



Loreto Grammar School

Period Dignity Policy

This Period dignity policy has been written for Loreto Grammar School in August 2022. The aims of the Period Dignity / Menstrual Wellbeing policy will be outlined and how they support the values, ethos, and moral and ethical framework of Loreto Grammar School, Omagh

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.

Period Dignity Policy aims and objectives

The aims of the period dignity scheme at Loreto Grammar School, Omagh include:

- Ensure that period products are available to learners who menstruate where and when they need them, as well as provide educational support within the school setting.

By having access to free period products the Period Dignity Scheme /Curriculum will:

- Help promote equality in Loreto
 - Help keep students in Loreto
 - Increase concentration in class
 - Increase student's confidence to participate in sports
 - Support good health and well-being
 - Increase knowledge of the menstrual cycle, periods and menstrual well-being.
- Educate the whole school community and removal of the taboo about periods.
 - Raise awareness amongst staff, parents and students
 - Challenge negative attitudes, stereotypes and gender inequality around periods.
 - Link to the school's Development Plan to support Student's emotional health and wellbeing in the School.
 - Ensure that pupils, staff and parents/carers understand the term 'period dignity'
 - Raise awareness of the Toxic Trio and how this impacts children and young people.
 - Promote period dignity in school and ensure that everyone who needs them has free access to period products.
 - Enable learners to achieve their potential by reducing any barriers they may experience due to periods.
 - Enable learners to understand how to deal with period issues, hygiene and disposal of period products.
 - Promote respect, understanding and open discussion about what people may experience when menstruating and have a positive impact on pupil confidence, well-being, attendance and attainment.

Links to other policies in Loreto

- The Period Dignity Policy will also link to the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy and the new RSE Framework.
- Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEN policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy

Links to other supporting material

- The policy takes account of **The Equality Act** (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. This is available at www.legislation.gov.uk. These Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of:

- ◆ goods, facilities or services;
- ◆ premises;
- ◆ education; and
- ◆ public functions.

- The Policy also links to the **UNCRC**, available at www.unicef.org.uk. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):
 - ◆ Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
 - ◆ Article 6 (life, survival and development)
 - ◆ 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.

The policy:

- Contributes to **Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement**. These documents are available at www.deni.gov.uk
- Helps to address better the various barriers to learning faced by children.

The Department of Education's wider vision is:

- ◆ 'To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her full potential at each stage of her or his development.'

Key principles (relevant to the Period Dignity Scheme)

- ◆ 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;

- ◇ Recognition that the improvement process is a collaborative one, requiring communication and co-operation within the school and between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves. Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy.
- ◇ A policy in which equality and inclusion are one of the cornerstones of an education system which enables every learner to fulfil his or her potential and which removes the barriers which prejudice such as sectarianism, racism and homophobia can create.
- ◇ Complements the curriculum by providing teachers and youth workers with the capacity to address what are often difficult and sensitive issues; by ensuring good practice is disseminated and relevant materials are available; by equipping children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to recognize, understand and respect difference in all its forms; and by providing opportunities for children and young people to put these skills into practice.
- ◇ Covers all section 75 groups*, so that our children and young people can learn to handle diversity in all its various forms and becomes fully embedded into educational settings to ensure that we prepare our children and young people to take their place in society.
- ◇ Recognises the role that schools can and do play in encouraging learners to become personally, emotionally, socially and physically effective; to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives; and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

*Promote equality of opportunity in respect of religious belief, political opinion, gender, race, disability, age, marital status, dependents and sexual orientation.

- The policy supports **Children and Young peoples’ strategy for Northern Ireland:**

The Strategy focuses on eight high-level outcomes for children and young people which align with the eight areas of wellbeing set out in the Children’s Services Co-operation Act.

By achieving these outcomes, we will have improved the wellbeing of our children and young people.

- ◇ 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 well-being.
- ◇ Children and young people make a positive contribution to society.
- ◇ Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights.
- ◇ Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

Policy Formation and Consultation Process

- This policy has been drawn up following guidance laid out by CCEA.

- Principal, Senior Management Team and Pastoral Care Staff have been involved in the consultation.
- The policy will be ratified by the Board of Governors
- The policy will be made available to all teaching, non-teaching staff via the Staff Handbook.
- The policy will be made available to Parents/ Guardians via Text Link.
- The policy will be reviewed biannually by Principal and Senior Management Team.

Key Staff Roles and Responsibilities

- Principal: Mrs Cullinan
- Period Dignity Key Contact: Ms SJ Fahy
- Vice Principal - Pastoral Care and Welfare: TBC
- Senior Teacher for Learner-Centred Provision: Ms SJ Fahy
- Head of SEN / Learning Support Coordinator: Mrs J Young
- Safeguarding Team: Ms SJ Fahy and Mrs J Young
- Heads of Year: Mrs Mullan, Miss Barbour, Mrs Mc Nally, Mrs Gorman, Ms Ryan, Miss Cumiskey, Mrs Kelly
- Pupil Welfare Officer: Mrs S Casey

Whole School Approach to Period Dignity

School Ethos will be reflected in Loreto Grammar School, Omagh by:

- Taking a whole school approach to communicate about period dignity and related issues.
- Visibly 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.

