



Period Dignity Policy for Parents

Introduction

At St Louis Grammar School, we are dedicated to creating a caring and supportive environment where all students can thrive. We understand that menstruation is a natural biological process that can sometimes pose challenges for students, potentially affecting their learning and wellbeing. This policy aims to ensure that all menstruating students have access to free period products and receive appropriate education and support, respecting their dignity, privacy, and confidentiality. This policy is guided by the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and the Department of Education (DE) Guidance.

Aims and Objectives

Our primary goal is to promote period dignity within St Louis Grammar School, positively impacting student confidence, wellbeing, attendance, and academic performance. Specific objectives include:

- Raising awareness about the importance of period dignity and addressing issues of inaccessibility, lack of education, and stigma.
- Ensuring free period products are readily accessible to all students who need them, in compliance with the law.
- Providing a reasonable choice of period products, including reusable options, as required by legislation.
- Educating students, staff, and parents/carers about the impact of menstruation on physical, emotional, mental, social, and educational wellbeing.
- Reducing stigma and taboo surrounding menstruation through education and open discussion.
- Equipping students with knowledge about period management, hygiene, and safe disposal of products.
- Promoting respect, understanding, and empathy among all students regarding menstruation.
- Fulfilling our statutory duties under the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and adhering to DE Guidance.

Legislative Context

This policy is developed in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.
- DE Guidance to Specified Public Service Bodies on the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.
- Other relevant legislation including The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, The Human Rights Act 1998, The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Whole School Approach and Consultation

Promoting period dignity is a collective responsibility of all staff at St Louis Grammar School.

We are committed to a whole-school approach that includes:

- Raising awareness through assemblies, registration time, and respectful information posters around the school.
- Collaborating with the School Council to ensure student voices are central to policy development and implementation.
- Using the school website and other communication channels (e.g., parent/carer emails) to share information about the policy and the availability of free products.
- Conducting ongoing consultations with students, staff, parents/carers, and the Board of Governors to refine the arrangements for providing free period products.

Period Product Provision

Following consultation, St Louis Grammar School will ensure a range of period products is available free of charge to all students who need them while on school premises. This provision will consider reasonable choice and feedback from consultations.

- **Types of Products:** We aim to provide a variety of products, including period pads (various absorbencies) and tampons (both applicator and non-applicator). We will also consider panty liners and reusable period pants based on consultation and budget.
- **Accessibility and Locations:** Products will be easily accessible in a way that respects dignity, privacy, and confidentiality. They will be available in as many toilets as practical, including girls' toilets and accessible toilets, as well as other discreet locations such as the office, Student Welfare Officer's room, and pastoral care offices.
- **Stocking and Replenishment:** A system for monitoring and replenishing supplies will be established, involving staff volunteers and the School Council. Regular checks will ensure products are well-stocked.
- **Availability at All Times:** Free products will be obtainable at all times when the school premises are in use, including during lesson times and school events.
- **Take-Home Provision:** Students will be able to take sufficient products for use during the school day, including on day trips.

Education and Learning

Education is crucial in promoting period dignity and tackling stigma. St Louis Grammar School will ensure age-appropriate information about menstruation, menstrual health, and period dignity is included within the curriculum, primarily through Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and PD lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4. Other curriculum areas such as Biology and Home Economics may also contribute.

- Teaching will be inclusive and sensitive to the diverse needs of students, considering gender, culture, religion, and special educational needs.
- Resources from CCEA and other reputable sources will be used to ensure factual accuracy and alignment with the school's ethos.
- The curriculum will cover key topics such as the menstrual cycle, hygiene, available products, managing discomfort, and addressing myths and stigma.
- Education will aim to create an open and supportive environment where students feel comfortable discussing menstruation.

- Male students will also be educated about period dignity, equality, and menstrual wellbeing to foster understanding and break down stigma.
- Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from RSE, in line with the school's RSE policy.

Key Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Effective implementation of this policy requires clear roles and responsibilities:

- **Head of Pastoral Care:** Ms C.King is responsible for the development, implementation, and review of the Period Dignity Policy.
- **Pastoral Leaders:** Year Heads and Tutors will assist in coordinating education within their year groups and will be points of contact for students.
- **Period Dignity Lead(s):** Mrs Sinead O'Hare will oversee the period dignity scheme, including product procurement, stock management, and awareness-raising.
- **SENCO and SEN Staff:** Will ensure students with special educational needs can access period products and education.
- **All Staff:** Will be expected to be sensitive and supportive to students regarding menstruation and aware of the policy and procedures. Designated staff members may be identified with a "Koala sticker."

Communication

This Period Dignity Policy will be available on the school website. Key information about the policy and the availability of free period products will be communicated through:

- School assemblies and registration.
- Information posters in key locations.
- School newsletters and emails to parents/carers.
- Information sessions or workshops.
- The school's social media platforms (if appropriate).

Communication will respect dignity, privacy, and confidentiality.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed through feedback from students, staff, and parents/carers. Methods include:

- School Council discussions.
- Surveys and feedback forms.
- Informal feedback mechanisms.
- Monitoring the usage of period products.

The policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or more frequently as needed, in response to updates in legislation, DE Guidance, recommendations from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), and specific issues arising from policy implementation.

Managing Issues

Staff will be alert to any signs of emotional or physical distress related to menstruation. A supportive and non-judgemental approach will be adopted. The school will be flexible in responding to absences due to period-related issues and will explore ways to support the student's learning. Additional items such as spare clothes, heat pads, or a quiet space to rest may be made available where possible.

Links to Other School Policies

This policy complements other school policies, including:

- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- Pastoral Care Programme
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Environmental Policy

Statement on Arrangements for the Provision of Free Period Products

St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel, 151 Newry Road, Kilkeel.

Free period products are available at a variety of locations around the main building and its outlying classrooms and accessible to all visitors, staff and pupils.

The consultation was carried out over a period of two weeks in late March and was completed on the 17th April.

This statement will be published on the school website.

The consultation was issued to parents, pupils and staff.

This consultation sought views on the ways products should be obtained, preferred locations, and types of products.

The Consultation established the following:

- **Accessibility:** Period products should be available in all toilets and with the school nurse.
- **Product Variety:** Period pads and applicator tampons are the most requested items.
- **Cost:** Both groups are generally open to using less expensive, unbranded products.
- **Sustainability:** There is a preference for plastic-free single-use items.
- **Privacy:** Accessing products in individual toilet cubicles and without having to ask staff is important for maintaining dignity and privacy.
- **Stock Management:** Regular checks and monitoring by staff or designated persons are suggested to ensure products are always available.
- **Awareness:** Posters and assemblies/meetings are the most recommended methods to inform everyone about the availability of free period products.