



# **St Mary's Primary School Banbridge**

## **Period Dignity Policy**



**April 2024**

**Updated: June 2025**

**Our Vision**

**“Safe. Valued. Empowered to Thrive.”**

## Our Mission

We are dedicated to creating a **safe**, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every individual feels **valued**, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

We inspire a love of learning, foster a sense of belonging, and cultivate the skills, values and resilience needed to **thrive** in a diverse and ever-changing world.

## Core Values

Family

Community

Respect

Resilience

Kindness

Tolerance

Perseverance

Responsibility

## Our Vision and Mission

We are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment where every pupil feels safe, valued, and empowered to thrive. This vision is central to our commitment to period dignity. We believe that no child should feel embarrassed, excluded, or disadvantaged because of menstruation. Our policy ensures that all pupils who menstruate are supported with dignity, respect, and care.

By embedding period dignity into our school ethos, we aim to remove barriers to learning and participation, reduce absence related to menstruation, and promote the wellbeing and self-esteem of all pupils. This policy reflects our ongoing commitment to equity, inclusion, and the holistic development of every learner.

## Period Dignity Policy

Our policy is informed by the guidance provided by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and aligns with the principles of the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. This ensures consistency and reliability in provision.

Period dignity means ensuring that every pupil who menstruates has access to the products, information, and support they need to manage their periods with confidence. Our approach is rooted in providing accurate, inclusive education that helps normalise menstruation, reduce stigma, and create a culture of empathy and understanding. By fostering a culture of openness and respect, period dignity initiatives help our pupils feel seen, supported, and confident. This contributes to their overall wellbeing, both emotionally and socially, and promotes a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for everyone.

We are committed to fostering open and respectful conversations about menstruation, where pupils feel safe to ask questions and engage in discussions. By integrating menstrual wellbeing into the Primary 6 and Primary 7 curriculum, we ensure that all pupils, regardless of gender, gain a clear understanding of the biological aspects of menstruation, as well as the importance of respect and equality.

Education is at the heart of our efforts to break down taboos and challenge misinformation. Through thoughtful and age-appropriate teaching, we aim to empower pupils with knowledge and promote a supportive environment for everyone. Providing accurate and inclusive education about menstruation reduces feelings of embarrassment or anxiety, which can affect a pupil's ability to concentrate, engage in lessons, or participate in physical activities.

We provide additional support for pupils who may need more guidance or reassurance, including those with additional learning needs or those experiencing period-related anxiety or health conditions.

(See **Appendix 1: Books to Read** related to Period Dignity).

The designated Safeguarding Officer delivers menstrual wellbeing education confidently and compassionately. CCEA-approved resources, including visual aids, short films, and discussion prompts are used to deliver the message of period dignity. Lessons are designed to be interactive and supportive, allowing pupils to ask questions in a safe environment. The staff engage with parents and carers to ensure they are informed and supportive of the school's

approach, recognising the role of families in reinforcing positive attitudes and understanding at home.

(See **Appendix 2: A Message for Parents – Why Period Dignity Matters?**).

When discussing menstruation, we prioritise the use of inclusive, respectful, and age-appropriate language to ensure all pupils feel comfortable and supported. Pupils are taught the correct biological and social terminology related to menstruation, which helps to normalise the topic and encourage open, informed conversations. Terms such as period, menstruation, and menstrual products are used consistently across teaching and discussions to promote clarity and reduce confusion. Staff are encouraged to model this language and to avoid rewordings or alternative phrases that might unintentionally reinforce stigma or shame. By using accurate and respectful language, we help create a learning environment where pupils can speak confidently and respectfully about menstruation, contributing to a culture of understanding and dignity.

To support this, we provide free period products in accessible, discreet locations throughout the school. These products are available to all pupils who need them, without question or judgement. Pupils are aware of the location of these products. We ensure that staff respond sensitively and appropriately to pupils' needs, and we maintain confidentiality and dignity in all interactions.

We actively involve pupils in shaping our approach to period dignity through student voice initiatives. Their feedback informs how we deliver education, where products are located, and how we can continue to improve our support. This collaborative approach ensures that our policy remains relevant, respectful, and responsive to the needs of our school community.

Period dignity plays a vital role in supporting our pupils' attendance. When pupils have access to free and appropriate menstrual products, they are less likely to miss school due to lack of supplies. This helps maintain consistent attendance and ensures that no pupil is disadvantaged simply because they menstruate.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Principal holds overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Period Dignity Policy and ensuring that it aligns with statutory guidance. The designated teacher for child protection plays a crucial role in safeguarding, making sure that all menstruation-related interactions are handled with sensitivity and in accordance with child protection procedures. The PDMU

(Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) coordinator leads on the delivery of the curriculum, ensuring that teaching materials and resources are current, inclusive, and appropriate. Pastoral staff are key in providing emotional support to pupils, helping them feel comfortable and ensuring they can access menstrual products discreetly when needed. All staff contribute to promoting a culture of dignity and respect by responding sensitively to pupils' needs and modelling appropriate language and attitudes in all discussions related to menstruation.

