

MAX  
CLEAN



## Access to period products removing barriers

Western Heights High School in Rotorua identified **period poverty as a significant barrier to student participation, with many students missing school and other activities due to limited access to period products.**

When the Ministry of Education's Ikura programme launched in 2022, the school acted quickly. As well as providing free period products, the programme helped challenge stigma, opened up conversations about menstruation, period care, and student wellbeing.

### The Challenge

- Reduce absenteeism linked to period poverty
- Provide discreet access to period products in multiple locations
- Enable menstruators to fully participate in learning, sports, and cultural activities
- Normalise conversations about periods.

### Results at a glance



#### Easy access for students

Period products are accessible via dispensers in high-traffic bathrooms and in the school's Health & Wellness Centre.



#### Confidence and participation

Improved attendance and increased involvement in sports and cultural activities.



#### Strong adoption

The school leadership implemented the programme with full commitment and great success.

WE SUPPORT THE  
*Period Positivity.*  
MOVEMENT



## The Solution

Strong school leadership commitment played a key role in the programme's success. From the outset, school leaders treated access to free period products as a practical, everyday need, not just a one-off initiative.



They installed ten dispensers in high-traffic bathrooms and put clear systems in place to manage stock and refills. While there was some initial product wastage, this was addressed early through consistent monitoring and open conversations with students about shared responsibility.

To build awareness and normalise conversations about periods, the school promoted the programme regularly. This was reinforced through assemblies, group gatherings and by informing parents and whānau via notices and school newsletters.

In addition to bathroom dispensers, the school extended access through pre-made period packs, ensuring no student was left without support. These packs are available from the school's Health & Wellness Centre in plain brown bags and include a range of products for students to take as required.

*"Product wastage soon reduced significantly. Students recognised the purpose of the programme, to treat the period products as a vital resource and use them responsibly to support their cycle."*

*Beryl Jane Te Moananui  
Teacher Aide/Nurse Aid,  
Western Heights High School*





The Ikura programme provides enough products for a full cycle, not just for emergency use. Students are encouraged to take enough supplies for use at home, during term breaks and over summer holidays, removing financial pressure and gaps in access beyond the school walls.

## The Results

Awareness and use of free period products increased significantly across the school. The programme has delivered clear, positive outcomes by:

- Reducing barriers to education enabling students to attend and engage consistently

- Easing financial pressure on families by eliminating an essential cost
- Supporting regular school attendance
- Increasing participation in sports and cultural activities
- Normalising conversations about periods through visible, stigma free access to period products.

*“The free period products are a huge financial relief for many families and are one less cost and concern for them.”*

*Beryl Jane Te Moananui  
Teacher Aide/Nurse Aid, Western Heights High School*

