Misuse Guide

At Share the Dignity, we're committed to ensuring Dignity Vending Machines® have the greatest possible impact in Queensland schools, so that no student misses a day of learning because of their period. If your school is experiencing challenges such as misuse, product wastage, or vandalism, the points below offer practical steps to help address these issues:

1. **Hold an Assembly / Classroom Education Session**
    - Find helpful resources on OnePortal by searching 'Share the Dignity', including assembly talking points and ideas for integrating the DVM into your school community.
    - Inform students who their primary point of contact is for all issues related to the DVM i.e. Business Manager, Guidance Officer, School Nurse, Teacher, Principal etc.
    - Reinforce that these products are essential for some students, and misuse can negatively impact those who rely on them.
    - Use the *Period Talk* program (provided via USB with your machine, along with an information sheet) and explore our Education Hub to help spark positive conversations about menstruation: https://www.sharethedignity.org.au/end-period-poverty/education-hub

2. **Change the Time Between Vends**
    - The delayed timer on the machine is adjustable from 1 – 10 minutes.
    - Increasing the amount of time between vends can help slow down the amount of product being dispensed and thereby deter misuse and wastage.
    - Email pas@sharethedignity.org.au for more information.

3. **Engage the Student Council / Leaders**
    - Talk to the student council or leaders about any misuse of the machine.
    - Explore the benefits of involving them in monitoring and maintaining the machine.
    - Consider assigning a student leader to check the machine daily. Normalising period care through student voices helps reduce stigma and encourages responsible use.

4. **Ensure Adequate Storage is Available for Excess / Unwanted Products**
    - Place a designated drawer, shelf, or box in the bathroom for students to return unwanted products.
    - Ensure there are adequate sanitary and general waste bins near the machine.
    - If students prefer pads, encourage them to take tampons home for family members or friends who may need them, helping reduce waste and support others.

5. **Change to Pad-Only Stock**
    - If tampons are consistently underused, consider switching to Pad-Only packs (3 x UltraThin pads). You can order Pad-Only stock at any time via the QR code on your machine and complete a *Period Pack Stock Order*.
    - Use any opened mixed packs within your school community at your discretion. Unopened surplus stock can be returned to Share the Dignity.
    - Only stock one type (Pad-Only or Mixed) in the machine at a time so students know what to expect.

6. **Use Posters to Promote Positive Usage**
    - Place clear, respectful signage above or near the machine outlining its purpose.
    - Share the Dignity has developed two posters, with the aim of promoting positive usage of the DVM. They can be accessed here: https://www.sharethedignity.org.au/end-period-poverty/dignity-vending-machines/qld-govt-instructions

7. **Set Designated Access Periods for the DVM**
    - In severe cases of misuse, you may like to try establishing specific times when the DVM is accessible i.e. before school / lunch breaks, and switching the machine off outside these times. This can help manage usage, reduce the risk of misuse or vandalism, and ensure stock is available when students genuinely need it.
    - Make sure students are aware of these access times through clear signage or communication from staff.

8. **Relocation of the Machine**
    - As a last resort, if the Dignity Vending Machine is being misused despite trying the above strategies, you may consider relocating the machine to a different location within the school.
    - If you wish to explore a relocation, please email pas@sharethedignity.org.au in the first instance. Do not relocate the machine without first contacting Share the Dignity.

Should you have any questions, or require any further assistance, please email us at pas@sharethedignity.org.au.