



# **Period Dignity & Menstrual Wellbeing Policy**

June 2025

## **RATIONALE**

This policy has been produced to:

- Promote a high standard of excellence and consistency of approach amongst all staff;
- Communicate the main features of the teaching and learning of period dignity within our school; and
- Form a reference document, particularly in relation to how period products are utilised in school.

## **CONSULTATION**

On-going self-evaluation is a key aspect of Botanic Primary School. When developing and drafting this policy, staff and the Board of Governors were consulted.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Botanic Primary School is committed to promoting the physical, emotional and social development, and health and wellbeing of its pupils through the management of a period dignity scheme. This policy outlines the organisation, teaching and management of our period dignity scheme at Botanic Primary School.

## **WHAT IS PERIOD DIGNITY & MENSTRUAL WELLBEING?**

'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.' (CCEA, 2023)

Our scheme aims to promote period dignity and tackle period poverty (poor menstrual knowledge and/or access to period products).

## **NI Curriculum**

Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing is embedded in the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) aspect of the NI Curriculum (2007) as it is concerned with and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils.

## **BOTANIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AIMS FOR OUR PERIOD DIGNITY SCHEME:**

In line with our school mission statement that our children delight in achievement, effort and respect, we aim:

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents/guardians understand the term 'period dignity';
- To raise awareness of the Toxic Trio and how this impacts children and young people;
- To promote period dignity in school and ensure that everyone who needs them has free access to period products;
- To ensure that all pupils, staff and parents/guardians understand the impact of periods on the emotional, mental, social and educational wellbeing of pupils;
- To enable learners to achieve their potential by reducing any barriers they may experience due to periods;

- To reduce stigma/taboo in relation to periods by providing **all pupils** with relevant, age-appropriate information on periods;
- To enable learners to understand how to deal with period issues, hygiene and disposal of period products;
- To promote open discussion about what people may experience when menstruating; and
- To limit the impact of the Toxic Trio: the cost of sanitary products; a lack of education about periods; and shame, stigma and taboo.

**BOTANIC PRIMARY SCHOOL HOPES THIS WILL:**

- Promote pupils' understanding of health, wellbeing and personal hygiene;
- Promote respect and understanding amongst pupils; and
- Have a positive impact on pupil confidence, wellbeing, attendance and attainment.

This will complement our school ethos that our children are encouraged, seen and valued.

## **CHILD CENTRED PROVISION**

### **Inclusion**

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of education. Taking into account this legislation, all pupils have a right to an education that adequately prepares them for adult life, regardless of their age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, disability status, religion or social class. As per the beliefs of the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy, this inclusive approach will help remove the barriers which prejudice can create.

Botanic Primary School's Period Dignity scheme aims to be a positive experience for all participants. It is developmental, accessible and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As maturity is not always determined by chronological age, teachers will be sympathetic to the personal and emotional circumstances of each individual pupil. They are aware of, and take into account, the variety of existing pupil knowledge levels, differing attitudes and beliefs, and the pupil's capacity to understand issues. This is particularly important in relation to children with special educational needs where their physical development may outstrip emotional maturity.

### **Rights of the Child**

Northern Ireland follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), thus agreeing to uphold the rights of children and young people as set out in the Convention. Through a period dignity scheme, Botanic Primary School will take into account the following articles of the UNCRC:

Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 6: Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 24: Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and wellbeing so that children can stay healthy.

### **Children and Young People's Strategy**

The Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030 focuses on eight high-level outcomes for children and young people. These outcomes align with the eight areas of wellbeing set out in the Children's Services Co-operation Act:

- Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy;
- Children and young people enjoy play and leisure;
- Children and young people learn and achieve;
- Children and young people live in safety and stability;
- Children and young people experience economic and environmental wellbeing;
- Children and young people make a positive contribution to society;
- Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights; and
- Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

As pupil wellbeing is a forefront motivation of Botanic Primary School, our Period Dignity scheme will work alongside the aims of The Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030.

