



# Supporting pupils who menstruate



It is a known fact that, as a collective, pupils who menstruate are more likely to take days off school during their period in order to manage their symptoms or to manage them privately. This may be due to adverse symptoms experienced before, during and after a period, the perceived stigma attached to asking for help with managing their symptoms, the risk of bullying or harassment from peers, or the inability to access period products while in school.

At Ravensdale Junior School, we are compassionate and understanding to the needs of pupils who menstruate and how it affects their comfort and attendance at school. We want to ensure that pupils who are menstruating have the same access to education, comfort, safety and security at school as pupils who do not, or are not yet, menstruating.

## **“Premenstrual syndrome” (PMS)**

(PMS) is a collective term for the symptoms people who menstruate may experience before their period starts each month. This can range from very mild to severe symptoms, and affects each person differently.

Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, the following:

Mood swings

Low moods and feeling anxious or irritable

Tiredness/ Insomnia

Abdominal discomfort or pain

Breast tenderness

Headaches/ migraines

Changes in appetite

Concentration problems

## Intimate care

All instances of intimate care will be undertaken in line with the Intimate Care Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The school will ensure staff are aware that some pupils may experience their first period while on the school site and/or may not have adequate knowledge of, or access to, period products; however, staff will never be permitted to change, apply or insert pupils' period products for them. Members of staff will instruct the pupil as necessary and perform a demonstration, e.g. on a model, prior to the pupil using the period product for themselves.

## Confidentiality

Advice and support provided to pupils regarding their periods, the products they use and the symptoms they experience will be kept confidential at all times; however, where safeguarding concerns arise, these will be managed in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and information may be shared on a need-to-know basis.

## Access to period products

School staff will avoid making assumptions or rules about what period products the school provides to pupils who menstruate.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware that individual pupils will have their own preferences for which period products they choose to use and varying levels of familiarity. As a result, period products will not be withheld from pupils who menstruate based on assumptions, e.g. withholding tampons based on a pupil's age.

The pastoral team will check on a monthly basis, that there is an adequate amount of period products available in school, including the products obtained via the DfE's free period product scheme, for all pupils who menstruate.

The school hold a variety of sizes, types and brands of period products to ensure that pupils who menstruate are afforded the opportunity to use a period product that is comfortable and familiar to them. In addition, the school will take into consideration the needs of pupils with allergies to certain materials, sensory difficulties and cultural or religious requirements.

The school will ensure that additional stocks of period products are kept where staff can access them, in the that communal stocks of period products available to pupils has been depleted, or a pupil cannot access a period product that is comfortable and familiar to them. Pupils who menstruate will be encouraged to ask a member of staff for access to additional stock.

## Behaviour

Deliberate misuse of period products supplied by the school will be managed in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Instances of bullying, discrimination and harassment towards any pupil because they menstruate will not be tolerated, and sanctions will be managed in line with the Behaviour Policy.

The school understands that being on their period while at school can be a distressing and uncomfortable event for some pupils, particularly if their symptoms are severe, and this may lead to some behaviour that is unusual for the pupil. The school will apply sensitivity and understanding where unusual behaviour is a result of a pupil's menstrual symptoms and will discuss with the pupil and, where necessary, their parents, any behaviour management strategies that may be beneficial, e.g. being able to retreat to a calm, quiet place when their emotions run high.

**The Headteacher will** work with the governing body to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting and protecting pupils who experience menstruation during school.

Work collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of pupils who experience menstruation.

Ensure any arrangements put in place to meet individual pupils' needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.

Ensure that any support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupils.

Arrange appropriate training for staff to allow them to effectively support and protect pupils who experience menstruation.

Ensure that there is fair, consistent and reliable access to period products for pupils who are menstruating during the school day.

**Parents will be expected to** ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.

Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.

Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.

Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's health and support needs.

### Informing the school

Parents will be encouraged to inform the school if their child has had their first period and of any support needs or arrangements they deem appropriate.

Parents will also be encouraged to inform the school if there any changes to their child's needs with regards to them managing their period or any symptoms during the school day.

Where required, the headteacher will arrange a meeting with the pupil's parents to discuss their child's support needs. An individual risk assessment will be produced and completed where necessary, and the outcome of this used to inform the introduction of any further actions or measures.

The headteacher will ensure that any reasonable adjustments discussed or identified are recorded

**All staff will** understand confidentiality in respect of pupils' health and privacy needs.

Ensure all pupils have equal access to education and balancing this with their individual needs regarding managing their period while in school.

Understand their role in supporting pupils who experience menstruation and ensuring they attend the required staff training.

Ensure they are aware of the needs of pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of individual pupils' needs.

Ensure they are aware of the signs and symptoms that pupils who menstruate may need support, assistance, or are struggling with their symptoms.

### Ethos and training

The school will introduce and maintain an ethos and understanding that menstruation is a natural biological cycle and that pupils who menstruate should not feel ashamed, embarrassed or targeted because they menstruate.

The school will, however, apply sensitivity that not all pupils who menstruate may be comfortable talking about their periods and will endeavour to accommodate them and support them as much as the individual pupil will allow.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff are sufficiently trained to be able to talk to pupils about periods and period products, regardless of the staff member's gender.

### Educational trips and visits

Pupils who menstruate will be supported to participate in school trips, sporting activities and residential visits.

Prior to an activity taking place, the school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments should be put in place to enable pupils who menstruate to participate equally to pupils who do not menstruate. Where required, the school nurse will be asked for recommendations and advice.

The school will arrange for any adjustments to be made for all pupils to participate in off-site activities.

Information used to support pupils who menstruate will be provided in a way that it is accessible to all, including younger pupils, pupils with EAL and pupils with SEND. Adjustments will be put in place for pupils who menstruate who have difficulties with communication, e.g. high levels of anxiety, to be able to ask for support and period products from a trusted member of staff, e.g. through use of a pre-agreed 'password'. The school will ensure that period products and period product disposal bins are made available in locations that are easily and comfortably accessible by pupils who menstruate