

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 February 2023
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Supporting Women's Health in Schools and Educational Settings
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide an update on various approaches used within education on delivering menstruation supports in schools, and the management of this approach in relation to women's health

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that it be noted that the Council's menopause policy and guidance review is applicable to employees across all Council services, including schools, educational establishments, and services and
- (2) that it be noted that Education Resources has in place specific policies, procedures, and guidelines on engaging with children and young people on access to products, de-stigmatisation and learning through Personal and Social Education (PSE).

3. Background

- 3.1. South Lanarkshire Council was proactive in supporting Women's Health issues and developing a Menopause policy to provide educational information and useful links for employees to access further support. Line managers were issued with guidance to support female employees which also transcended to all educational establishments. In line with this approach, it is recognised that teachers and other school staff are also employees of the council, benefiting from the opportunities to participate in supportive discussions around the female reproductive cycle and diminish the stigma that can be attached to talking about menstruation.
- 3.2. The Council seeks to support all employees' wellbeing regardless of gender. However, understanding the profile of our workforce enables us to have a more targeted approach in terms of supporting employee health and wellbeing. As part of ensuring a dignified approach, schools ensure that there are arrangements put in place to meet their duties and allow any individual (staff or pupils) who menstruates, including transgender males and non-binary individuals, to have ready access to period products in a supportive, dignified, and inclusive environment.
- 3.3. The Council, on 28 September 2022, agreed a Motion to consider the necessity, feasibility, and implications of implementing a menstruation policy in the workplace

and this report provides an insight and update on the supports in place in schools and educational settings.

4. Education Resources Position

- 4.1. South Lanarkshire Council has introduced policies and procedures outlining the implementation of the 'Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021' across the school estate. This guidance can be found in the 'Period Positive South Lanarkshire – Schools Guidance' document published August 2022 (Appendix 1).. One impact of this guidance is that in all schools and educational settings, it is free and easy to collect period products as and when required.
- 4.2. As part of the de-stigmatisation procedures schools and establishments ensure pupils are not negatively impacted by any absence due to menstruation. Each school has a member of staff responsible for Period Products and menstruation, and they will take the lead on their school's procedures for absence due to menstruation and ensuring pupils affected can access work at home to keep up with their schoolwork.
- 4.3. As part of their learner journey, all children and young people in Scotland are entitled to experience a coherent curriculum from 3 to 18, in order that they have opportunities to develop the knowledge, personal skills and attributes they need to adapt, think critically and be successful in today's world. Puberty and Menstruation is taught as part of the Personal and Social Education (PSE) curriculum, covering set experiences and outcomes in-line with Scottish Government recommendations.
- 4.4. The Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) strategy for ensuring quality in delivery of curricular Health and Wellbeing in schools centres on an NHS Lanarkshire resource called Healthy Schools. It provides a flexible, adaptable framework of materials which complement existing resources. It builds on prior learning, knowledge and understanding to support practitioners plan and deliver Health & Wellbeing Experiences, Outcomes and Benchmarks at each Level aligned to the Wellbeing Indicators. Puberty and Menstruation are delivered as part of the Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) topic.
- 4.5. Following the Council Motion, on 12 September 2022 a corporate review of menopause policy and guidance was undertaken. The reviewed policy is to be communicated across the Council.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. As stated in 3.1 above, it is recognised that teachers and staff in educational settings are also employees of the council and, as such, will have access to supports offered by the Council in line with menstruation policy in the workplace.
- 5.2. Information and training on various aspects of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum is planned for teaching staff and delivered each term, improving and upskilling staff to develop confidence in delivery of sexual health topics. Feedback from participants involved is positive and we liaise with several external providers to further support for schools in their provision. (NHS Lanarkshire, LGBT Youth Scotland, Healthy Schools).

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The Council has funding to allow for free access to period products in schools and educational settings, other Council establishments and external settings including NHS buildings.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. Consideration of the environmental impact of single use period products has been highlighted to all establishments. Schools consider the most appropriate way to make reusable period products available for free for those who wish to use those types of products. There should be no pressure applied to people who do not wish to use reusable products, but consideration should be given to making sustainable or plastic-free products available as part of the choice of products.
- 7.2. Environmental implications were important to the young people who responded to the South Lanarkshire Education Consultation, although it was clear that the young people were not aware that 'Hey Girls' products currently provided are plastic-free and made from sustainable materials.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. None.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. There was an extensive consultation undertaken with secondary schools aged young people which assisted in the formation of the 'Period Positive South Lanarkshire – Schools Guidance' document published August 2022.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

18 January 2022

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learners and strengthening partnerships.

Previous References

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council – 7 December 2022
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council – 23 September 2022
- ◆ Education Resources Committee – 18 September 2022

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Period Positive South Lanarkshire Guidance for Schools – Issued August 2022

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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