



## **Supporting Students Who Menstruate Policy**

**January 2024  
Review January 2026**

## Statement of intent

It is a known fact that, as a collective, students 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 Exceptional Ideas Ltd., we are compassionate and understanding to the needs of students who menstruate and how it affects their comfort and attendance at school. We want to ensure that students who are menstruating have the same access to education, comfort, safety and security at school as students who do not, or are not yet, menstruating.

In addition, by adopting this policy, we aim to raise awareness of the issues faced in school by students who are menstruating and ensure that staff can effectively support and provide for them as necessary.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Create an environment in which students can openly and comfortably discuss menstruation and their individual needs.
- Ensure every staff member understands what menstruation is, who it affects, and the common symptoms students may be experiencing.
- Ensure senior staff are aware of any reasonable adjustments that should be put in place to support menstruating students, especially students who are young, have additional needs and/or experience uncommon or severe symptoms.
- Reduce absenteeism due to managing menstrual symptoms at home, or feeling targeted by their peers.
- Increase access to period products in school for students who menstruate and ensure these products are not misused or withheld.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- DfE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Students with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## 2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, we have used the term **“students who menstruate”** to include students of any gender identity who experience menstruation. This includes students who have variations to sexual development (VSD) who may also experience menstruation or menstruation-like symptoms.

**“Premenstrual syndrome” (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 or insomnia
- Abdominal discomfort or pain
- Breast tenderness
- Headaches and migraines
- Changes in appetite
- Problems with concentration

**“Toxic shock syndrome” (TSS)** is a rare but life-threatening condition caused by bacterial toxins that enter the bloodstream. It is often associated with tampon use. The risk of TSS increases the longer a tampon is in place during menstruation. It is recommended that tampons are changed every few hours and left in place no longer than eight hours. The symptoms of TSS include:

- A high temperature
- Flu-like symptoms
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- A sunburn-like rash
- Red discolouration of the lips, tongue and eyes
- Dizziness and fainting
- Difficulty breathing
- Confusion

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The directors will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of students who menstruate are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for managing the safety, security and wellbeing of students who experience menstruation while in school.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting students with their periods are appropriately trained.
- Approving and reviewing this policy on a biennial basis.

The operational senior will be responsible for:

- Working with the directors to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting and protecting students who experience menstruation during school.
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of students who experience menstruation.
- Ensuring any arrangements put in place to meet individual students’ needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Ensuring any support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual students.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff to allow them to effectively support and protect students who experience menstruation.
- Ensuring that there is fair, consistent and reliable access to period products for students who are menstruating during the school day.

All staff will be responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of students’ health and privacy needs.

- Ensuring all students have equal access to education and balancing this with their individual needs regarding managing their period while in school.
- Understanding their role in supporting students who experience menstruation and ensuring they attend the required staff training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of students through the appropriate and lawful sharing of individual students' needs.
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs and symptoms that students who menstruate need support, assistance, or are struggling with their symptoms.

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.

#### **4. 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 operational senior will arrange a meeting with the student'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 operational senior will ensure that any reasonable adjustments discussed or identified are recorded.

#### **5. Reasonable adjustments**

Recommendations for reasonable adjustments from the student's parents or, where possible, the student themselves, will be implemented as far as reasonably practicable, e.g. allowing the student to use the toilet facilities more regularly during the school day.

When implementing reasonable adjustments for the student to be able to manage their periods at school, the operational senior will balance the requirement to ensure the student is provided with a complete education and ensuring their safety, security, comfort and wellbeing.

Where a proposed reasonable adjustment cannot be implemented, the operational senior will provide a reason for this and propose alternatives where possible.

The operational senior will arrange a follow-up meeting after three months to allow them, the student and the student's parents to assess and discuss the effectiveness of any adjustments that have been put in place and make any amendments as necessary.

The operational senior will arrange for termly assessments of any reasonable adjustments in place, to establish their effectiveness and whether they are still required by the student. The student and their parents will be notified of any changes.

To support students who menstruate, the school will consider implementing the following reasonable adjustments:

- Permitting students who menstruate additional access to toilet and changing facilities, as required, including access to toilet and changing facilities that are more private.
- Permitting the student to not take part in PE or other physical activities during their period, if they choose to.
- Ensuring there are period products readily available for students to use.
- Allowing the student to store a spare change of clothing and underwear, as necessary, and providing space to store any spare or soiled articles of clothing during the school day.
- Where necessary, allow students to ask for pain-reducing medication to be administered to help them manage any adverse symptoms, e.g. headaches and abdominal pains.
- Allow for flexibilities and understanding with regard to behaviour, in the scope of the Behaviour Policy and on a case-by-case basis, if the student experiences severe mood swings and behavioural changes as a result of their PMS.
- Putting in place a named member of staff that the student feels comfortable and confident talking to should they need support while on their period at school.
- Establishing, with the student's parents, an agreed timeframe for the student to catch up on any class work and/or homework as a result of absence, where appropriate.
- Allow the student to retreat to a comfortable, quiet place on the school premises should they be experiencing low moods, anxiety or irritability as a result of PMS.

## **6. Self-management**

Students who are able to manage their own menstrual needs and any pain medication will be encouraged to take responsibility for self-managing their periods and symptoms while at school.

Where there is uncertainty surrounding whether the student will be able to self-manage their own symptoms and/or menstrual hygiene, the operational senior will discuss this with the student's parents prior to setting any expectations of self-management.

Where possible and appropriate, students will be allowed to carry their own period products. Where it is not possible for students to carry their own medicines or period products, they will be held in a suitable location that can be accessed quickly and easily.

If a student refuses any medication to help manage their symptoms or carry out necessary menstrual hygiene care in school, staff will not force them to do so. Following this, the

student's parents will be informed of any incidents so that alternative options can be considered in future.

Medication will be stored, controlled and administered in line with the Administering Medication Policy.

## **7. Toilet, washroom and changing facilities**

The school will ensure that all students have access to appropriate toilet, washing and changing facilities and that these are maintained and safe for use at all times.

Toilet and washing facilities will have:

- Hand washing facilities that are provided within the vicinity of every toilet.
- Adequate lighting and ventilation.
- Easy access for students and allow for supervision by members of staff without compromising the privacy of students.
- Adequate privacy when using the toilet facilities.

The school will ensure that, wherever possible, individuals are never an unreasonable travel distance away from toilet and washing facilities and that there are adequate toilet facilities on each floor and in each area of the school.

The operational senior will ensure any changing rooms are designed to provide dignity, decency and privacy when required for all students.

Where possible, the placement of stocks of period products in toilet facilities will be sufficiently private to allow students who menstruate to access period products privately and away from their peers should they need it.

Where agreed, students who menstruate will have access to toilet and washroom facilities that provide additional privacy during their period, e.g. a disabled toilet or designated staff toilet.

Period product disposal bins will be available in all student toilet facilities, regardless of gender designation and signs displayed to remind students not to flush period products down the toilet.

## **8. Attendance**

Unless alternative arrangements have been agreed, the attendance of students who menstruate will be managed and monitored in line with the Attendance and Absence Policy.

Parents will be required to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to menstrual symptoms that cause illness and/or cannot be reasonably managed at school, e.g. migraines.

Absences due to menstrual symptoms that cause illness and/or cannot be reasonably managed at school will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the parents' claim.

Where appropriate, the school will provide educational support to students who are absent from school because of adverse menstrual symptoms in the form of remote education.

## **9. Exams and assessments**

Where reasonable adjustments are in place for a student who menstruates, the operational senior will liaise with the student's parents about their child's requirements during examinations and assessments, where appropriate.

The school maintains that certain reasonable adjustments that ordinarily apply to day-to-day school life and attendance may need to be amended to account for exam or assessment schedules and the locations for these. Where changes to reasonable adjustments need to be proposed, the operational senior will liaise with the student's parents and, where appropriate, the student.

## **10. Access to period products**

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

The operational senior will ensure that all staff are aware that individual students 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 students who menstruate based on assumptions, e.g. withholding tampons based on a student's age.

