



## **INTIMATE CARE POLICY**

St. Oliver Plunkett's Primary School,  
Ballyhegan.



<b>NAME:</b>	<b>ROLE:</b>
<b>Mr. Seamus Galvin</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Mr. Micheal Lee</b>	<b>Chair of Board of Governors</b>

<b>Date Ratified:</b>	<b>21/11/2022</b>
<b>Date of Review:</b>	<b>25/10/2022</b>

## **Introduction**

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There shall be a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

## **Principles of Intimate Care**

- ❖ Every child has the right to be safe
- ❖ Every child has the right to personal privacy and to be treated with dignity and respect
- ❖ Every child has the right to be valued as an individual
- ❖ Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account

## **Our Approach to Best 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 needs 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 the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

### **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 give choices where possible. Check your practice by asking the child or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.

**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 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 and assessed.

**5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.**

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs 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.

**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 for child protection.

If a child is accidentally hurt during the 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 available to parents and kept in the child's personal file.

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

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. 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 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; and
- ❖ 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, 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; and
- ❖ treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

## **In the event of a toileting or Wet Play Accident:**

- ❖ The child will be taken discreetly to the toilet area
- ❖ The child will be encouraged to change into clean clothes themselves and assistance will only be given if they are having difficulty
- ❖ At all times the child's right to privacy will be respected
- ❖ At no time will the child be left in full view of other children
- ❖ Members of staff will remain in full view of others when dealing with a child
- ❖ Students will not be left to change a child, but may assist a member of staff
- ❖ All changes will be detailed on a record sheet and parents will be informed of changing details.
- ❖ Record of incident to be attached/stuck into book (held in office)

**A classroom assistant or teacher will not change a child if they soil themselves without phoning the parent. A parent/carer will be asked to make themselves available and if this is not possible, they will give verbal permission over the phone for two members of staff to change. This will be noted and kept in office.**

**Out of School Trips, Clubs etc.**

Staff should take care when supervising in the less formal atmosphere of a school trip or after school activity. Staff must still approach every situation requiring intimate care attention in the same manner.



**INTIMATE CARE POLICY STATEMENT & PARENTAL AGREEMENT**

In the event of toileting accidents:

- Staff realise that children of Primary school age need to be reassured when toileting accidents occur and this is done with the utmost respect for the child, reflecting the needs of the child at that particular time;
- Should a child accidentally wet him/herself during the day it is our policy that two adults will supervise and assist the child to change into their spare clothes. The child will be taken a suitable toilet area where their change of clothes (to include socks, pants, change of bottoms and shoes) will be handed to them in the cubicle. Assistance will only be given if requested by the child. The child will independently clean and change themselves as much as possible. If the child gets distressed or doesn't wish to get changed we will contact the parent immediately;
- Every change of clothing and toilet accident is recorded by the staff;
- Should the same child have a second accident on the same day the parent will be contacted to collect the child from school in case the child is unwell;
- In the event of a child being sick or soiling him/herself the parent will be contacted to collect the child and take him/her home as soon as possible.

Please read the following statements carefully and tick the relevant boxes.

I give permission for staff to provide intimate care for my child.

I do not wish staff to provide intimate care for my child. I wish to be contacted and provide the care myself.

I understand that if I am not able to come to school promptly or am unreachable as any time then the school staff may have to proceed to provide intimate care in the best interests and comfort of my child.

Please sign the this consent form to indicate that you **have read and agree to our intimate care policy statement.**

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_

**If you do not consent** please provide contact details below of an alternative nominated contact who will have to be available in the event of the school being unable to contact yourself.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number (on which they must be available daily) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number (on which they must be available daily) \_\_\_\_\_

**St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S.**

**Intimate Care Record**

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

Dear Parent

Your child \_\_\_\_\_ soiled/wet themselves today.

**(please tick as appropriate)**

- they changed their clothes independently
- they changed their clothes with the support of a member of staff
- they were changed by a member of staff
- they were changed by a family member (guardian)

In accordance with our policy the incident has been recorded.

If your child has been changed in school you will find soiled/wet clothes in their school bag. Would you kindly return any school clothes loaned to your child after they have been laundered.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class Teacher

**(Please note a signed copy of this may be photographed and shared with you on SeeSaw to inform you of any intimate care incidents.)**