



**ST. JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
GALBALLY**

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Reviewed and Updated: September 2021

COVID 19/PANDEMIC SITUATION: Since March 2020, schools have had to administer Intimate Care (IC) taking extra precautions regarding PPE, distancing, sanitizing and cleaning. The policy outlined below should be understood in the context of the ongoing precautions required as a result of Covid-19.

DEFINITION OF INTIMATE CARE

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.

Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral care
- Washing
- Dressing/undressing
- Toileting
- 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.

Only appropriately trained and vetted named staff should undertake the intimate care of children.

All staff must be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines within the context of their work.

Intimate care arrangements must be agreed by the Principal, parents / carers and child (if appropriate).

Intimate care arrangements must be recorded in the child's personal file (digital or paper based) and consent forms returned by the parents / carers and child (if appropriate).

Staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed between the principal, parents / carers and child (if appropriate)

Agencies need to make provisions for emergencies i.e. a staff member on sick leave. These arrangements must be agreed between the principal, parents / carers and child (if appropriate).

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice they must report this to their designated teacher. 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. Disabled children can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be 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 care tasks can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

GENERAL PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF UNDERTAKING THE INTIMATE CARE OF A CHILD

(Specific procedures will be agreed where a child has a disability or medical condition resulting in the child having ongoing intimate care needs- care plans need to be in place for these children)

Adults should not assist with any personal care task, which a child or young person can undertake by themselves- This will be dependent on the child's age group and the severity of the accident.

If we have reason to believe a child may be wet or soiled the Class Teacher / Classroom Assistant will discreetly check for signs of this. Your child will be asked if they need to change or if they have had an accident and the adult's actions will be explained to them.

When it has been determined that an accident has occurred resulting in a child wetting or soiling, adults will provide facilities for the child to change themselves. Parents will be notified and an intimate care report form will be sent home to the parent. In the case of a child requiring direct assistance a member of staff along with another member of staff, will assist the child. Depending on the severity of the child's accident, staff may require the parent to assist and change the child in school or remove the child from school for further cleaning. Staff should be careful to ensure the dignity of the child is maintained at all times.

Foundation Stage children are asked to bring a change of clothes to school so that in the instance an accident occurs, school staff have immediate access to clean clothing and underwear belonging to the child.

The parent or identified adult will be contacted immediately on IC needs becoming apparent (we normally see to the child first so that they are not in discomfort).

The decision to proceed with IC tasks will be agreed or the parent / identified adult will attend to the child's IC needs.

Involve the child in their intimate care.

Encourage a child's independence as far as possible in their intimate care

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

Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent-if occurs during break/dinner time, teacher needs to be notified immediately.

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent to carry out.

Promote Positive self-esteem and body image.

A written record of concern if recurring intimate care issues present themselves must be made and be kept in the child's file/digital notes.

A member of staff should never undertake intimate care alone.

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 care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance. Report concerns to your Designated Teacher and make a written record.

Parents / Carers must be informed about any concerns unless to do so would potentially place a child at risk of harm. When in doubt advice should be sought from CPSSS Designated Officer or Social Services Gateway Team.