



## SCHOOL

# POLICY

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Period Dignity Policy
<b>Review date:</b>	April 2023
<b>Date to be reviewed:</b>	April 2026
<b>Agreed by the BOG on:</b>	30 May 2023
<b>Policies which are linked to this policy:</b>	Intimate Care Policy

Integrated Education has been one of the most significant social developments within Northern Ireland in the last 40 years. Priory wears its Integrated ethos and practice with pride, Integration is prioritised by school leadership and is led by the Principal, BOGs and a drive team, under the leadership of the newly appointed Integration Co-ordinator. The four core principles of integrated education - **equality, faith and values, parental involvement** and **social responsibility** are central in all we do. Integration and Inclusion remains high on the agenda of the college and we will endeavour to make sure that every child is welcomed and taught in a safe and nurturing Priory College.

### College Mission Statement

Priory Integrated College welcomes children from all traditions, cultures and abilities. Together, we aim to empower every child to reach their full potential, in a nurturing, caring environment which upholds respect and excellence for all.

At the heart of our vision for Priory Integrated College is the commitment to know and value our pupils as individuals and to challenge and support them to identify and fulfil or exceed their individual potential. We seek to do this within a caring and supportive environment where we aim to develop our young people in mind, heart and body to enable them to hold a positive view of themselves. We aim to encourage each pupil to develop moral and ethical values and a sense of social responsibility which has at its core respect and tolerance towards each other. Furthermore, it is our aim to create an environment where each member of the school community feels safe, valued and respected.

We recognise that many pupils may have additional physical, emotional, mental, social and educational needs due to the challenges and difficulties surrounding menstruation which may, at times, create barriers to learning. In implementing this policy, we believe that pupils can be helped to overcome these barriers to learning and be supported to reach their full potential.

The implementation of the Pilot Period Dignity Scheme in Priory Integrated College sits within the Preventative Curriculum and gives permission for menstruation to be addressed and openly discussed so that our young people are equipped with the skills, attitudes and behaviours to recognise, understand and respect the different challenges and difficulties that people may experience when menstruating, irrespective of religious belief, race, disability, age or sexual orientation.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should be aware of the importance of promoting period dignity. Staff will be asked to be sensitively alert to signs of physical and emotional distress that the young person may be experiencing in relation to periods, for example, discomfort, pain, lack of concentration, leaking, anxiety or being unable to sit still. Staff will manage such situations sensitively in line with our school values and ethos by helping the pupil to manage the situation themselves or by signposting them to Leader of Pastoral Care and Welfare to access, for example, a heat pad or a change of clothing.

This policy sets out the procedures in place to ensure free accessibility to period products, menstrual education and the de-stigmatisation surrounding menstruation which will subsequently have a positive impact on pupil confidence, wellbeing, attendance and attainment.

### **Aim and Objectives**

Our overarching aim within this policy is to have a positive impact on pupil confidence, wellbeing, attendance and attainment.

The aim will be met through the following objectives which 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;
- ensure that all pupils, staff and parents/guardians understand the impact of periods on the physical, emotional, mental, social and educational wellbeing of pupils;
- enable learners to achieve their potential by reducing any barriers they may experience due to periods;
- reduce stigma/taboo in relation to periods by providing all pupils with relevant, age-appropriate information on periods so that a culture of openness in relation to menstrual issues is created;
- enable learners to understand how to deal with period issues, hygiene and disposal of period products;
- promote respect, understanding and open discussion about the challenges and difficulties that people may experience when menstruating.

\*Toxic Trio refers to inaccessibility/unaffordability of period products, a lack of menstrual education, and period stigma.

## **Whole School Approach and Involvement of Parents**

Educating pupils on period dignity is the responsibility of all staff. In drawing up our implementation plan, we have sought to ensure a whole school approach which visibly supports the promotion of period dignity through the use of presentations by the Period Dignity Lead to teaching and non-teaching staff, via Year Group Assemblies and Tutor Time to pupils, by placing posters around the school, by working closely with the School Council and by means of a letter to parents via the school App.

We at Priory Integrated College will encourage our parents to work in partnership with us by talking to their children about period dignity and menstrual wellbeing.

Relationships and Sexuality Education/Preventative Curriculum are statutory components of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, and it is within these areas that Period Dignity and menstrual wellbeing will be primarily addressed. However, parents/guardians have the right to have their child educated in accordance with their wishes, therefore the school will respect the requests of parents/guardians who wish to withdraw their child from Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing education.

## **Curricular Links**

- 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 Preventative Curriculum.
- Menstruation will also be addressed in Science in Year 8 under the Menstrual Cycle and in Year 12 when covering Fertilisation.
- We recognise that menstruation can be a sensitive topic for some people to talk about, and that in discussing menstruation and menstrual health other related sensitive topics may be brought up by participants (including gender identity, sexual health, contraception and pregnancy). Appropriate sensitivity when approaching these topics will be of paramount importance and handling questions and disclosures will be in line with our school's Child Protection Policy.
- In line with our Learning Support Policy, for those pupils with sensory difficulties, anxiety or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) tendencies or learning difficulties, we will adapt the pastoral or curricular lesson(s) accordingly to meet their individual needs and recognise that education about periods may need to be delivered one to one. We will also be mindful of individual's needs such as word triggers and the impact they can have.
- 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.
- Guidance issued from NHS, CCEA and in DE Circulars will inform curricular planning to ensure relevance.

