



Intimate Care Policy

This policy represents the agreed principles for intimate care throughout the school. This policy has been agreed by all staff and Board of Management within the school.

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, 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 in how intimate care is administered
- To ensure parents/carers are consulted in the intimate care of their children

Principles

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as sensitively as possible. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young persons' right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

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

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed particularly in infants. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing independently.

Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in infants). Where children require physical support, staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum and be child initiated. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff's hands should always be seen and a child should not be positioned close to a member of staff's body which could be regarded as 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.

Providing care for minor cuts and injuries

If a child acquires medical attention for an injury or cut, they are sent to the secretary's office. Visible cuts/ grazes will be cleaned and a plaster will be offered if required. If a cut 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 during the process.
- Physical contact is kept to a minimum to carry out necessary cleaning/ assessment.
- If a child is wearing tights or trousers, they will be encouraged to use the bathroom to clean the cut and put the plaster on themselves. If there is any doubt about the injury in this case parents will be called.
- Staff receive first aid training regularly.

Soiling

Intimate care for soiling should only be given to a child after the parents have given permission for staff to clean and change the child. Parents who have children in infants may sign a permission form so that the staff can clean and change their child in the event of the child soiling themselves (Appendix 1). Parents of children in Junior and Senior infants are advised to provide a change of clothes in their child's bag

If the parents/carers or emergency contact wishes to attend and is able to come within a few minutes, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives. A child will not be left on his/her own whilst waiting for a parent to arrive, an adult will stay with him/her, 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 be contacted or cannot attend, the Principal will be consulted. If necessary, staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some

level of physical contact in order to aid the child. All incidents of intimate care provision will be recorded and parents informed. (Appendix 2)

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:

- A second member of staff is present or in the vicinity
- 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 is kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning
- Privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation
- All spills of vomit, blood or excrement are wiped up and flushed down the toilet
- Any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet
- Soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child

Individual Care Plans

Children who have a diagnosed medical condition and need intimate care will require their own individual care plan. Parents should provide this information to the school when the care need arises. A plan will be drawn up between the parents and school. This plan will be reviewed and updated regularly. If individual needs change at any time throughout the year, the school should be informed of this by the child's parents.

Hygiene

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and have access to protective, disposable gloves.

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:

- Attempting to contact parents/carers for the child
- Gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary

- Informing the Principal
- Allow the child, wherever possible, to express a preference to choose his/her carer and encourage them to say if they find a carer to be unacceptable
- Allow the child a choice in the sequence of care
- Be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions

Safeguards for children

There is an obligation on schools to ensure that staff who have substantial, unsupervised access to children undergo police checks.

- All staff at Bennekerry National School are Garda vetted
- It is not appropriate for students (teaching or work experience) or volunteers to carry out intimate care procedures

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if necessary and was ratified on

15 Jan 26

On behalf of the Board of Management

Chairperson's signature:

Phyllis Daly

Principal's signature:

Julie Fitzmaurice 15.01.26

Appendix 1

Permission form for Intimate Care Provision

Should your child have an accident (soil or wet themselves) in school and require changing we are willing, with your permission to clean and change your child as required. We will follow the procedures outlined in our "Intimate Care Policy". This role will always be undertaken by a member of staff (teacher or SNA) and you will be informed that an incident has taken place.

In such an event please indicate below how you would like us to proceed.

- In the event of my child having an accident in school and needing to be cleaned and changed, I give permission for a member of staff (teacher or classroom assistant) to clean and change him / her.

Child's name _____

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian)

OR

- In the event of my child having an accident in school and needing to be cleaned, I would like to be contacted so that I can proceed to school.

I accept that if you are unable to contact myself or someone on the emergency contact list you will proceed to clean and change him / her as based on the procedures outlined in the "Intimate Care Policy"

Child's name _____

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Appendix 2

Record of Intimate Care Provision

Name of Child	
Date of Incident	
Brief Description	
Member of Staff involved with Child	

Signed _____ (member of staff)

Signed _____ (Principal)