health and Well-being who acts as the liaison with the wider School community.
- A member of the School's Senior Leadership Team liaises with the Teacher with Responsibility for Pupil and Staff Health and Well-being on a regular basis.
- Heads of Year help to co-ordinate Period Dignity education within the Preventative Curriculum for their Year group.
- The SENCO and, where applicable, Classroom Assistants, will ensure pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) know how to access period products.

The Role of Parents/Carers

The School encourages our parents/carers to work in partnership with us by talking to their children about Period Dignity and menstrual wellbeing.

Relationships and Sexuality Education and the Preventative Curriculum are statutory components of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, and it is within this context that Period Dignity and menstrual wellbeing is primarily addressed.

Other Relevant School Policies

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance – Pupils;
- Health and Safety;
- Intimate Care;
- Pastoral Care;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Special Educational Needs;
- Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs

Review

This policy will be kept under review by the Board of Governors, in line with the School's Policy Review Schedule.

Statement on Arrangements for the Provision of Free Period Products

Details of Specified Public Service Body

Name of Specified Public Service Body	Belfast High School
Main Address of Specified Public Service Body	740 Shore Rd Newtownabbey BT37 0PX
Location of sites where free period products are available	All female and accessible toilet facilities within BHS premises.

Publication Details

Date of first publication	1 March 2025
Where will this Statement be published?	The Statement on Arrangements is included in the Pupil Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Policy which is on the School website.

Details of Consultation Carried Out

WHEN was the consultation carried out?	16 December 2024 – 16 February 2025
WHO was consulted?	Pupils, parents/carers, Governors and staff of Belfast High School
HOW did the consultation process establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ways in which product users ought to be able to obtain free period products? the locations in the School premises in which period products ought to be obtainable free of charge? the types of period products which ought to be available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation allowed respondents to indicate where and how they felt free period products should be obtained The consultation allowed respondents to select which products they thought should be available from a range of eight options (including reusable products)
HOW did the consultation have regard for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the dignity, privacy and confidentiality of product users articles which are reusable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents were able to respond privately and anonymously through a Google Form. The responses were only directly accessible by the Principal and Vice Principals Participants were asked to select which products they thought should be available from a range of eight options (including reusable products).

The Arrangements

Belfast High School conducted an eight-week anonymous consultation process with parents/carers, pupils Governors and staff on the provision of free period products, the results of which have been used to develop the arrangements for the provision of free period products within the School.

In line with the Department of Education Guidance, Belfast High School has used the results of the consultation to put arrangements in place for the provision of free period products; however, provision was already in place prior to the consultation. The consultation has shaped the location and type of products available for pupils, staff and visitors while on site at Belfast High School.

With regard to the products available, 99% of respondents indicated that period pads should be made available while 82% indicated a preference for tampons. Of the eight available options, these 2 options were the most popular selections during the consultation process. In addition, 53% of respondents indicated a preference for pantyliners. Under one-fifth of participants indicated a preference for reusable products.

In line with the responses, Belfast High School will provide free of charge period pads, tampons and pantyliners. These will be available in female toilets and accessible toilets.

The School will also display information on toxic shock syndrome in dispensing locations.

Publicising the Arrangements

Information publicising the provision of free period products will be displayed on the School Health and Wellbeing noticeboards and in each location where the products are available.