

Scoil Mhuire Clontibret

Intimate Care Policy

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.

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

What is 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. In school, this may occur on a regular basis or on a one-off incident.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

- Assisting a child to change his/her clothes
- Changing or washing a child who has soiled him/herself
- Assisting with toileting issues
- Assisting with/supervising self-care during menstruation
- Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care
- Providing first aid assistance
- Providing comfort for a distressed pupil
- Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- Every child has a 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
- All children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities

- All children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views taken into account
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent

Assisting a child to change his/her clothes

On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he /she has an accident at the toilet, gets wet outside, or has vomit on his/her clothes, etc.

- Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required, this will be given.
- Staff will endeavour to have a colleague in attendance or in the vicinity if possible, 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.
- If a staff member is concerned in any way, parents will be notified and asked to come to the school and assist their child.
- Furthermore, a parent will be informed if the child becomes distressed

Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff.

- 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.
- 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 First Aid

Children may require first aid after an injury.

- Provision of minor first aid will be carried out in accordance with the principles of intimate care as outlined above.

Medical Procedures

If it is necessary for a child to receive medicine during the school day, parents/guardians must fill out a permission form from the school office and discuss their child's needs with the Principal before the school agrees to administer medicines or medical care. It must be made clear to parents/guardians that staff administration of medicines is voluntary.

Any member of staff giving medicine to a pupil should check:

- The pupil's name

- Written instructions provided by parents or doctor
- Prescribed dose
- Expiry date

Particular attention should be paid to the safe storage, handling and disposal of medicines.

The Principal has prime responsibility for the safe management of medicines kept at school. This duty derives from the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). School staff are also responsible for making sure that anyone in school is safe. Medicines should generally be kept in a secure place, not accessible to pupils but arrangements must be in place to ensure that any medication that a pupil might need in an emergency is readily available.

Changing a child who has soiled him/herself

If a child soils him/herself in school, a professional judgement has to be made whether it is appropriate to change the child in school, or request the parent/carer to collect the child for changing. In either circumstance, the child's needs are paramount and he/she should be comforted and reassured throughout. The following guidelines outline our procedures but we will also seek to make age-appropriate responses.

- The child will be given the opportunity to change his/her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.
- School will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare clothes for this purpose. (Parents will be asked to send in a change of clothing for pupils who have ongoing intimate care needs).

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
- The child's wishes and feelings are respected
- The incident is recorded by the staff member(s) involved (Appendix 3)

Hygiene:

- Protective disposable gloves to be worn by staff member(s)
- Be familiar with and follow basic hygiene procedures to avoid infection
- 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
- Seal any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for return to parents

Toileting/Intimate Care of students in the ASD Classes/Mainstream students with additional needs:

It is school policy that:

- The personnel involved in intimate care needs of students are usually SNAs but teachers may be involved.
- There should be a minimum of two staff members present/in the vicinity at all times. Additional support will be provided by other SNAs if needed.
- No substitute SNA should be involved in the toileting of a student unless sanctioned by the Principal or the SENCO
- Younger children who are not yet potty/toilet trained will be changed at least once daily, with additional changing as required

Parental Responsibilities:

Parents/Guardians need to identify any toileting needs in their application form. They should supply the school with the resources required to carry out the toileting or other care needs, which may include, but not be limited to:

- Nappies
- Wipes
- Creams
- Nappy Sacks
- Spare underwear
- Spare Clothes

Intimate Care/Toileting Plan

In the event that a specific toileting need has been identified for a student, an intimate Care/Toileting Plan will be developed in partnership with the student's class teacher, designated SNAs and the student's parents/guardians.

The Care Plan must include:

- Specific Care Need
- Number of staff required to meet the needs of the student
- Identification of the staff members involved
- Additional equipment required
- Child's preferred means of communication to include agreed terminology for body parts and bodily functions.
- Child's level of ability
- Cultural and/or religious sensitivities
- Signature of Class Teacher
- Signature of SENCO/Principal
- Date of Care Plan

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 the child or another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- Informing the Class Teacher/Principal/Deputy 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
- Attempting to contact parents/carers for the child when deemed appropriate
- Incidences of intimate care after wetting/soiling/vomiting to be recorded by staff member(s) involved – see Appendix 3

Safeguards for children

There is an obligation on schools to ensure that staff undergo Garda vetting.

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

Reporting

All toileting 'accidents' involving students with no Care Plan must be reported to the student's parents.

If during the intimate care of a student:

- The staff member accidentally hurts/injures the student
- The staff member observes something which raises child protection concerns
- The student seems to misinterpret what is said or done
- The student has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause

the incident must be reported to the ASD Teacher/Principal/SENCO or the DLP or Deputy DLP as appropriate.

Communication, Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review. It will be reviewed initially after one year and then every three years, unless there is a compelling reason to review it earlier.

Ratified by the Board of Management, Scoil Mhuire, Clontibret, Co. Monaghan

Scheduled for review: December 2022

Signed: *Cathal Mc Glone*
Chairperson

Date: *2nd December 2021*

Signed: *Elizabeth Moorehead*
Principal

Date: *2nd December 2021*