An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Period Products for Schools in the DEIS Plus Scheme

Guidance for Schools

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Table of contents

Table of contents i

1. What is free period products funding? 2
2. Why is it important to provide free period products? 2
3. How do schools access the products? 2
4. Do schools have to use the OGP Framework? 3
5. What types of products should be provided? 3
6. How should schools make the products available to students? 4
7. How often can students access the free products? 5
8. What safety matters should schools be aware of? 5
9. Who should be responsible for period products in schools? 5
10. Is there any other information staff and students should be aware of? 6
11. Contacts for queries 6
12. Useful Links 6

1. What is free period products funding?

As part of the DEIS Plus scheme announced by Minister Naughton in March 2026, funding has been allocated to provide free period products to all schools in the scheme for the 2026/27 school year.

A grant will be issued in Q3 2026. The grant amount will be calculated based on the number of students in your school who, based on age, are likely to have started their period.

The funding provided is buying period products for eligible students in your school.

At the end of the school year, the department will contact schools to check if the funding is at the right level.

2. Why is it important to provide free period products?

All students should be able to access period products when they need them. This may include students who:

- Have forgotten to bring period products to school or have run out of them.
- Cannot afford period products.
- Have started their period unexpectedly.

3. How do schools access the products?

A grant will be paid to schools annually by the Department of Education and Youth. Schools may access products via the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) framework 'Cleaning, Paper, Personal Hygiene and Period Equality Products'. Further details and information can be found by clicking on this link:

Cleaning, Paper, Personal Hygiene and Period Equality Products

The Framework for the provision of Cleaning, Paper, Personal Hygiene & Period Equality Products is fully compliant with procurement regulations. It reduces the time and costs associated with running your own procurement process by offering goods that have already been competitively tendered for.

The OGP has created a user guide for this framework. Banner and We Are Riley are the current period product suppliers.

When ordering products, schools are encouraged to consider:

- Reducing waste and only ordering products when stock is low.
- The environmental impact of the frequency of deliveries.

Advice on the use of the framework and practical assistance can be provided by the Schools Procurement Unit.

4. Do schools have to use the OGP Framework?

While encouraged to source your requirements for these products through the framework, it is not mandatory for schools to do so.

Funding will be allocated to schools based on the average prices of products from the OGP framework. Where schools do not utilise centralised procurement arrangements, they should be in a position to provide a value for money justification.

Schools who wish to source the products elsewhere will therefore need to conduct a procurement process, if necessary. The current guidelines state:

- Contracts less than €5,000 in value (excluding VAT) can be awarded on the basis of verbal or written quotes from one or more competitive supplier.
- Contracts between €5,000 and €50,000 in value (excluding VAT) can be awarded on the basis of responses to written specifications (for example, sent by email) to at least three suppliers.

The contract value in all cases being an assessment of the annual/multi-annual spend on such products.

5. What types of products should be provided?

Feedback from focus groups conducted with students showed that they valued being involved in deciding which products should be ordered for them.

Students indicated that they would like:

- A range of sanitary pads and tampons to be available, including products suitable for light to heavy periods and tampons with and without applicators.
- Access to other period products, such as period pants and menstrual cups.

- Good-quality period products, as these are generally more comfortable and effective.
- Schools to engage with student councils or other student-led groups to decide which products should be ordered.

Schools are encouraged to consider whether the range of period products available meets the diverse needs of their students, taking account of cultural and religious considerations where appropriate.

Some parents and carers may have preferences or concerns regarding certain period products. When selecting products, schools are encouraged to consider the views of students, parents and carers from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds to help ensure an inclusive and appropriate range of products is available.

Some period products may not be suitable for students with certain disabilities or additional needs. Where appropriate, schools should seek the views of those students and ensure that suitable products are available to support their needs.

6. How should schools make the products available to students?

Schools will need to determine how and where period products are made available, ensuring that students can access them easily, discreetly and with dignity.

Schools should consider the needs of students whose first language is neither English nor Irish and ensure that information on accessing products communicated in a clear and accessible way.

Supplies should be checked regularly to ensure that products remain in good condition and are fit for use. Stock levels should also be monitored and replenished as required to help ensure that products remain readily available to students.

In consultations with students, the following preferences were identified:

- Period products should be available without students having to ask for them, helping to reduce stigma and avoid embarrassment.
- Where practical, products should be available in school bathrooms.
- Products could also be made available in base classrooms or other accessible locations, such as libraries, reception areas, or other communal spaces.

7. How often can students access the free products?

Students should be able to access the period products they need, without unnecessary restrictions.

The grant allocation is based on the number of students in your school who are likely to have started their period. In primary schools, this is calculated using figures for students in fourth class and above.

8. What safety matters should schools be aware of?

Schools should ensure that sufficient sanitary bins are available in bathrooms for the safe disposal of period products. These bins should be emptied regularly.

All period products supplied under the OGP framework meet relevant industry standards. Manufacturers may update product and safety guidance from time to time, so schools should refer to the information provided with each product. Students should also be given access to any relevant safety information for the products they use.

Schools should follow appropriate storage and safety practices when stocking period products. Products should remain individually wrapped, and any expired products should be disposed of appropriately. Schools should also keep a record of product batch numbers.

Some period products, including tampons and menstrual cups, carry a very small risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). TSS is a rare but serious infection that can develop quickly and requires urgent medical attention. It is important that both staff and students are aware of the symptoms and associated safety guidance. Further details are included in the guidance supplied with the products.

9. Who should be responsible for period products in schools?

Schools may wish to nominate one or two members of staff, such as a teacher or Special Needs Assistant (SNA), to act as a Period Champion. This role could include overseeing the availability of products, ensuring supplies are maintained, and serving as a point of contact for students who have questions or feedback about the initiative.

10. Is there any other information staff and students should be aware of?

Schools are encouraged to consider providing information and awareness sessions on periods and menstrual health, with content tailored to the age and needs of their students. A range of free resources and guidance materials is available, including from the HSE. Schools should review any resources before use to ensure they are appropriate for their student cohort.

Schools are encouraged to raise awareness of the free period products initiative through school assemblies, engagement with student groups and student councils, and communication with parents and carers. Consideration should also be given to the language used when discussing the initiative. Research suggests that using positive, inclusive and non-stigmatising terminology can help support open and respectful conversations about periods and menstrual health.

11. Contacts for queries

Advice on the use of the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) framework, together with practical procurement support, is available from the Schools Procurement Unit.

Queries relating to OGP frameworks may also be directed to the Office of Government Procurement Support Desk at support@ogp.gov.ie.

If your school has a specific query that is not addressed above, please contact the department by email at Period_Products@education.gov.ie.

12. Useful Links

Office of Government Procurement

Schools Procurement Unit

HSE Health Promotion Publications

Free Period Products - downloadable poster

Táirgí míostraithe saor in aisce - downloadable poster

Healthy Ireland 'Period Poverty' website

HSE Overview of Periods

