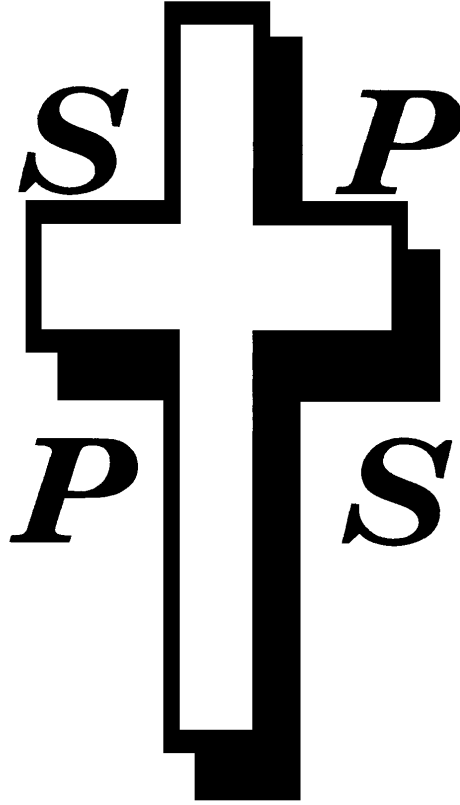


St Patrick's PS



INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Review due: Nov 2025

Mission Statement

St Patrick's PS strives to promote primary education of the highest quality for all children, in a caring environment.

Rationale

It is our intention to develop independence in each child; however, we recognise that there will be times when help is required. Our Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It forms part of the school's Pastoral Care Policy. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Children are generally more vulnerable than adults. Therefore, staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Intimate care may be regarded as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Such activities may include:

- toileting;
- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- first aid and medical assistance; and
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child. Medical advice will be taken into consideration where appropriate.

Current practice in St. Patrick's P.S. Newtownstewart:

In St. Patrick's P.S. Newtownstewart, Ms Neill is responsible for Pastoral Care and the Intimate Care Policy is viewed as an integral part of Pastoral Care.

Currently in school -

- P1 & P2 do not change their clothes for P.E. Jumpers are removed and placed into schoolbags. If children wet themselves, we provide clean underwear and trousers to change into and parents are asked to return these items to school after they have been laundered.
- For the first few months of P1, parents are also asked to supply a change of underwear to assist this procedure. If the incident is of a soiling nature, parents are immediately contacted to collect the child and the child is made as comfortable as possible during the interim.
- If children are physically sick over their clothing, again they are encouraged to change themselves and fresh clothing is provided. Their own clothes are put into a sealed bag and given to the carer/parent. We ask parents once again to launder and return any clothing provided by school.
- In cases where an odour (especially faecal) is detected, the parent will be contacted with a view to the child being checked/changed and brought back to school.

- Older girls in school are informed that if their period starts unexpectedly when they are at school they can see Mrs. Caterson who will supply them with the necessary items and underwear if required. If Mrs. Caterson is not at school, then Mrs. Harris will act in her place. The aforementioned items are located in Mrs. Harris' classroom and are also brought in our First Aid bag when travelling on a trip.
- A new hygiene room beside Mr Glone and Mrs Sheridan's classrooms was completed in 2021 replacing the disabled toilet for changing and cleaning.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based. Every child has the right to:

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

School Responsibilities

- All members of staff working with children are vetted.
- Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school are involved in the intimate care of children.
- Anticipated intimate care arrangements which are required on a regular basis are agreed between the school and parents, and when appropriate and possible, by the child.
- In such cases consent forms are signed and stored in the child's record file.
- Intimate care arrangements for any child who requires this support on a regular basis should be reviewed at least every six months.
- The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform any future arrangements. Any amendments to arrangements should be recorded for all parties involved.
- Parents are asked to give permission annually for staff to attend to the intimate care of their child (with particular reference to toilet accidents or illness) should the need arise (see Appendix A).
- **Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. The act of intimate care would be reported to a member of staff and parents at the earliest possible time following the event.**

- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, he or she must report it to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Ms Neill, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mr McGlone.

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. All incidents of Intimate Care should be documented using the Record of Intimate Care form (Appendix B).

Members of 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 some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation.

Staff will endeavour to:

1 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 situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices.

2 Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.

Care should not be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child.

3 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 the practice is consistent.

4 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.

5 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 with 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.

6 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 or the Deputy 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 to the DT or DDT. Report and

record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the Child Protection File.

Hygiene

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection and should ensure the use of appropriate protective equipment when necessary, for example, protective, disposable latex/vinyl gloves.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

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. Male members of staff will be available if necessary.

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, ie. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screen/curtains put in place;
- if the child appears to be 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 DT or DDT and make a written record;
- parents must be informed about any concerns.

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 maturity and levels of stress children may communicate using different methods – words, signs, symbols, body movements 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.

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.

ST PATRICK'S PSToileting and Intimate Care

The children's emotional and physical well-being is central to their development and at St Patrick's PS we encourage children to develop their own skills at toileting. However, there may be times when they need assistance by an adult in doing so. Such times may include if a child wets/soils themselves or is physically sick.

If this occurs staff will encourage the child where possible to change himself/herself. If assistance is required, a classroom assistant or a teacher will help the child. At all times the helper will encourage the child to change himself/herself as well as possible. Another adult will be in an adjoining classroom with the classroom door open while the child is getting changed in the toilets.

If a child is very upset through wetting/soiling themselves or from being physically sick, and does not want help from an adult, we will contact their parent/guardian to take the child home.

The persons responsible for such care will be any member of teaching staff as well as our permanent classroom assistants.

The following individuals will **not** be responsible for such care:

Volunteers Substitute Teachers Students Peripatetic Staff

Although these instances seldom occur, the adult involved will complete an "Intimate Care Record" sheet of such instances, which will be monitored by the Designated Teacher (Ms Neill) or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mr McGlone).

If a child appears to be having continual "accidents", a strategy may need to be agreed between the parent and the school.

* Delete as appropriate

*I give / *do not give permission for my child _____ to receive intimate care if required.

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

St Patrick's Primary School

Record of Intimate Care Administered to All Children

Date	Child's Name	Time	Details of Care Administered	Signature of Staff	Print Name

St Patrick's Primary School

Record of Intimate Care Administered to All Children

Date	Child's Name	Time	Details of Care Administered	Signature of Staff	Print Name

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