



MALLUSK INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Period Dignity Policy

Ethos

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School it is hoped that the school's ethos will contribute to the full development of its pupils by:

- Creating a strong sense of loyalty from the staff towards the school and its goals, the promotion of a good relationship among the staff where everyone feels valued and all can work together in a constructive manner.
- The promotion of good relationships between pupils and teachers both in and out of the classroom.
- The promotion of a strong sense of belonging among pupils to a school community where visitors are welcomed and opportunities are created for pupils to have an interest in and involvement with the well-being of the wider community.
- Promoting confidence and self esteem among the pupils through a range of curricular and extra curricular activities.
- Encouraging pupils to value one another and to express their own views while appreciating and respecting the views of others.
- Encouraging children to fulfil their potential.
- The involvement of parents in the work of their children.

Rationale

As an inclusive, caring, respectful school community, we aim to ensure equality and dignity for all our children. We recognise the essential care needed to support a period and through education, aim to ensure there is no stigma surrounding periods and to promote respect, understanding and open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating.

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

1. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
www.legislation.gov.uk
2. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child www.unicef.org.uk
 - Article 3 – The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
 - Article 6 – Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

- Article 24 – Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy.

3. Every School a Good School, Together Towards Improvement and Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy www.deni.gov.uk

- The interests of pupils rather than institutions must be at the centre of efforts to improve educational achievement and tackle underachievement.
- Equity of access and equity of provision, as well as a continuum of provision for a diversity of need. Recognition that the improvement process is a collaborative one, requiring communication and co-operation within the school and between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves.

4. Menstrual Well-Being in the RSE Curriculum <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources-and-sexuality-education-rse/menstrual-wellbeing>

Aims

This policy aims to promote period dignity and tackle period poverty, helping pupils who menstruate to attend school happily, with confidence, enabling them to reach their full potential. We will do this by:

- Creating an inclusive, caring, supportive, respectful school community where periods are understood, accepted and normalised-periods are not a choice and periods products are not a luxury.
- Providing pupils with relevant, age-appropriate information on periods, regardless of age, ability, gender, religion, or culture.
- Ensuring the dignity and access to good quality, safe products to people who need them.
- Reducing any barriers they may experience due to periods, having a positive impact on pupil confidence, well-being and attendance.
- Enabling pupils to understand how to deal with period issues, hygiene and disposal of period products.
- Ensuring parents, staff and pupils understand the term ‘period dignity.’

This policy works in partnership with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Addressing Bullying policy, Equality and Inclusion policy, SEN policy, Positive Behaviour policy, Pastoral Care policy and RSE policy. It has been drawn up in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and Governors.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

Governors will approve and ratify the policy.

Principal

Mrs Kinsella is the Period Dignity Key Contact and will be responsible for the coordination of the approach to period dignity. She will consult with Governors, staff, parents and pupils. She will ensure that parents are given information about Period Dignity and the sanitary items available for the children through email communications and consultation processes. She can also support conversations they may have at home with their children.

Staff

All staff should be familiar with this policy and should provide the appropriate support to those pupils who need it.

Parents/ Carers

Parents & carers have a key role in explaining periods to their 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. We encourage parents & carers to talk to their child about periods when they see early signs of puberty, 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.

Parents & Carers are encouraged to inform Mrs Kinsella if their child has started menstruating so that she is aware and can provide any support when it is needed.

Methodology

RSE is taught throughout the school as part of our thematic approach to The World Around Us and PDMU (see RSE policy for details). Themes which specifically contribute to learning about our bodies and relationships are listed below.

- Look at me, look at you
- Mighty Me
- Growing Together
- Keeping Control
- The Super Human Machine
- Are you Wise?

Some of the themes in Key Stage 2 will include the physical and emotional changes that occur at puberty. In order to facilitate this, classes may be split by gender. School facilitates programmes from *Love for Life*. These programmes are delivered in line with the requirements of RSE within the Northern Ireland Curriculum and are age-appropriate, offering accurate information in an engaging manner, helping the children to learn, reflect and develop in their knowledge, skills and attitudes in this area. There are two separate programmes for P6 and P7. 'Choices and Changes' introduces P6 children to the physical and emotional changes they can expect during puberty, offering support as they explore and

develop an understanding about the choices and changes in their lives. 'What's Inside' is a comprehensive and interactive workshop, preparing P7 pupils for both the physical and emotional changes of puberty, exploring the changes associated with the transition to post-primary school, as well as recognising the importance of building healthy relationships. Each programme is accompanied by a set of lessons plans and resources which can be used in preparation or as a follow-up to the visit.

RSE is a statutory component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. However, parents/ carers 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, we recognise that parents/ carers may wish to do so. We will respect these wishes and will give due consideration to any such requests received on an individual basis.

Children in P6 & 7 are informed of the Period Dignity Scheme and the items available to them in school. P5 children or younger may be informed as required. They are advised of the teachers they may approach if they have any issues.

A range of sanitary products are available in the girls' toilet and a supply is also kept by Mrs Kinsella, who checks when supplies need to be replaced. There will always be a supply of towels, disposal bins, underwear and extra clothes.

Staff will be vigilant for any children who are distressed or experiencing discomfort due to menstruation. Children will be treated with care and sensitivity and will be given support.

Useful Resources

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

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

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

Implementation date: March 2024

Review date: March 2027