## **Every School a Good School**

We support the Department of Education's wider vision which is 'to ensure that every learner fulfils his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.' The Period Dignity scheme at Botanic Primary School relates to key principles of Every School a Good School including:

- The interests of pupils, rather than institutions, must be at the centre of efforts to improve educational achievement and tackle underachievement;
- Equity of access and equity of provision as well as a continuum of provision for a diversity of need; and
- Recognition that the improvement process is a collaborative one, requiring communication and co-operation within the school and between the school and its parents/guardians and the wider community that it serves.

## **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 wear the wrong product, substitute for a poor-quality product or toilet roll, or wear a product for longer than is safe.

## **HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **Period Dignity & Menstrual Wellbeing within Botanic Primary School**

School provisions supporting period dignity & wellbeing include:

- Posters visually promoting the importance of period dignity and challenging stigma;
- Lessons in Key Stage 2 around periods, period dignity and menstrual wellbeing (see Relationships & Sexual Education (RSE) framework);
- Educating boys on periods and menstrual wellbeing to aid their understanding of periods, reduce any stigma associated with periods amongst boys and challenge any common myths (see RSE framework);
- Ensuring pupils have access to period products in a location that is discreet;
- Stocking only pads to reduce the risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome;
- Monitoring and replenishing period products;
- 'Normalising' the availability of period products alongside toilet roll and soap in public toilets;
- Stocking spare pants and items of clothing;
- Giving pupils hygienic and discreet methods to dispose of period products within the bathroom, ensuring they know how to dispose of the products correctly;
- Helping pupils identify staff members whom they can approach with any issues;
- Being vigilant of any children who are distressed or experiencing discomfort due to menstruation;
- Working alongside parents/guardians, to ensure that absences are not caused by children unable to manage periods or lacking confidence; and
- Treating pupils with care and sensitivity.

### **Planning and Teaching**

It is expected that teachers will evaluate and modify their planning according to the needs and maturity of the pupils. At times, this may involve asking pupils for their input/evaluation of the Period Dignity scheme through questionnaires and school council.

Teachers are encouraged to share good practice relating to Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing. If training is available, staff may attend and disseminate their training with the relevant staff.

Lessons on periods and menstrual wellbeing may be taught through realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Ground rules should be agreed upon to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage respect for each other's opinions.

### **Progression and Continuity**

As part of planning for progression and continuity, all staff should teach period dignity and menstrual wellbeing as per the RSE framework, created by the coordinator and agreed by the Senior Leadership Team. This framework has been created in line with CEA's Relationships and Sexuality Education Progression Framework (2022) and in line with Botanic Primary School's values.

As pupils mature, they will be encouraged to appreciate the importance of dignity and respect for themselves and others. Through PDMU and the World Around Us (WAU), children will learn about changes in their bodies as they grow older and the emotional and physical changes they may expect during puberty. As the average age for puberty is 8–12 years old for girls and 9–14 years old for boys, schools must schedule learning about puberty during Key Stage 2 so that they are prepared for these changes. This includes teaching boys about the menstrual wellbeing of girls so that they develop knowledge and awareness, and stigma can be reduced.

### **Answering Pupils' Questions**

There will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a group of pupils. An initial judgement will need to be made about whether or not it is appropriate to deal with the issues with the whole class. If pupils raise issues that are offensive to some, or beyond the maturity level of the majority of the pupils, staff will not answer these questions in class. The teacher may wish to discuss the issues with the parents/guardians to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Botanic Primary School's Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team might also provide useful guidance. The teacher may decide to answer the question in a sensitive manner which may require the presence of another colleague. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents/guardians. If the question asked raises safeguarding concerns, this will be referred to the Designated Teacher.

### **Terminology**

The language that we use is important in order to promote Period Dignity and challenge stigmas associated with periods.

Sanitary products are often used to describe period products. However, the word 'sanitary' conjures up images of periods being unhygienic or dirty. Instead, the products that they use to help manage periods should be referred to as **period products** (pads, tampons, menstrual cups and period pants).

