Period Dignity Education Policy

Poplar Avenue, Ripley, DE5 3PN
Tel: 01773 742281

Date Reviewed / Adopted	Minute No.	Amendments Made	Next Review Date
July 2026			July 2029

Introduction

This policy is for the information of staff, governors, parents/guardians and all those concerned with the learning and welfare of the children at Ripley Junior School.
The members of staff at Ripley Junior School are highly committed to the care and wellbeing of each child, they have a deep sense of pride in the school and community and work together to contribute to the holistic development of all children entrusted into their care. At Ripley Juniors, we seek to provide a safe environment to break the stigma surrounding periods and to promote respect, understanding, and enable open discussions about what girls may experience when menstruating.

From September 2020, teaching both boys and girls about periods and menstrual wellbeing has been compulsory in all state-maintained schools, primary and secondary, as part of health education. As it's part of the statutory health education parents cannot withdraw pupils from menstrual wellbeing lessons, as they form part of statutory Health Education.

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 a private space that is safe and dignified.

Period Dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a period, in conjunction with the removal of stigma around periods. Education is a key factor in breaking the stigma surrounding periods and promoting respect, understanding and open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating.

Period Poverty refers to poor menstrual knowledge and/or access to period products.
Why is Period Dignity important: According to the NHS, most girls start their periods when they are about 12 years old, but they can start as early as eight years old. It's therefore important to talk to girls and boys about periods from an early age to make sure they are aware of what is involved and how girls can be prepared for their first period. Ripley Junior School participates in the DfE Period Product Scheme to ensure free access to menstrual products.

Aims

This policy will address the importance of accessibility and availability of essential care linked to menstruation in Ripley Junior School. We aim to ensure that:

- Pupils are provided with facts about menstruation.
- Pupils are given an age-appropriate comprehensive understanding of menstrual wellness, and how this impacts physical and emotional wellbeing.

- We educate pupils about menstrual management – essential facts and how to deal with related situations.
- Negative attitudes, myths and stereotypes are challenged.

Whole school approach

At Ripley Junior School we will support period dignity through our provision by;

- Educating our children in an age and stage appropriate way about periods, period dignity and menstrual well-being
- Challenging negative views, stereotypes, gender inequality and stigma around periods
- Communicating period dignity and related issues through a whole school approach
- Using appropriate language such as period pads and menstrual products instead of sanitary items or feminine hygiene products.
- Supplying free menstrual well-being products to those who need them. A range of menstrual products are available in Mrs Hardy's classroom and the school office.
- Hold a talk with the Year 4, 5 and 6 girls or discuss during lessons on menstruation the availability of the menstrual products and their location.
- To take a bag of menstrual products on school trips or residentials- the bag to be held by the lead female member of staff.
- Provide safety information for each product in an accessible format before the product is used.

To minimise the risk of injury from use of period products, we will:

- store products safely and hygienically in accordance with manufacturer guidance.
- ask pupils or their parents/ carers if they have experienced an allergic reaction to period products or other materials
- check expiry dates with each individual product
- follow safety guidelines when stocking products
- make sure all products remain individually wrapped
- dispose of any expired products
- staff will be made aware of the symptoms and need for urgent treatment of the rare infection - toxic shock syndrome - even though only period pads will be provided in school, in case any pupil is using tampons at home.

The products are replenished by Mrs Hardy/Mrs Swift when necessary. These staff members will also check the expiry dates on products.

Teaching

RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) is taught throughout the school as part of PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education) lessons using PSHE Matters and Clued Up to Growing Up. Clued Up to Growing Up covers the topic of periods and menstruation during Year 4.

See **appendix 1** for statutory guidance the Government has given schools for what pupils should learn about the Menstrual Cycle.

The girls and boys are taught together because 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.

Dealing with questions

Sometimes an individual child will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom.

- Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed later. Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations and refer to the PSHE coordinator if necessary.
- Teachers will establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting.
- Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way so pupils discuss issues in a way which reduces embarrassment and models sensible discussion.
- If a question is too personal the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. No one [teacher or pupil] should be expected to answer a personal question.
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later, on an individual basis. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse then the usual child protection/safeguarding guidelines will be followed.
- Teachers are careful not to be drawn into providing more information than appropriate to the age of the child.

Attendance

Students must never feel pressured to miss school because of their period. The school will:

- **Attendance expectations** — State that pupils are expected to attend as normal, while recognising that symptoms such as pain, fatigue, or heavy bleeding may require reasonable adjustments.
- **Flexible support** — Provide access to rest areas, toilet breaks, and period products without question or delay.
- **No penalties** — Ensure pupils are not marked late, penalised, or challenged for additional bathroom visits or time needed to manage symptoms.
- **Confidential communication** — Allow students to discreetly inform staff if they need temporary adjustments, without requiring detailed explanations.

