

PERIOD DIGNITY POLICY

(Pastoral Care)

2022



Ashgrove Primary School



PERIOD DIGNITY POLICY

A SAFEGUARDING & PASTORAL CARE POLICY

AGREE DATE	REVIEW DATE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW
2022	2026	V Luney & R Smith

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-and-sexuality-education-rse/menstrual-wellbeing>

ASHGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL ETHOS STATEMENT

At Ashgrove Primary we strive for every child to feel and be remarkable- to nurture their unique gifts and talents.

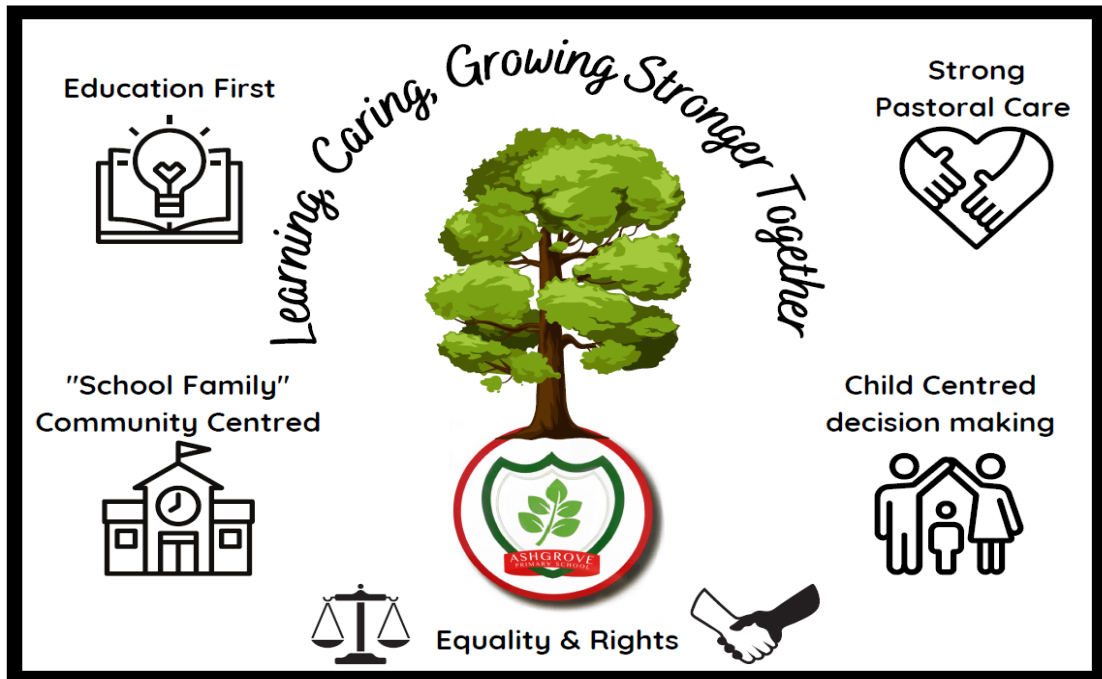
We intentionally cultivate a family-like, inclusive and vibrant learning environment where the needs of our pupils come first. Here at Ashgrove we nurture a child-centred community where we plant the seeds for lifelong learners, thinkers and risk takers. Our children will grow to be role models in society; future leaders, artists, musicians, creators – our aspirations are high.

Our 5 core values lie within our commitment to:

- High Quality Education;
- Excellent Pastoral Care;
- Child-centred Learning;
- Building positive relationships within our School Community; and
- Ensuring the rights of every child are met

Diversity at Ashgrove is part of our strength, we are proud to embrace and welcome everyone in our school. We are a UNICEF Rights Respecting School and place the UNCRC at the heart of all we do. Through this, and initiatives such as Thinking Matters, we aim to empower our children to develop into reflective and independent thinkers and make a positive contribution to our school and community.

Our Five Core Values



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;

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

We are a UNCRC Rights Respecting School and place the Convention at the core of our ethos. All children are entitled to their rights and these can not be taken away from them. This Anti Bullying Policy specifically links to the following Rights:

Article 19: Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 24: Every child has the right to the best possible health.

Article 28: Every child has the right to an education. Discipline in school must protect children's dignity.

POLICY FORMATION & CONSULTATION PROCESS

We have consulted with stakeholders through;

- Consultation with Governors
- Letters and questionnaires to parents
- Consultation with pupils e.g. School Council
- Staff meetings
 - Consideration of Period Dignity Policy
 - RSE Review
 - Questionnaires to staff

KEY STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School governor with oversight of the period Dignity Programme	TBC
Pastoral Care Leader	Mrs Jill Carberry
Period Dignity Key Contact	Mrs Valerie Luney
SENCO	Mrs Lesley Doherty
SEN Learning Support	Mrs Pamela Hawkins
Safeguarding Designated Teacher	Mrs Valerie Luney (Designated Teacher)

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 email 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.

Mrs Valerie Luney (Designated Teacher for Child protection) is the Period Dignity Key Contact. She works closely with Mrs Carberry (Pastoral Care Leader) and Mrs Doherty (SENCO) along with all other members of staff to ensure a whole school approach.

The Period Dignity Key Contact and Principal have availed of curriculum teaching materials and online Teacher Professional Learning provided by CCEA. They will continue to follow CCEA guidance and any further Period Dignity circulars to equip themselves 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 Ashgrove Primary School 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

Primary 1	There's No-one Quite Like Me!	Sometimes I Feel	Taking Care of Me	Belonging & Co-operating	Caring & Sharing	You & Me!	
Primary 2	Wonderful Me!	How do I feel?	Keeping Healthy, Staying Safe	Getting Along with Others	I am Learning to...		
Primary 3	Getting to Know me!	Families	Why Should I?	Living With Difference			
Primary 4	Difficult Feelings	Growing means Changing	Friendships	Who Influences Me?	I am... You are... We can...		
Primary 5	Valuing Self & Others	Ups & Downs	Learning More About Others	Valuing Self & Others	Stay Safe & Healthy	Myself & my Attributes	I have feelings
Primary 6	Speaking Up for Me	Check It Out First	Healthy Habits	Who Am I?	Working At Harmony	Dealing with Feelings	Decisions, Decisions, Decisions...
Primary 7	Who Says So?	Who Cares?	Moving On	Fit For Future	New Horizons	What Makes Me, Me?	Thinking & Feeling

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 of the teachers they may approach if they have any issues (Mrs Luney and class teacher). The products are ordered after consultation with staff and pupils to ensure that suitable items are purchased.

A range of sanitary products are available in the girls' bathrooms and a supply is kept by Mrs Luney (**and the P6&7 Teachers**) and Classroom Assistants. The products are replenished by Mrs Luney 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.

The Period Dignity Programme compliments the work carried out in Shared Education as we focus on mutual respect and the rights of the child. Our status as a gold standard Rights Respecting School reinforce the messages of period-dignity and well-being.

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, Ashgrove Primary 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 (Mr Smith) 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 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.

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
- First Aid Policy
- SEN Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy

CONSULTATION

Ashgrove Primary has consulted with stakeholders through:

- CCEA Training
- Staff Meetings & Questionnaires

- Parent Questionnaires
- Consultation with governors

USEFUL RESOURCE LINKS

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

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

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