

## Pastoral Care Policy

### *Period Dignity Policy*

#### **Rationale**

Mossley Primary School staff 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.

#### **Aims**

To address the importance of accessibility and availability of essential care in Mossley Primary School. We aim to ensure that:

- Pupils are provided with facts about menstruation;
- Children are given a comprehensive understanding of menstrual wellness, and how this impacts physical and emotional wellbeing;
- We educate children about menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations;
- Negative attitudes, myths and stereotypes are challenged;
- Free products are provided with education around periods and period dignity;
- There is a positive impact on pupil confidence, well-being, attendance and attainment.

#### **Background**

##### *What is period dignity?*

- 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.
- The pilot scheme was implemented to address period dignity in schools, which aimed to promote period dignity and tackle period poverty, helping learners reach their potential.
- Period poverty generally refers to poor menstrual knowledge and/or access to period products.
- Plan International describes a ‘toxic trio’ as the factors that have led to developing awareness and responses to period dignity. The toxic trio is a combination of:
  - the cost of sanitary products;
  - a lack of education about periods; and
  - shame, stigma and taboo.
- There have been significant developments in the rest of the UK in relation to schemes to provide free period products and promote period dignity through education programmes in schools and other educational establishments.
- On 17 December 2020, the Northern Ireland Executive agreed to fund a pilot programme to provide free period products to all schools in Northern Ireland with effect from September 2021.

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### Legislation

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

- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006  
[www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)  
([www.unicef.org.uk](http://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](http://www.deni.gov.uk))
- Menstrual Well-being in the RSE Curriculum <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse/menstrual-wellbeing>

### Our Ethos

We seek to provide a **safe, caring environment** to ensure the **principles of care** surrounding periods are upheld, valued and promoted in Mossley Primary School. We are **committed to supporting the health and well-being of all our pupils**, and seek to uphold Period Dignity as an integral part of the development of our pupils in line with the following Pastoral and Safeguarding policies:

- Child Protection policy
- Intimate Care policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Pastoral Care policy
- RSE policy
- SEN policy
- Positive Behaviour policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- First Aid policy
- Intimate Care Policy

### Roles and responsibilities

The Period Dignity programme is a whole school initiative, involving pupils, parents, staff and Governors. The policy was consulted with staff, governors and parents and consequently has been made available to parents via our school website, with paper copies available upon request. Parents are given information about Period Dignity and the sanitary items available for pupils in school, when appropriate, through Seesaw, Facebook and our school Website.

- The Board of Governors are responsible for overseeing the implementation of Period Dignity as they review all relevant policies and liaise with key members of staff.
- Mrs Kayes (*Co-Principal, Designated Safeguarding Teacher*) is the **Period Dignity Key Contact/ Period Dignity Champion**.

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- Mrs Kayes works closely with Mr Mulligan (*Co-Principal, Deputy Designated Teacher*) and Mrs Thompson (*Co-VP, Deputy Designated Teacher and SENCo*) along with SLT and all staff members to ensure a whole school approach is followed.
- Mrs Kayes has availed of curriculum teaching materials and Online Teacher Professional Learning provided by CCEA. Staff will continue to follow CCEA guidance and any further Period Dignity circulars to equip themselves for teaching effectively using relevant and current information.
- Mrs Kayes will liaise with P7 teachers to provide 'Love for Life' or a similar appropriate agency to assist with disseminating the teaching of period dignity material in line with CCEA guidance and the ethos of the school.
- Mrs Kayes is responsible for the allocation of funding to purchase period products relevant for school and include pants and tight. These will be purchased through iProcurement.

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.
- P5 – 7 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.

### Consultation

This policy has been drawn up following guidance laid out by CCEA. The Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors have been involved in the consultation:

- The policy will be made available to all teaching and non-teaching staff.
- A copy of the policy is available on the website for consultation for Parents.
- A parent focus group were consulted regarding this policy.
- Any feedback on the policy should be directed to Mrs Kayes (*Co-Principal*).
- The policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Period Dignity Key Contact.
- A finalised version of Mossley Primary School's Period Dignity Policy will be published on the school website following consultation.

## Whole-school approach to period dignity

### *The Period Dignity Scheme*

- Children and parents are informed of the Period Dignity scheme via letter in P5 (Appendix 1) and P6 & 7 (Appendix 2)
- Children are informed of the Key Contact teacher within their year group at the beginning of the school year, and are made aware of where the free products will be kept.
- The products are ordered after consultation with staff and pupils to ensure suitable items are purchased. Orders for pads, pants and tights should be made through the EA Procurement System.
- Sanitary bins and products will be available in a set of drawers that will be in each female toilet in P5, P6 and P7.
- The products are stored and replenished by the Key Contact teacher within each year group when necessary, checking expiry dates on a termly basis.

