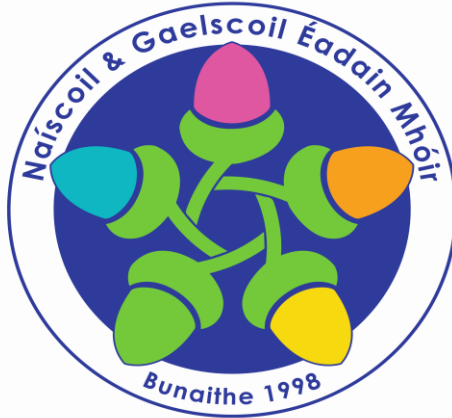


Naiscoil & Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir



Period Dignity Policy

Written: September 2024

Reviewed by parents: September 2024

Ratified by Board of Governors: Sept 2024

Review Date: September 2028

Foreword

Periods are normal. They are not a choice. We either have them, have had them or know some people who do. Periods are not just a 'woman's issue', they are not dirty and not something to be ashamed of. No-one in our school should be disadvantaged because of their period.

Everyone should have access to period products, as and when required, to use in private space that is safe and dignified.

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

- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
www.legislation.gov.uk
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
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
- Menstrual Well-Being in the RSE Curriculum
<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources-andsexuality-education-rse/menstrual-wellbeing>

Eiteas na Scoile / School Ethos

- In Naíscoil & Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir we strive to create a generation of proud Irish speakers who are able to live life to the fullest as part of a vibrant Irish speaking community in our city. We use Irish as part of our daily life and encourage all children to do the same.
- In our school we hope for every child to feel and be remarkable - to nurture and celebrate their unique gifts and talents.
- We intentionally cultivate a family-like, inclusive and vibrant learning environment where the needs of our pupils come first.
- In Naíscoil & Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir we nurture a child-centred community where we plant the seeds for lifelong learners, thinkers and risk takers.
- We hope that our children will grow to be role models in society; future leaders, artists, musicians, creators and sports people - our aspirations are high for all of our children to reach their full potential.

Aidhmeanna Ár Scoil / Our School Aims

We aim:

- To encourage all pupils to become Irish speakers who play an integral part in the Irish speaking community in Derry now and in the future.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness of, and to develop respect and understanding of other cultures.
- To ensure that all pupils reach their full potential through the implementation of a broad and enriched curriculum which fully utilises all available resources.
- To provide all pupils with the tools to become confident global citizens.
- To create a safe, inclusive and encouraging learning environment where pupils, staff and parents feel valued and empowered and where talents and achievements are celebrated.
- To provide continuous professional development opportunities for all staff.

Ár Ráiteas Misin / Our Mission Statement

- Cothú, Cultúr, Cúram, Ceiliúradh

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Ár bhFís Scoile / Our School vision

- Sar-oidreachas i gcroílár an phobail

Aims of the Period Dignity Policy

- Create a culture where periods are understood, accepted, and normalised. Periods are not a choice and period products are not a luxury.
- Ensure the dignity and access to good quality, safe products to people who need them.
- Enable learners to achieve their potential by reducing any barriers they may experience due to periods, having a positive impact on pupil confidence, well-being and attendance.
- Reduce stigma/taboo in relation to periods by providing all pupils with relevant, age-appropriate information on periods; and
- Enable learners to understand how to deal with period issues, hygiene and disposal of period products.

KEY STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School governor with oversight of the period Dignity Programme	Carol Nic Conamara
Pastoral Care Leader	Mary Nic Ailín
Period Dignity Key Contact	Mary Nic Ailín
SENCO	Nicole Rabbett
Safeguarding Designated Teacher	Alicia Uí Chathain
P6/7 Designated Adults	Alicia Uí Chathain/ Moira Armstrong

The Period Dignity programme is a whole school initiative involving pupils, parents, staff and governors. The policy is freely available on our website and paper copies available on request via the school office.

Parents are given information about Period Dignity and the sanitary items available for pupils through school App communications, the school website and consultation processes. They are also provided with helpful links to support conversations they may have at home with their children.

The Board of Governors are responsible for overseeing the implementation of Period Dignity as they review all relevant policies, teaching materials and liaise with key members of staff.

Senior management along with all other members of staff work closely together to ensure a whole school approach.

The Period Dignity Key Contact and Principal has availed of curriculum teaching materials and online Teacher Professional Learning provided by CCEA. As a school we will continue to follow CCEA guidance and any further Period Dignity circulars to equip ourselves for teaching effectively using relevant information.

ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents & Guardians have a key role in explaining periods to your child and that this is a normal and natural part of growing up. It is important to acknowledge again, that children mature at different rates.

The NHS recommends that parents should talk about periods as part of an ongoing process rather than a formal sit-down talk.

Advertisements for sanitary products may be a place to start or simply ask your child what they know. We encourage parents to talk to their child about periods when they see early signs of puberty (see useful resource links).

According to NHS the early signs of puberty in girls are:

- Spots or acne.
- More hair on legs and arms; and
- Breasts begin to develop.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PERIOD DIGNITY

In Naíscoil & Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir, we will support period dignity through our provision by:

- Visibly promoting the importance of period dignity in an age and stage appropriate way.
- Challenging negative views, stereotypes, gender inequality and stigma around periods.
- Communicating period dignity and related issues through a whole school approach.
- Educating our children in an age and stage appropriate way about periods, period dignity and menstrual well-being.
- Supplying free menstrual well-being products to those who need them. RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) is taught throughout the school as part of PDMU (Personal Development & Mutual Understanding) lessons using Cross Curricular Themes, practical activities and group/partner work. Refer to RSE Policy.

PDMU Themes with RSE links are outlined below:

- Themselves & Their Personal Attributes
- Their Own & Other's Feelings & Emotions
- Keeping Healthy & Safe
- Relationships with Family & Friends
- Responsibilities & Conflict Situations
- Similarities & Differences
- Learning to Live as a Member of a Community

These topics are taught to all pupils. (Internet Safety is taught to all year groups).

Children as young as 8 years old may start their periods. It is important to remember periods are completely normal and natural - they are part of growing up.

Period Dignity lessons are taught to all pupils from P6-7. Our aim is to ensure equality and information for all children regardless of gender, ethnicity, culture and religion in a sensitive manner.

Lessons are differentiated to accommodate SEN where appropriate. These activities will address the stigma and myths around periods and create an atmosphere of positivity and open communication to increase pupils' knowledge, confidence and well-being.

By providing a comprehensive Period Dignity Education, we will encourage pupils to make the use of the free period products available in school, rather than wearing poor quality or unhygienic products.

Children in P6&7 are informed of the Period Dignity Scheme and the items available to them in school (P6 Term 3, P7 Term 1).

P5 children or younger may be informed as required. They are advised by staff to speak to teachers if needed. The products are ordered after consultation with staff and pupils to ensure that suitable items are purchased.

A range of sanitary products are available from the class teachers in Rang 5 - 7 if needed or from school office. The products are replenished

by School Secretary when necessary, who will also check the expiry dates on products.

BOYS

Boys will have mothers, sisters or other relations who have or will one day have periods. By teaching boys and girls together we aim to help normalise and demystify periods. This will also serve to challenge any common myths or stigma associated with periods.

LINKS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AND WIDER SCHOOL

The understanding and knowledge of period dignity and menstrual well-being will be taught mainly through our PDMU and RSE curriculum and links to ICT, WAU and Literacy. The emotional health & well-being of pupils is a key priority in our School Development Plan.

WITHDRAWAL FROM LESSONS

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

Parent/guardians who wish to withdraw their child from all or parts of the RSE programme should put their request in writing to the Principal and, preferably provide reasons for withdrawal.

DISPOSAL OF PERIOD PRODUCTS

Period products should be disposed of correctly using the facilities provided in the school toilets. Flushing any period product down the toilet is not only harmful to the environment but may also result in drain blockages and or damage to plumbing.

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 there will always be a stock of towels, disposal bins, underwear and extra clothes.

Staff will work alongside parents and guardians to ensure that absences are not caused by children unable to manage periods or lacking confidence. Parents / guardians will be informed of any issues that arise.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, along with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The policy will

be reviewed every 4 years, but may be updated sooner in response to:

- Relevant circulars or publications provided by the Department of Education, the Education Authority or CCEA.
- A recommendation from the Education Training Inspectorate.
- Issues arising from the implementation of the Period Dignity and Menstrual Well-Being Programme in school; or
- Reviews of other related policies such as Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Pastoral care Policy, Intimate Care Policy etc

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- RSE Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- SEN Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy

USEFUL RESOURCE LINKS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/startin-g-periods/>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/talk-about-menstruation.html>

<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/living-learning-together>