

# St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit



## Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children

Signed (Chair of the Board of Governors):	Oonagh Donnelly
Signed (Principal):	Barry Conroy
Agree Date:	September 2024
Review Date:	October 2025

## **Introduction**

The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching programmes in St Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit. We are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children. Our Intimate Care Policy is part of our collective pastoral care policies.

This policy is in line with multi-agency guidance as found in the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

In St Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit, the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children have been developed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Children are generally more vulnerable than adults and staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

## **Definition**

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child. Parents have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their child, and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents. (9.26, ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures). Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral Care
- Washing
- Dressing/Undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual Care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

## **Principles of Intimate Care**

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are based:

- Every child has the right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

### **School Responsibilities:**

All staff in St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit are vetted by the E.A. This includes students on work placement and volunteers. Vetting includes Access NI checks, pre-employment checks and two references.

Only named members of staff who are familiar with the Intimate Care Policy and other Pastoral Care Policies are involved in the intimate care of the children. Volunteers or students will not be involved.

Intimate care arrangements which are required on a regular basis (Intimate Care Plan: Appendix 2) are agreed between the school and parents and when appropriate and possible, by the child. Signed Intimate Care Plans are contained in the child's personal file. Intimate care arrangements for any child who requires this support on a regular basis are reviewed annually.

The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. Any amendments to the arrangements should be recorded and made available for all parties involved.

Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. This act of intimate care would be reported to a member of staff and parents at the earliest possible time following the event.

If a member of staff has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, he or she must report this to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

### **Guidelines for Good Practice**

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care, as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

- **Involve the child in the intimate care.**  
Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a child is fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices. Check your practice by asking the child or parent about any likes/dislikes while carrying out the intimate care.
- **Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.**  
Care should be carried out in an age-appropriate manner.
- **Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.**  
As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.

- **Be aware of your own limitations.**  
Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.
- **Promote positive self-esteem and body image.**  
Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Your attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.
- **If you have any concerns, you must report them.**  
If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.  
If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated teacher.  
Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made and kept in the child's personal file. Parents will be informed.

### **Working with Children of the Opposite Sex**

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care, but the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman. The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- When intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy, i.e. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screens/curtains put in place.
- If the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
- Report any concerns to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and make a written record.
- Parents must be informed about any concerns.

### **Procedures for Assisting a Child to change his / her clothes**

This is more common in Nursery and Foundation Stage. On occasions, an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he / she has an accident at the toilet, gets wet outside, or has vomit on his / her clothes etc.

Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required, this will be given.

- The member of staff they will alert the teacher in charge regarding the need to change a child and keep a door open so that they can call for assistance if needed.
- In the Nursery, if a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will change or assist the child. Written agreement to do so is sought at Nursery Induction meetings.

- In Foundation Stage classrooms, staff will assist, only if the child seeks help. In cases where they cannot do so, written permission is sought at Primary 1 Induction meetings (Appendix 1)
- School will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare uniforms for this purpose. (A supply of clean underwear and spare uniforms are available in the Nursery and Foundation Stage classrooms).
- In the case of an older child, an emergency number will be contacted. If the emergency contact is able to come to school within an appropriate time frame, the child will be accompanied and supported by a staff member until he/she arrives. This avoids any further distress and preserves dignity.
- If the emergency contact cannot attend, school will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child.
- Staff should always encourage good hygiene standards by asking the child to flush the toilet after use, wash their hands with soap and water and drying hands afterwards.

### **Communication with Children**

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Depending on their age, maturity and levels of stress children, may communicate using different methods – words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc., to ensure effective communication:

- Make eye contact at the child's level
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary
- Wait for response
- Continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important to note that in addition to the information in the Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to the Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when deemed necessary as a result of further guidance given by DENI or other statutory/advisory bodies. All stakeholders will be involved in the review through a consultation process.

Appendix 1



St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit

**Parental Permission for Intimate Care**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for my child to receive intimate care (help with changing or following toileting), only if it is very necessary.

I understand that staff will encourage my child to be independent.

I understand that I will be informed discretely if an incident arises.

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 2**



**St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit**

**INTIMATE CARE PLAN**

**Pupil Name:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Year Group:**

**Medical Condition(s):**

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**Details of Assistance Required**

When?

Where?

What/How?


**Facilities and equipment** (Clarify responsibility for provision of supplies e.g. parent/school/other)

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**Staffing** (clarify who will provide the intimate care)

Main Staff Member:

Back-Up Staff Member:

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**Training needs** (Identify any staff training needs and attach to the care plan a record of any training delivered.)

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All staff have received a copy of the school's Intimate Care Policy And Safeguarding Policy, including the Code of Conduct. Staff receive annual Child Protection training.

**Curriculum specific needs:**

**Arrangements for trips/transport:**

**Procedure for raising and monitoring concerns:** (including notification of changing needs by any relevant party)

Any concerns will be noted in Home/School Communication book.

**This current plan has been agreed by:**

Name	Role	Signature	Date

**Date for Monitoring and Review of Plan:**

Reviewed termly. Next review: