



# Personal Hygiene

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## Rationale

To protect the health of the school community and help students manage their own personal hygiene routines.

## Policy

### **Definitions**

**Personal hygiene** is the action, habit, or practice of keeping oneself clean, especially as a means of maintaining good health. The practice of personal hygiene can also protect the health of others.

**Hand hygiene** is a general term referring to any action of hand cleansing. It includes hand washing with soap and water and the use of antimicrobial hand rubs (for example, alcohol-based hand rub).

**Menstrual hygiene management (MHM)** is a necessary aspect of hygiene for women and girls for a significant period of their lives. MHM describes the practice of using clean materials to absorb/collect menstrual blood that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary when girls and women have their menstrual period. Good management includes using soap and water for washing the body as required and having access to facilities to dispose of used sanitary products.

## Strategies and actions

The following table outlines the strategies and actions that schools can undertake to help students manage their own personal hygiene routines.

Strategy	Action
Provision of soap and other hygiene consumables	<p>Schools have a responsibility to provide appropriate hand hygiene consumables to support the personal hygiene routines of students. Consumables include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• soap, preferably in liquid form via a dispenser (for example, wall mounted).</li><li>• a method for hand drying (for example, paper towel or hand dryer).</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alcohol-based hand rub (where deemed appropriate).</li> </ul> <p>Although washing hands with soap and water is the preferred method of hand hygiene, alcohol-based hand sanitisers are a useful adjunct to hand washing and can be provided in classrooms or where running water is not available. Non-alcohol-based hand sanitisers are not recommended.</p> <p>Provision for the cost of school consumables such as soap is included in the cash component of the Student Resource Package.</p>
Menstrual hygiene management	<p>Menstrual hygiene is a basic need for all women and girls who menstruate. It is an important part of a women's reproductive health. Having periods is a normal and healthy part of growing up.</p> <p>Having a supply of sanitary pads and tampons available in toilets in schools can help to normalise menstruation. Having open discussions about the safest way to use sanitary products will help to build positive social norms and help girls and women to manage their menstrual hygiene with dignity and comfort.</p> <p>With the provision of sanitary items, schools also have a duty of care to provide students with information about the safe use of sanitary items, see: <a href="#">Promoting Menstrual Health In Schools</a>.</p> <p>For further information about the implementation of the Free Sanitary Pads and Tampons in All Public Schools initiative, see: <a href="#">Frequently asked questions -Sept 2019</a>.</p>
Hand hygiene education	<p>Schools can incorporate hand hygiene education into the curriculum and daily school activities to maximise opportunities for students to develop personal hygiene practices. See the Clean Hands hand hygiene curriculum resource in Department resources below.</p> <p>Hand hygiene should be routinely performed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• before, during and after preparing food.</li> <li>• before and after eating.</li> <li>• after using the toilet.</li> <li>• after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.</li> <li>• after touching animals or pets.</li> <li>• before and after treating a wound or cut.</li> <li>• after handling garbage.</li> <li>• when hands are visibly soiled.</li> </ul>

Personal hygiene care and learning plan	<p>Schools can create a personal hygiene care and learning plan that positively reinforces progress for students identified with a learning need in the step-by-step processes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hand hygiene.</li> <li>• face washing, especially after eating.</li> <li>• blowing and wiping their noses.</li> <li>• Toileting.</li> <li>• menstruation management for those who need reassurance, verbal support or assistance, see the Raising Children Network's webpage: <a href="#">Girls with autism spectrum disorder: periods</a></li> </ul> <p>The <a href="#">Toileting Care and Learning Plan (docx - 44.28kb)</a> is an example of a care and learning plan that can be customised.</p> <p><a href="#">Health Support Planning Forms</a> are also available when health advice on an identified health need has been received from the student's medical practitioner.</p>
Occupational health and safety	All personal hygiene management practices must reflect occupational health and safety standards for the school.

#### **Department resources**

- [Clean Hands curriculum resource](#): for hand hygiene curriculum (and other support materials) for primary schools
- [Health and Physical Education Resources](#): for sexuality education curriculum resources for primary schools; see particularly 'Coping with Body Changes' in 'Catching on Early: Sexuality education for Victorian Primary Schools'.
- [Toileting Care and Learning Plan \(docx - 44.28kb\)](#): a tool schools may use to maximise opportunities for students to self-manage their toileting as far as possible.

#### **Other resources**

- [Be a Soapy Hero!](#): Better Health Channel video for primary school students and information for parents/guardians and teachers.
- [Healthy swimming](#): information on practicing good hygiene before swimming (Better Health Channel)
- [Personal Hygiene](#): Better Health Channel's community page on personal hygiene
- [Resources for the Community](#): information for caregivers of children from Hand Hygiene Australia (see 'Hand Hygiene Information Brochure for Childcare')

#### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the school's three-year review cycle.

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**Last ratified by School Council in May 2023**