Child-Centred provision will be reflected in Loreto Grammar School, Omagh 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, staff, parental feedback,

The Period Dignity Scheme Actions in Loreto Grammar School:

- Early consultation was carried out through online surveys via Forms and Teams. Students were consulted on access to period products and product preference.
- Free period products will be selected and purchased by Ms SJ Fahy.
- Sanitary towels and tampons are available to students.
- Products are available in bags in all cubicles in toilets.
- Products will be made available from the school office. Pupils will be made aware of product availability during holiday periods.
- Period products will be stored in the Medical Room.
- Health and Wellbeing Prefects are responsible for monitoring and replenishing period product supplies including checking expiry dates.
- Pupils can approach Ms Fahy (Senior Teacher for Learner Centred Provision), Mrs Casey (PWO), and their Head of Year with any issues they may have.
- Staff consulted on and informed of scheme, policy and updates.
- Parents will be made aware through consultation and dissemination of the policy. Information will also be shared via school website and social media.

Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education and Learning

Teaching Approaches/Strategies

The Period Dignity scheme sits firmly within our Pastoral Care programme and will be promoted and discussed at Key Stage 3 under the concept of Relationships & Sexuality and at Key Stages 4 & 5 under Personal Health & Wellbeing within our Personal Development Curriculum and within appropriate subject areas. The education of students will take place through Personal Development or LLW lessons. Teaching of period dignity and menstrual wellbeing will be incorporated into the curriculum on an ongoing basis, building on knowledge and understanding, rather than being treated as a one-off lesson. There will also be an opportunity for external agencies to come in to deliver linked to RSE education. All teachers are responsible for the delivery of menstrual education if timetabled for Personal Development or LLW. SEN students may seek further help or clarification from their classroom assistant, LSCO or Assistant LSCO. Carefully selected and appropriate to the age and learning needs of pupils. Our overarching aim in educating pupils within the Pastoral Programme is to challenge negative views, stereotypes, gender inequality and stigma in line with our school's Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Resources used, including images, videos and language, should not include inappropriate or explicit content. Resources should be reviewed and quality assured to ensure that they are inclusive and consistent with the school's ethos and values.

All teaching resources should:

1. reflect the ethos of Loreto

2. be age-appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to the needs and experiences of all pupils; and
3. be factually accurate, up-to-date and make clear distinctions between fact and opinion or myth.

Note: CCEA resources to support this area are under development.

Guidance issued from NHS, CCEA and in DE Circulars will inform curricular planning to ensure relevance. Resources will be carefully selected to the age and learning needs of the pupils. All resources will be reviewed and quality assured by the Period Dignity Lead and/or those delivering the Personal Development Curriculum to ensure that they are inclusive and consistent with the ethos and values of Loreto.

The resources used in the Pastoral Care / Personal Development Curriculum will be those recommended or produced by CCEA. These resources will address the following key topics and themes:

Key facts about the menstrual cycle;

- What is and isn't normal;
- Communication skills needed to ask for help;
- The range of period products available, how and when they're used, and their advantages and disadvantages;
- Menstrual wellness – physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing leading up to and during periods;
- Menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations;
- Challenges – pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment and myths;
- Endometriosis and other menstruation-related issues – symptoms, support and treatment; and Period poverty.
- Challenging male privilege.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in consultation with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the policy. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years but may also be updated in response to:

1. relevant circulars and publications provided by the Department of Education, the Education Authority or CCEA;
2. recommendation(s) by the Education and Training Inspectorate;
3. specific issues arising from the implementation of the Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Programme in school; or
4. reviews of other related school policies such as the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Pastoral Policy or the Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Programme will be evaluated and reviewed at least every 2 years using pupil, staff and parent/guardian feedback.

1. Involving and consulting with parents or carers.

RSE is a statutory component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. However, parents/ guardians have a right to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes. Although there is no legislative provision permitting parents to withdraw their child from sex education, the school will respect the wishes of parents/ guardians and give due consideration to any such requests received on an individual basis.

Parents/ guardians who wish to withdraw their child from all or part of the school's RSE programme should put their request in writing to the Principal and, preferably, provide the reason(s) for withdrawal.

2. Links across the curriculum and to the wider life of the school

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, for example through Personal development, Learning for Life and Work, Science, Child Development and other identified key subject areas. Other initiatives support and complement education about period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing, including RSE and Health and Wellbeing. Elements of the wider pastoral programme support and complement education about period dignity, period equality and menstrual wellbeing, for example school assemblies.

3. Managing Issues

Staff at Loreto Grammar School, Omagh will be aware of signs which may indicate a pupil may be experiencing emotional or physical distress due to having a period. Staff will be supportive and non-judgemental. If a student is unwell due to their period, they will follow the procedure for accessing first aid.

4. Appendices

1. CCEA Period dignity resources: <https://ceea.org.uk/learning-resources/period-dignity>
2. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. This is available at www.legislation.gov.uk.
3. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): www.unicef.org.uk.
4. Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement: www.deni.gov.uk
5. Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/community-relations-equality-and-diversity-policy>
6. Children and Young peoples' strategy for Northern Ireland: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/children-and-young-peoples-strategy-2020-2030>

7. CCEA RSE Hub: <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse>
8. Key contacts related to period dignity scheme: <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/period-dignity#section-19846>
9. 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>