Period poverty was the term coined to highlight the issue that people suffer during their period due to lack of: period products, facilities and education. However, this term can also create a stigma for menstruators as they are led to believe that it is their fault if they cannot afford period products, cannot access clean facilities and/or they do not have the knowledge to help support them during their period. Instead, **period dignity** is the preferred term.

All staff will use the proper biological names for body parts, where appropriate and relevant to the RSE programme. The use of common slang will be avoided where possible. Parents/guardians are welcome to view the school framework and become familiar with the language used within it.

### **Resources and Outside Agencies**

All resources (books, videos, TV programmes, websites, leaflets etc) will be vetted before use to ensure they are consistent with the school's policy and ethos, are factual and up-to-date.

If education and/or health professionals from statutory or voluntary organisations are invited into the school, the activities which the agency or individual provide will complement the on-going programme within the school. Care will be taken to ascertain that they have read and are willing to comply with the school policy, that they know what has been taught in preparation for their visit and what will be done as follow-up. The teacher will always be present when an individual or

representative from an external agency is taking an aspect of RSE. Such a visit is **not** to be seen as the RSE or Period Dignity programme, but as an integral part of it.

## **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

### **Role of the Period Dignity Key Contact**

In Botanic Primary School, all teachers accept shared responsibility for promoting period dignity throughout the school. However, one teacher has designated responsibility for overseeing this scheme: the Period Dignity Key Contact is responsible for leading the development of the scheme, ensuring the effective utilisation and availability of period products and will receive important information and updates on the NI Period Dignity Pilot Scheme. This will be in consultation with the principal, Senior Leadership team, teachers, parents/guardians and governors, and in accordance with the school's development plan.

- School Governor with oversight of the Period Dignity Programme - Miss Stewart
- Period Dignity Key Contact – Miss Barnes
- Pastoral Care Leader – Mrs Harper
- SENCo - Mr Douglas
- Safeguarding Designated Teacher – Mrs Lonyai

## **A CONNECTED SCHOOL**

In Botanic Primary School, we believe that the education of our pupils is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, classroom assistants, parents/guardians, pupils, external agencies and the wider community.

### **The Involvement of Parents/Guardians**

Teaching about periods is a matter of health and should be regarded as such. Whilst the classroom teacher has a significant role to play in the implementation of RSE and thus a Period Dignity scheme in school, this role cannot be considered in isolation from the role of parents/guardians and should ideally be in addition to and complementary. The home exerts a major influence on all aspects of a young person's life and especially so in the domain of personal hygiene and physical development.

The school will consider any parental concerns expressed, attempt to deal with any misunderstandings, identify the specific issues and lessons which are problematic, and explain the implications for the pupils in terms of the parts of the statutory programmes of study which will be missed. The social and emotional effects of exclusion should be considered as well as the likelihood that pupils will discuss the content of period dignity and menstrual wellbeing lessons outside the classroom. In all cases, the school will, as far as possible, try to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution.

## **CONCLUSION**

This policy will be in line with other school policies including:

- Anti-bullying & Cyberbullying Policy
- RSE Policy
- PDMU Policy
- Pastoral Care
- Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

The Period Dignity & Menstrual Wellbeing Policy is:

- Agreed with the Board of Governors;
- Shared with parents/guardians via the school office and website; and
- Regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with school stakeholders: staff, children, parents/guardians and governors.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years but may be updated sooner in response to:

- relevant circulars and publications provided by the Department of Education, the Education Authority or CCEA;
- a recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate;
- issues arising from the implementation of the Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Programme in school; or
- reviews of other related school policies.

Policy written by: H.Barnes (PDMU Coordinator & Period Dignity Key Contact)

Date for the policy to be reviewed: June 2028

[Menstrual Wellbeing: Primary Links.pdf \(cea.org.uk\)](#)

\*Please note that these are not necessarily recommendations but rather sources of further information for parents/guardians to consider.