### *Education and Learning*

- Love for Life will visit the school each year to speak to P7 children about puberty. This visit includes a session focused specifically with menstruation. Both boys and girls attend this workshop. Love for Life also carries out a parent workshop and this information session provides parents with a forum to ask questions and learn about how the subject of puberty and body changes will be taught in school.
- Period Dignity is also addressed throughout the school in Key Stage 2 as part of PDMU using cross curricular themes, practical activities and group/partner work.

Theme	Primary 5	Primary 6	Primary 7
1 Develop our self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem.	√	√	√
2 Examine and explore our own and others' feelings and emotions.	√	√	√
Recognise that feelings may change at times of change and loss	√	√	√
4 Understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity, healthy eating, rest and hygiene.	√	√	√
Know how the body grows and develops.		√	√
Be aware of the physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty.			√

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5 Explore and examine what influences their feelings and behaviour		√	√
Consider the challenges and issues that can arise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at home;</li> <li>• at school;</li> <li>• between friends and how they can be avoided, lessened or resolved.</li> </ul>	√	√	√

**Table 1: Year Group coverage of PDMU Themes from NI Curriculum**

Our aim is to ensure equality and information for all children regardless of gender, ethnicity, culture and religion in a sensitive manner. Lessons will be differentiated to accommodate SEN pupils where appropriate. The children will be challenged to discuss, ask questions and make decisions to equip them for real situations.

### Managing Issues

- Staff will be vigilant for any children who are distressed or experiencing discomfort due to menstruation. Children will be treated with care and sensitivity.
- Pupils will be given support and P5-7 female toilets will always be well stocked with towels, disposal bins, underwear and extra clothes.
- Staff will work alongside parents, to ensure that absences are not caused by children unable to manage periods or lacking confidence. Parents will be informed of any issues that arise.
- When a pupil is missing school due to menstruation, possible support and reassurance should be discussed with pupil and parent/ carer to encourage attendance.

### Staff Training

- The Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing Education Key Contact (*Mrs Kayes*) 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 will 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) will all understand the policy behind the scheme, how it links to RSE within the curriculum and how the products are utilised,

The policy will be reviewed in September 2024 by the Period Dignity Key-Contact (*Mrs Kayes*).

**Appendix 1 – Letter sent out to P5 parents at the beginning of the school year.**

September 2022-000

2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2022

Dear parent/ guardian,

As many of you are aware the onset of puberty affects children at different ages. For some of our girls it can happen from P5 onwards. We are writing to let you know about how we seek to support the girls in school and what arrangements are in place.

Parents are encouraged to inform the class teacher (or a female teacher in the Year Group if you prefer) if their daughter has taken her period. This enables the class teacher to be aware of your daughter's needs, explain routines in school and make things as stress-free and comfortable as possible.

In school, as part of our Period Dignity policy, products including sanitary towels, underwear and tights are available in each of the female toilets in P5 – 7. A set of drawers allows free, easy access to these products and discretion for all pupils. Please let us know if your child has any allergies to certain products. If you would like to provide sanitary towels for your daughter, we suggest these are placed in a small make-up case / pocket in their coat for easy access when they are going to the toilet.

Sanitary bins are also located in each girls' toilet, P5-7. At the beginning of the year, a teacher will inform pupils of the drawers and the products available to them should they require them while explaining the proper hygiene around menstrual and use of sanitary bins.

In deference to the majority, the subject of puberty is kept until P7. In May of P7, both boys and girls, with your permission, participate in a 'Growing Up' talk organised by the Christian charity, Love for Life. This covers many issues including puberty, friendships and transitioning to post-primary school. All staff are happy to support your child through these changes, so please contact them directly to ensure your child receives the best support.

Thank you for your help and support in these matters.

Yours sincerely,

*SWJ Mulligan*

Co-Principal

*D Kayes*

Co-Principal

**Appendix 2 – Letter sent out to P5, P6 and P7 parents at the beginning of the school year.**

September 2022 – 000

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022

**Period Dignity and Menstrual Well-Being**

Dear Parent,

In Mossley Primary School, we are part of a pilot scheme called Period Dignity. The aim of this scheme is outlined in our Period Dignity Policy available on our school website. Period Dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a period, along with the removal/breaking of stigma and taboo around periods. You may have seen / heard this issue being discussed in the media recently.

If you feel that your child would need period products in school; now, or in the future, they are freely available in each female toilet in P5, P6 and P7. In each toilet there is a set of drawers that contains free pads, underwear and tights should your child need these. There is also a sanitary bin in each of the toilets as well. At the beginning of the year, a class teacher will show the pupils where the products are, explain what they are for and show pupils how to dispose of products hygienically.

By having these products located in the female toilets, it is hoped that your child will have more privacy in which to make themselves comfortable while menstruating.

I am happy to talk to you, or your child, about any issues surrounding this matter. You can also make the class teacher aware of any changes which you may notice in your child so that they are able to help. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you or your child have any questions or concerns about menstrual wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

*SWJ Mulligan*

Co-Principal

*D Kayes*

Co-Principal