## **Teaching Approaches/Strategies**

In delivering the Period Dignity aspect of the Pastoral Programme we will use active and experiential approaches when exploring issues around menstrual wellbeing.

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. The issues relating to periods, menstrual wellbeing and period dignity will form part of our Preventative Curriculum within each Year Group as it is integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of our pupils.

External organisations/agencies will be used to complement the delivery of elements of the Preventative Curriculum relating to Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing. Where external agencies are involved appropriate vetting procedures will be followed.

The normal teaching arrangements of mixed gender classes will remain in place for delivery of period dignity and menstrual education with the aim of increasing understanding among all pupils and to challenge/reduce stigma, myths and stereotypes. This arrangement will be kept under review.

Having open conversations with pupils of all genders will enable us to break down the stigma around periods, and work to prevent bullying and shaming behaviour. In Priory Integrated College we seek to develop open conversations through menstrual education being delivered via the following ways:

- Mixed classes of boys and girls when period dignity discussed in pastoral or curricular lessons
- Reference the Period Dignity programme in College assemblies

We will endeavour to consult with pupils who identify as gender neutral (who biologically menstruate), SEN pupils and those not of UK nationality to ascertain their needs. Staff will be mindful of cultural differences that may exist, for example, some cultures may be against the use of tampons. There is a wide age range represented in the Form captains group. Staff will be mindful of their use of language when discussing periods in situations where there are pupils who identify as gender neutral.

As the Period Dignity Policy rolls out, we will continue to consult with our Form Captains group to continue to improve and develop the policy on an ongoing basis.

### **Resources**

Resources will be carefully selected to the age and learning needs of the pupils. Resources used, including images, videos and language will not include inappropriate or explicit content. All resources will be reviewed and quality assured by the Period Dignity Lead and/or those delivering the Preventative Curriculum to ensure that they are inclusive and consistent with the ethos and values of Priory Integrated College as well as ensuring that they are factually accurate and up to date.

The resources used in the Pastoral/Preventative 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.
- 

### **Consultation**

The School Council has been centrally involved in the Period Dignity project and a Period Dignity Committee, with both male and female members from across all year groups, has been established. This committee has been involved in consultation to date on the choice of products and it is also envisaged that they will take an active role in the replenishment of supplies. Remaining pupils will be informed of the scheme during Year Assemblies and will be encouraged to review the draft Period Dignity Policy during Tutor Time.

Teaching and non-teaching staff will be informed of the scheme by the Period Dignity Lead and encouraged to review the policy and provide feedback.

Parents will be informed of the Period Dignity scheme by means of a letter posted on Parentmail. A two-week consultation window will allow parents to access the policy on the school website or Parentmail and subsequently return feedback to the Period Dignity Lead within the school.

### **Period Product Provision**

- A selection of age-appropriate period products (sanitary towels and tampons) will be available in the girls' toilets and in the designated all access/disabled toilets.
- The Period Dignity Committee members will monitor and replenish the period products on a weekly basis. This will include checking of dates on tampon products.
- A designated member of staff will carry out spot checks of dates on tampon products throughout each term to minimise the risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS).
- Designated pupils will assume responsibility for all toilets and any designated all- access/disabled toilets.

Supplies can be collected from Mrs Stronge's science store and a written record of quantity of all period products taken is to be recorded in the Period Dignity Stock Management file kept at Reception.

The Period Dignity Lead and Bursar will liaise when supplies are running low so that an order can be processed.

Ms Ferguson will provide additional support in the form of heat pads, or a change of clothing, if required.

### **Key Staff**

The Period Dignity Lead in the school is Mrs Stronge.

- Leaders of Key Stage will co-ordinate the period dignity education within the Preventative Curriculum for their Year Group and they will be the key point of contact for pupils to approach with any issues they may have.

### **Communication**

The Period Dignity Policy will be available on the school website

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Board of Governors will be responsible for reviewing the Period Dignity Policy. Initially, it will be reviewed annually and subsequently every 2 years alongside the review of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy. The policy will also be updated in response to:

- relevant circulars and publications provided by the Department of Education, the Education Authority or CCEA;
- recommendation(s) by the Education and Training Inspectorate;
- specific issues arising from the implementation of the Period Dignity and Menstrual

Wellbeing Programme in school; or

- reviews of other related school policies such as the Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy or Pastoral Policy. The policy's effectiveness will be monitored through:

- WWW/EBI of Period Dignity scheme at each Form Captain group meeting
- Feedback from pupils, staff and parents via focus groups or questionnaires at end of each academic year