In conclusion, our commitment to period dignity reflects our broader values as a school community, where every child is safe, valued, respected, supported, and given the opportunity to succeed. By providing access to essential products, delivering inclusive education, and fostering a culture of openness and respect, we are removing barriers to learning and promoting the wellbeing of all pupils. This policy is not only about meeting practical needs, but also about empowering young people with knowledge, confidence, and dignity.

### **Annual Policy Review**

We will continue to listen, learn, and adapt our approach to ensure that every pupil feels safe, valued, and empowered to thrive.

The school is committed to regularly reviewing the effectiveness of its period dignity provision to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. The senior leadership team, in consultation with relevant staff, reviews the policy annually. This includes evaluating feedback, usage data, and curriculum delivery to ensure the policy continues to reflect best practice and statutory guidance.

## Appendix 1: **Recommended books for children and parents to read together or individually about menstruation.**

These books are inclusive, age-appropriate, and designed to support open, confident conversations about periods at home. They build confidence, and help children feel prepared and supported.

**Own Your Period** by Chella Quint

A fun, fact-filled guide that promotes period positivity and helps children understand their bodies with confidence. Suitable for ages 9+. Available from major booksellers such as Amazon and Waterstones.

**Red Moon Gang** by Tara Costello

An inclusive, gender-neutral guide that uses humour and clear explanations to break down myths and support young people of all identities. Available online through independent bookstores and Amazon.

**The Autism-Friendly Guide to Periods** by Robyn Steward

A practical and sensitive guide specifically designed for autistic children and young people, with clear visuals and step-by-step instructions. Available from Jessica Kingsley Publishers and Amazon.

**Vaginas and Periods 101** by Christian Hoeger and Kristen Lilla

A straightforward, inclusive book that explains anatomy and menstruation in a way that's accessible and affirming for all children. Available through online retailers including Amazon.

**Period** by Natalie Byrne

A beautifully illustrated book that tackles period stigma and provides honest, empowering information for tweens and teens. Available from Waterstones, Amazon, and other major booksellers.

**Some Periods** by Mai Nguyen

A gentle, inclusive storybook that introduces the concept of menstruation to younger children in a relatable and reassuring way. Available through independent bookstores and online platforms.

**The Care and Keeping of You** by Valorie Schaefer (American Girl series)

A classic guide for younger girls, covering body changes and self-care, though more traditional in tone. Available on [Amazon](#) and other online booksellers.

## Appendix 2: **A Message for Parents - Why Period Dignity Matters**

At our school, we want every child to feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. The Period Dignity Project (2022) helps us achieve this by making sure that no pupil is held back by something as natural as having a period. We provide free period products in school and teach pupils about periods in a respectful, age-appropriate way. This helps reduce embarrassment, supports attendance, and builds confidence.

We provide a range of menstrual products to ensure that all pupils have access to options that suit their individual needs and preferences. This includes disposable sanitary pads in various sizes and absorbencies, with both day and night options available to support comfort and protection throughout the day. For lighter days or daily freshness, panty liners are also offered. Pupils who prefer a more sustainable approach can choose reusable pads, and we provide guidance on how to use and care for them properly. Where available, period pants are also offered; these are washable and designed to be worn like regular underwear, providing a discreet and comfortable alternative. To support privacy and dignity, discreet hygiene bags are available so pupils can carry products with them as needed.

All products are individually wrapped and available in discreet, accessible locations such as the medical room, designated toilets, and pastoral care areas. Pupils can take what they need at any time, without having to ask or explain. Everything is provided free of charge, and we encourage pupils to use the products whenever they need them, whether they've started their period unexpectedly or simply forgot to bring supplies from home. We also provide small hygiene bags so pupils can carry products privately if needed. If a pupil is ever caught off guard or needs products to take home, they are welcome to do so, no questions asked.

This project is part of our wider commitment to fairness and inclusion. It supports important education policies in Northern Ireland that focus on equality, child wellbeing, and creating a positive school environment for everyone. By talking openly about periods and making sure pupils have what they need, we're helping to build a school community where all children can thrive, no matter their background or needs.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about how we support pupils through this project, we're always happy to talk.

### Appendix 3: **Integrating the Period Dignity Policy with Related School Policies**

The Period Dignity Policy is closely connected to several other school policies, as it supports pupil wellbeing, inclusion, and safeguarding across the school community. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy ensures that any disclosures or concerns related to menstruation, such as period poverty, neglect, or emotional distress, are addressed appropriately and in line with safeguarding procedures. The Pastoral Care Policy highlights period dignity as a key aspect of emotional support, helping to build self-esteem and confidence among pupils who menstruate.

Menstrual wellbeing is also embedded within the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) or Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy, which outlines how menstruation is taught in the curriculum. The Inclusion and Equality Policy ensures that all pupils, regardless of gender identity, socio-economic background, or additional needs, have equal access to menstrual products and education. The Health and Wellbeing Policy supports both physical and mental health by ensuring pupils can manage their periods hygienically and with confidence.

The Attendance Policy is supported by the Period Dignity Policy through its efforts to remove period-related barriers to school attendance, helping to reduce absenteeism and promote full participation in school life. The Anti-Bullying Policy plays a role in preventing and addressing any teasing, stigma, or bullying related to menstruation, fostering a respectful and inclusive school culture. The SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Policy ensures that pupils with additional needs receive the appropriate support and accessible information about menstruation.