

**SUPPORTING STUDENTS
WITH PMDD:**

**THE
PMDD
PROJECT**

A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL AND EDUCATORS

This guide is designed to help schools support students with Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), following UK legal guidelines.

It aims to equip teachers, management, and support staff with strategies to promote an inclusive, understanding environment that accommodates the unique needs of students experiencing PMDD.

UNDERSTANDING PMDD



What is PMDD?

PMDD is a severe mood disorder linked to the menstrual cycle. Symptoms include intense emotional and physical changes, such as mood swings, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating.

Impact on learning:

Students with PMDD may experience challenges with attendance, focus, and mood regulation.

This can impact their academic performance and social relationships.

Recognising the confusion for young students



Navigating new experiences:

For young students who have only recently begun menstruating, experiencing PMDD can be especially confusing, as talking about periods is often still considered taboo.

Support through education:

Educating students, staff, and families on PMDD and menstrual health is essential for breaking down these barriers. This education helps ensure students' needs are met and that they don't feel isolated in their experiences.

Workshops on menstrual health:

The PMDD Project offer workshops on menstrual education, including PMDD, to help schools raise awareness, promote empathy, and ensure students, staff, and families have access to the knowledge and resources they need.



Legal obligations and reasonable adjustments

Equality Act 2010:

Under UK law, PMDD may be considered a disability if it significantly affects daily activities. Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments to support affected students.

Reasonable adjustments:

Adjustments could include flexible deadlines, access to support resources, or modified attendance requirements during severe symptoms. Keep communication open to tailor adjustments based on individual needs.



Classroom strategies for teachers

Flexible expectations:

Allow students the option for extensions on assignments or modified participation when symptoms are intense. If possible, reduce high-stress activities, like presentations, during this time.

Comfortable environment:

Provide access to quiet spaces or allow students to take breaks if they feel overwhelmed.

Sensory-friendly areas can help students manage stress.

Understanding and empathy:

Promote an inclusive classroom where students feel comfortable discussing their needs. Normalising mental health discussions can reduce stigma.



Access to school-based support services

Counselling services:

If available, encourage students to use school counselling services for additional support.

Academic adjustments:

Offer options like remote learning or recorded lessons if PMDD symptoms affect attendance or concentration.



Developing a supportive school culture

Staff training:

Educate teachers and staff on PMDD, mental health, and menstrual health to build a culture of empathy and understanding.

Designated support staff:

Ensure students with PMDD have access to a trained staff member they can turn to for support, like a school nurse or counsellor.

Confidentiality and communication:

Respect student privacy, sharing health information only on a need-to-know basis. Maintain clear communication channels with a student and, where appropriate, their family.



Working with parents and external support

Parent communication:

Work with parents or guardians to understand any specific needs or coping strategies the student may have.

External resources:

Encourage students and families to connect with external PMDD support networks or healthcare providers as needed.

Implementing a PMDD awareness programme

Educational workshops:

Host workshops or assemblies on menstrual health, mental health, and PMDD.

The PMDD Project will offer menstrual education workshops designed to break the stigma, enhance understanding, and help all students feel supported.

Peer support groups:

Consider establishing peer support groups or mentorship programs where students can connect with others facing similar challenges.



By implementing these steps and making use of resources such as workshops from The PMDD Project, schools can better support students with PMDD.

You'll be creating a learning environment that respects and accommodates their needs while breaking down taboos around menstrual health.

THE PMDD PROJECT