Period Dignity Policy

Scoil na Fuiseoige



**Period Dignity**

**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:

* the cost of period products
* accessibility of period products; and
* 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.

**Child-Centered provision**

Scoil na Fuiseoige 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

**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.**

* **Early consultation with pupils to launch the scheme**

Conversations should be held with all female pupils from year 6&7 to inform about the scheme. This initial engagement is key as it provides the opportunity for pupils to discuss where they feel is best to store and access period products. Research shows that pupils are embarrassed to ask members of staff for products. 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.

* **Promotion**

Inform all female pupils in primary 6&7 about the project. Positively promote the scheme through a letter home informing parents of the benefits associated with it. Ensure everyone knows where products can be accessed and that pupils are aware of the key staff involved.

* **Free Period products (term time)**

We have chosen to supply Sanitary towels as free period products. This follows guidance from CCEA advising against the use of tampons in primary schools. Products will be ordered by the principal on an annual basis. Pupils should initially be provided with relevant advice on how to use the product safely and dispose of correctly.

* **Storage of Period Products and Practicality**

After consultation with pupils, it was decided that period products, should be made available in the disabled toilet beside the school office. The Key Contact monitors and replenishes period product supplies on a weekly basis. This includes monitoring the products to ensure pupils are not taking more than they need, checking for tampering and expiry dates. Ensure all products remain individually wrapped and dispose of any expired products.

* **Free period Products (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.

* **Key Staff**

Pupils should feel confident in knowing they can approach Christine (pastoral care/ Key Contact) or JoJo (School Secretary) with any sensitive/period/scheme related issues they may have.

**Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education and Learning**

Through the education of Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Scoil na Fuiseoige aims to;

* break the stigma/taboo surrounding periods and promote respect and understanding
* address challenges such as pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and myths
* 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

**Staff Training**

* The Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education Key Contact (Christine) 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.

**Involving and consulting with parents or 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.
* Parents/carers will be informed of the scheme via letter.
* 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.

Managing Issues

* Encourage positive behaviour to help ensure products are not misused or tampered with.
* Staff should 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)
* Staff should watch out for warning signs that indicate a pupil may be experiencing emotional or physical distress due to having a period.
* Staff should be supportive and non-judgmental
* When a pupil is missing school due to menstruation, possible support and reassurance should be discussed with pupil and parent/ carer to encourage attendance.