The operational senior 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 students who menstruate.

The school will hold a variety of sizes, types and brands of period products, including both reusable and single-use products, so that students 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 students with allergies to certain materials, sensory difficulties and cultural or religious requirements.

Where reusable products are provided to a student, this will be on the basis that the product is brand new and does not have to be returned, i.e. the product is given to the student to keep.

Period products kept on the school site will always be new, unused, undamaged, available in their original packaging, properly labelled, and will not have passed their expiry date.

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



## **11. Health and wellbeing**

The school will ensure that staff are adequately trained on the signs and symptoms of TSS. Any instances of TSS will be managed immediately and in line with the First Aid Policy.

While the school will endeavour to stock a range of period products, high-absorbency tampons are most associated with developing TSS and staff will, therefore, be vigilant when providing this type of tampon to a student. If in doubt, the member of staff will contact the parent.

Students who menstruate will be taught via the delivery of the RSHE curriculum the safe way to use tampons, how long they can be kept in for, and how to choose which product is right for them. Students who menstruate will be made aware that they should notify a member of staff if they feel unwell while using a tampon.

Students who experience severe symptoms during their period will have access to additional support and pastoral care as necessary.

Students who have their first period while on the school site will have access to support, advice and will be permitted to choose a period product that is right for them.

Where required, the operational senior will make a decision as to whether the student should be sent home if they are distressed or worried about getting their first period while at school.

Students who menstruate and are experiencing particularly distressing, painful or uncomfortable symptoms during their period will be directed to the parent. They may be sent home to manage their symptoms, at the discretion of the operational senior.

Where a member of staff is concerned about the severity of a student's menstrual symptoms, the method by which they are or are not managing their menstrual hygiene, or the amount of time a student is missing school due to managing their symptoms, they will raise this with the operational senior as soon as possible.

## **12. Confidentiality**

Advice and support provided to students 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.

## **13. Intimate care**

The school will ensure staff are aware that some students 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 students' period products for them. Members of staff will instruct the student as necessary and perform a demonstration, e.g. on a model, prior to the student using the period product for themselves.

Where the changing, application or insertion of a period product is outlined in a student's therapeutic plan, this will only be carried out by an authorised member of staff who is suitably

trained, has the relevant DBS checks, and it is listed in their job description and/or contract of employment.

## **14. Ethos and training**

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

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

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

The school will not put a disproportionate burden on members of staff who menstruate to be able to support and talk to students who require support for their menstrual needs – this responsibility will be expected of all trained staff.

## **15. Inclusivity**

Support, advice and period products will be made available to all students who menstruate, and staff will be suitably trained to have conversations about periods with any student who requires it.

Specific period product types will not be withheld from students who menstruate based on assumptions about their age, gender, culture, religion, or any additional needs. The school will ensure staff understand that the period products that students who menstruate choose is based on individual needs and preferences.

Information used to support students who menstruate will be provided in a way that it is accessible to all, including younger students, students with EAL and students with SEND.

Adjustments will be put in place for students 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'.

Information and policies in place to support students who menstruate will be written in language that does not isolate younger students, and reflects the needs of students who menstruate but do not identify as female. Where possible, the school will avoid using gender-specific language with regards to the access of period products offered by the school to avoid discouraging students who do not identify as female and students with VSD from accessing them.

The school will ensure that period products and period product disposal bins are made available in locations that are easily and comfortably accessible by students who menstruate that do not use toilet facilities designated for female use.

## **16. 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 student 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 students, particularly if their symptoms are severe, and this may lead to some behaviour that is unusual for the student. The school will apply sensitivity and understanding where unusual behaviour is a result of a student's menstrual symptoms and will discuss with the student 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.

## **17. Educational trips and visits**

Students 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 students who menstruate to participate equally to students 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 students to participate in off-site activities.

A variety of pain medications and period products will be made available to students on educational trips and visits.

## **18. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis by the directors.

The directors will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and its implementation, and introduce a review of this policy to address any improvements to practice.

The next review of this policy is scheduled for January 2026.