



Intimate Care Policy

Adopted February 2017
Adapted December 2020
Due for Review: December 2023

This policy represents the agreed principles for 'intimate care' throughout the school.

Please note that parents/carers will be notified at the earliest opportunity if their child has had an intimate care incident.

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

- to safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of the children;
- to ensure children are treated with sensitivity and respect, and in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one;
- to safeguard adults required to operate in sensitive situations;
- to raise awareness and provide a clear procedure for intimate care;
- to inform parents/carers how intimate care is administered;
- to ensure parents/carers are consulted regarding the intimate care of their children.

1.2 Principles

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position. Given the right approach, intimate care can provide opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self-esteem. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young person's right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

1.3 Definition

Intimate care is one of the following:

- supporting a pupil with **dressing/undressing**;
- providing **comfort or support** for a distressed pupil;
- assisting a pupil requiring **medical care**, who is not able to carry this out unaided;
- cleaning a pupil who has **soiled him/herself**, has vomited or feels unwell.

2.1 Supporting dressing/undressing

The school considers that helping a child with an outer layer of clothing (eg. a sweatshirt or coat) is not an intimate act and therefore acceptable.

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child dressing or undressing (particularly in Early Years) due to an accident, soiling themselves or due to a medical condition. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

If staff are concerned in any way parents/carers will be consulted or sent for and asked to assist their child.

Staff will always ensure that they have a colleague in attendance when supporting dressing/undressing and will always give the child the opportunity to change in private, unless the child is in such distress that it is not possible to do so.

2.2 Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Early Years).

Where children require physical support, staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff must ensure that at no time can the act be considered intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is suitable to the age, gender and situation of the child. If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable. If a child requires physical comfort from a member of staff, this should always be in the presence of another member of staff or adult.

2.3 Medical Care

Pupils requiring short term and long term medical care involving intimate care, will receive this care in line with the child's 'Care Plan' (if one is in place). The content of any 'Care Plan' will be discussed with the relevant medical body.

Parents/carers as a first option will be asked to provide medical procedures that involve intimate care unless other provision is made available by the Education Authority (EAN). If this is not possible, the school will seek the necessary advice from the EA and/or medical

professionals.

If it is possible for the staff of the school to provide the level of medical care required, the staff member/s will receive the appropriate training. Written permission must be received from the person with parental responsibility before a medical procedure can be carried out.

2.4 Soiling

Staff will use common sense approach when tending to a child who has soiled themselves during the school day.

Parents/carers of pupils who can have accidents are asked to send into school, a labelled bag containing clean underwear for their child. If a child's underwear requires changing due to a soiling incident, the child will be asked to do this in private and if possible carry out the act themselves.

If a child has a medical condition which is likely to lead to soiling, the parents/carers will be asked to sign a permission form so that staff, as appropriate, can clean and change their child.

If a parent/carer has not previously given consent, the school will contact the parent/carer or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. If a parent/carer or emergency contact **is able to attend**, the child will be comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent/carer arrives.

Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent/carer to arrive. An adult will stay with them, giving comfort and reassurance. The child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed. If a parent/carer or emergency contact **cannot attend**, the school will seek to verbal consent from a parent/carer for staff to clean and change the child if appropriate.

When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.

If a child needs to be cleaned, staff will make sure that:

- protective gloves are worn;
- the procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process;
- the child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible;
- physical contact by staff is kept to a minimum when carrying out the necessary cleaning;
- privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation.

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and have access to protective, disposable gloves. These are stored in the First Aid cabinets.

4.1 Protection for staff

Members of staff need to have regard to the danger of allegations being made against them and take precautions to avoid this risk. These should include:

- gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary;
- allow the child a choice in the sequence of care;
- be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions;
- a record of the incident should be recorded in the school's Intimate Care Record Book and a copy sent home to inform parents.

4.2 Safeguards for children

All paid staff in Knockloughrim Primary School must gain AccessNI clearance before working in the school.

Volunteers who will be working unsupervised with our children must gain AccessNI clearance before working in the school.

Volunteers who will be working only supervised with our children do not need to gain AccessNI clearance before working in our school but may be asked to be checked if volunteering on a regular basis as there is a greater chance of them working unsupervised with our children. Children's rights to privacy will always be respected when dealing with intimate care issues.

Annex to Intimate Care Policy – COVID -19

September 2020

We will continue to meet the needs of those children who require intimate care. However, at present due to Covid-19, if your child has a bout of diarrhoea and needs thoroughly cleaned and changed, you will be contacted and asked to collect your child.

An appropriate risk assessment will be put in place. During intimate care PPE must be worn. Please see guidance below.

DE Restart Guidance 13.8.20.

We will ensure this is carried out in a sensitive way.

All relevant staff have had awareness training on putting on and removal of PPE.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) / Face Coverings

The PHA has published guidance to support safe working in educational settings in Northern Ireland. This advises that routine use of PPE within education settings is not required other than for certain tasks deemed to be of higher risk of transmission.

PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases. These are: -

- working with children, young people and pupils whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE, due to their intimate care needs; and giving children medication.

PPE in the following situations means: -

- fluid-resistant face masks;

-disposable gloves;

-disposable plastic aprons; and

-eye protection (for example a face visor or goggles).

Where PPE is recommended, this means that: -

- facemask should be worn if a distance of 2m cannot be maintained from someone with symptoms of COVID-19 (symptomatic children should not be in school);

-if contact is necessary, gloves, an apron and a facemask should be worn; and

- if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of fluids entering the eye (e.g. from coughing, spitting or vomiting), eye protection should also be worn.

When PPE is used, it is essential that it is used properly. This includes scrupulous hand hygiene and following guidance on donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) PPE safely to reduce the risk of contamination.

Face masks:

- MUST cover both nose and mouth;
- MUST be changed when they become moist or damaged;
- MUST be worn once and then discarded – hands must be cleaned after disposal;
- MUST NOT be allowed to dangle around the neck; and
- MUST NOT be touched once put on, except when carefully removed before disposal.