

MAX CLEAN



Students transforming access to period products

A student-led initiative at Auckland's Howick College has transformed conversations about periods and access to period products. The school is a leading adopter of the Ministry of Education's Ikura programme, with strong uptake of free period products.

The programme is overseen by Senior Academic Dean, Anna Marsick and managed day-to-day by the student-led service group 'Z Club' comprising of over 100 members.

The group takes its name from Zonta International, a global women's rights organisation with a New Zealand presence.

This long established group has already led several initiatives aimed at improving the wellbeing of students. To adopt the Ikura programme, the group built a system that made running distribution of products efficient and drove its visibility and engagement amongst students.

Results at a glance



Stock availability

Free period products always readily available.



Tackling period poverty

The initiative removed access barriers and ensured reliable supply of period products.



Reduced school administration

The student-led model keeps the programme running with minimal supervision from school support staff.





“Over three years ago, Z Club identified a room in the campus and converted it into their Period Products Office. They organised the space into a proper stock room, painted and decorated the walls with the photos of role models. They created a mini office and have been running their operations efficiently from this little space.”

Anna Marsick
Senior Academic Dean, Howick College

The Challenge

Key challenges the school faced when adopting the Ikura programme included:

- Mismatched dispensers, product sizes, and capacity issues
- Frequently topping up dispensers and addressing broken units
- Managing the stock and tracking usage across several dispensers in different bathrooms
- Creating awareness, reducing stigma and cultural barriers to access free period products
- Ensuring period products are easily accessed by everyone.

The Solution

Passionate about student wellbeing, Anna Marsick added this initiative as a part of the student leadership matrix. This provided the group with the guidance, support, and the opportunity to run the programme independently.

Z Club created a simple Google Form that allowed students to request period products from anywhere, at any time. These requests are sent directly to the group who coordinate preparation and collection.

Student representatives then pack the period products into brown bags, label them, and place them in their dedicated stock room called the ‘Period Products Office’ for students to collect discreetly.



The group also stocked the products in other locations of their vast campus for easy access including the student office, library, and health centre.

Regular reminders communicated to students encourage them to stock up for a full cycle before term or exam breaks, summer holidays, field, or sports trips in New Zealand or overseas.

The group also monitors stock levels and notifies the Dean when it's time to place the next order with OfficeMax, usually at the start of each term.

“We’ve had some very positive feedback from our fellow junior and senior students since the programme was implemented. They like the Google Form ordering process which is simple, efficient and they can collect it discreetly from the Period Products Office. We’ve witnessed less hesitation and more open conversations happening when it comes to periods and period products.”

*Members of the Z Club
Howick College*

The Results

This student-led system has made the programme more reliable and better organised. Over 1000 students have easy access to free period products on a daily basis. The programme has also enabled more open conversations about period products and has enhanced overall student wellbeing. Key outcomes include:

- Period products are always available in stock
- Students often pair up to collect the supplies discreetly from the stock room
- High usage of the free period products
- Destigmatised period conversations across the school
- Students can order and stock up for a full cycle before school breaks and summer holidays.

Impact for Howick College:

- Howick College now runs the Ikura programme like clockwork, reducing operational strain on the school and its management
- Students have gained leadership and people skills, which contribute to their end-of-year assessments.

Anna Marsick emphasises that the programme is so valuable for young students that it should be implemented beyond school into tertiary education.



“The programme works well while students are at school. Once they enter university, they’re expected to purchase products themselves, which adds extra pressure. This programme should be extended further into university settings, hostels and more.”

*Anna Marsick
Senior Academic Dean, Howick College*