

# Briefing on Menstrual Health Management and Sanitary Dignity Programme in Basic Education

Presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

18 February 2025



# Presentation Outline

1. Purpose
2. Background
3. DBE Response to Menstrual Health Management
4. Actions Taken
5. Existing Policy Frameworks
6. DBE Research Findings on Sustainable Menstrual Health Practices in South African Schools
7. Conclusion
8. Recommendation

# Purpose

To present to the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities regarding the implementation of the Menstrual Health Management and Sanitary Dignity Programme in Basic Education.

# Background



MHM is a Human Rights issue – if girls cannot attend school due to challenges relating to MHM (or cannot engage even if in attendance) this goes against their right to basic education.



Acknowledge that this has to be tackled at different levels of various Departments and other social organisation



Education is important – especially to dispel myths through curriculum. This is being done with the support of other partners.

# DBE Response to Menstrual Health Sanitary Dignity



### Grade 4

4.1 Respect for my own body

4.2 Respecting the bodies of others

4.3 Dealing with conflict

4.4 Emotions-Why am I feeling this way?

4.5 Bullying

4.6 Responding to bullying

4.7 Culture, society and sexuality

4.8 The basics of HIV and AIDS

4.9 Transmission of HIV

4.10 Celebrating the life of Nkosi Johnson

### Grade 5

5.1 Body image

5.2 (a) I can choose my relationships  
5.2 (b) This is my body and I say what happens to it.

5.3 The benefit of good and safe relationships

5.4 Child abuse-“Keeping myself safe from abuse”

5.5 Sexual grooming: I can say “NO”!

5.6 Dealing with violent situations-  
“What is sexual violence?”

5.7 Learning from our elders

5.8 Should boys and girls be treated differently?

5.9 Dealing with the stigma of HIV

5.10 Changing attitudes towards people infected with HIV and AIDS

### Grade 6

6.1 Body Image: “ My body is changing”

6.2 Body image: “I am who I am”

6.3 Body Image: Acceptance of self

6.4 Negative and positive peer pressure

6.5 Behaviours that put pressure on us

6.6 Bullying and links to gender-based violence

6.7 Bullies can change

6.8 What is gender stereotyping, sexism and abuse?

6.9 Gender equality, stereotypes and bias

6.10 HIV and AIDS, stigma, care, treatment and support

# Senior Phase Grade 7 to 9

## Making informed choices

### Grade 7

7.1 Setting Goals & Reaching Your Potential

7.2 **Appreciation and acceptance of self and others**

7.3 Is there a difference between Gender and Sex?

7.4 **Understanding Puberty – Physical, Social and Emotional Changes**

7.5 Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

7.6 Making Decisions about Sex

7.7 Assertive Communication

7.8 Revisiting Your Goals and Moving Forward

### Grade 8

8.1 Setting Goals & Reaching Your Potential

8.2 (A) and (B) Healthy and Unhealthy messages about our Gender

8.3 Making Healthy Sexual Choices and Knowing Your Limits

8.4 Sexuality is More than Sex

8.5 What Young Adults Need to Know about STIs and HIV / AIDS

8.6 **Am I At Risk for Pregnancy and STIs?**

8.7 HIV / AIDS and Stigma

8.8 The Art of Saying “No, Thanks”

### Grade 9

9.1 Setting Goals & Reaching Your Potential

9.2 Safer Sex – Contraception

9.3 Safer Sex Using Condoms

9.4 Barriers to Condom Use

9.5 One Partner at a Time

9.6 **Using Sexual and Reproductive Health Resources in the Community**

9.7 **Are You Ready for Parenthood?**

9.8 Sexual Consent

9.9 Power and Control in Relationships

9.10 Being Assertive, Staying Protected

9.11 Consolidating Intentions for Grade 9

# FET Phase Grade 10-12

## Healthy relationship choices and planning ahead

### Grade 10

10.1 Developing my self-confidence

10.2 Understanding power. Getting to share it.

10.3 Gender equality and healthier relationships

10.4 Social and environmental justice. We can make a difference

10.5 My changing life roles and life goals

10.6 Understanding sexual interest

10.7 Our choices, our decisions

10.8 I know what I want

10.9 Consent, rape and taking action.

### Grade 11

11.1 My priorities and life goals

11.2 Healthy relationships: Choosing the right influences

11.3 Healthy and unhealthy relationships and the media

11.4 Living a balanced lifestyle, staying in control

11.5 Understanding the consequences of risky behaviour

11.6 Positive role models

11.7 Gender, power and violence

11.8 Rape – prevention, support and change

11.9 Taking action against abuse

### Grade 12

12.1 Our needs and our rights, taking action

12.2 Human factors affecting our health: What we can do about them

12.3 STIs: Protecting ourselves, protecting our future

12.4 Looking ahead: my personal protection plan

# Action taken



In addition to prioritising MHM within Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL), it encourages collaboration with sister departments, funding partners, NGO and other partners, including business.



DBE Guidelines have been produced to support MHM in schools. Produced in an accessible way so that any and all in the school community can reference



DBE acknowledges the reality that all schools are different – but there are basic things that can be done

# Action taken

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Guidelines for Water, Sanitation & Hygiene in South African Schools produced in 2017

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Includes using what you have – such as making a tippy tap if no water; schedules for cleaning and maintenance (ensure facilities are safe)

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Integrated School Health Policy (ISHP) active in this area to support

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Curriculum (Life Skills) covers WASH, which is directly related to MHM

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# Menstrual Health Video 1

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# Menstrual Health Video 2

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# Existing Policy & Strategic Frameworks

- Integrated School Health Policy (2012)
- Underpinned by the SA Constitution - Bill of Rights
- The South African Schools Act,
- the National Development Plan 2030,
- National Strategic Plan for HIV, STIs and TB
- National Strategic Plan to end Gender-based Violence and Femicide.
- The BELA Bill adds protective mechanisms for this area of work.

# DBE Research Findings on Sustainable Menstrual Health Practices in South African Schools

**Integrating menstruation education into the school curriculum.**

✓ through Comprehensive Sexuality Education

**Ensuring the availability and accessibility of sanitary products.**

✓ through Sanitary Dignity Implementation Framework (SDIF) with DWYPD – sanitary pads distribution in Q1 – 3 selected schools

**Addressing menstruation-related absenteeism.**

✓ Learner Support Agents (LSAs); Child and Youth Care Workers follow up on long absenteeism

**Improving wash and sanitation facilities for menstrual management.**

✓ through ASIDI and SAFE Initiative

**Providing adequate disposal facilities.**

✗ pending – Menstrual Waste Management still a discussion point, including product mix & choice

**Strengthening support from families, schools, communities, and stakeholders in managing menstruation**

✓ through the multiple community-based campaigns

# Conclusion

1. Policy and progressively introduce legislation once budgets are secured
2. DWYPD incremental implementation of the sanitary dignity programme – R246m vs R400m that was costed at the time
3. Mobilisation of other sectors and social partners to support basic education in its endeavours
4. Improvement of efficiencies is ongoing

# Recommendation

It is recommended that the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities notes the briefing regarding the implementation of the Menstrual Health Management and Sanitary Dignity Programme in Basic Education.