Physical Education (PE)

Periods should not prevent students from taking part in PE, but participation must always be comfortable and dignified. The school will:

- **Inclusive participation** — Encourage students to join PE lessons where they feel able, offering alternative roles or modified activity when symptoms make full participation difficult.
- **Alternative options** — Provide low-impact alternatives such as walking, stretching, officiating, coaching roles, or theory-based tasks.
- **Uniform flexibility** — Our PE kit is already dark bottoms however alternative uniform items may be chosen by a student in order to feel secure and comfortable.

- **No stigma** — Promote a culture where students can request adjustments without embarrassment, and staff respond with sensitivity and discretion.

Confidentiality and child protection

It is inevitable that effective Period Dignity Education which allows for open discussion to take place may lead to disclosures from pupils. It is essential that those teaching the lessons are completely familiar with the child protection procedures. Pupils' disclosures or suspicion of abuse must be followed up with the pupil concerned, that same day and referred to the designated safeguarding lead, and if not present their deputy. They will deal with these disclosures or suspicions in line with the child protection policy.

Equal Opportunities

key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.
about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.

Pupils with SEND have the same opportunities and access to learning as pupils without SEND and, if necessary, activities will be adapted and outcomes differentiated to facilitate inclusion. Following professional advice there are times when some children will find it hard to learn in a busy classroom so may take part in small group or 1:1 activities in a quieter, less stimulating space. Staff are very aware of children's emotional needs and this is taken into consideration when planning provision for children with SEND.

For pupils who may have a sensory issue, with the period pads or may have a fear of the sight of blood, the school will speak to parents about the use of period pants and will, in consultation with the parents of the pupil, make necessary individual arrangements.

Roles and responsibilities

<u>The governing board</u>

The governing board will approve the Period Dignity Education policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

<u>The Head Teacher</u>

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body and parents/carers.

<u>The Role of the Co-ordinator</u>

The PSHE co-ordinator will:

- Ensure consistent approaches throughout the school by monitoring teaching and learning
- Discuss issues raised at staff meetings and Inset days
- Participate in Inset training and subsequent dissemination of relevant information

- Undertake an annual enquiry into any areas where staff may have concerns or requests
- Collate the views of staff, pupils, parents, carers and the community and act upon these.

The School Staff

- Delivering Period Dignity Education content in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to periods
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils

The Pupils

- Pupils are expected to engage fully in Period Dignity Education lessons and, when discussing issues related to periods, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Role of Parents and Guardians

- Parents & Guardians 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. The NHS recommends that parents should talk about periods as part of an ongoing process rather than a formal sit-down talk. Advertisements for menstrual products may be a place to start or simply ask a child what they know. We encourage parents to talk to their child about periods when they see early signs of puberty.

The school has a set of books in the library discussing periods and the changing body that can be taken home by the pupils to use as a discussion point with parents if requested.
Staff will be vigilant for any children who are distressed or experiencing discomfort due to menstruation. Staff and children will be made aware, through teaching, that girls can experience different rates of blood flow and that if they feel that their period is different to normal that they need to discuss this with their parent or teacher.
Children will be treated with care and sensitivity. Pupils will be given support and there will always be a stock of menstrual products, 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.

USEFUL RESOURCE LINKS
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/starting-periods

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

New text messaging service available for Derbyshire parents and carers: Derbyshire Family Health Service

Monitoring
The PHSE coordinator will monitor the effectiveness of the Period Dignity Lessons using pupil and staff voice feedback. This evaluative process will enable the PSHE co-ordinator to further strengthen and develop the lessons as necessary; identify staff training and support needs and make any changes deemed necessary from the pupil and staff voice feedback.

The Head Teacher and PSHE coordinator will review this policy yearly. Any amendments will be presented to the Governing body.

Appendix 1
Government Statutory Guidance:

The facts about the menstrual cycle, including physical and emotional changes, whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls' periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.

These are the learning opportunities taken from the PSHE Association Programme of Study (2026):

Developing Bodies 1: The emotional and physical changes that occur during puberty in both males and females (e.g. mood swings, periods, body hair); strategies to prepare for and manage these changes

Developing Bodies 3: The facts about the menstrual cycle and menstrual wellbeing, including what period products are available; where to get help and advice for menstrual wellbeing.