

BALLYKEEL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT

INTIMATE CARE POLICY (Updated September 2022)

This policy represents the agreed principles for ‘intimate care’ throughout the school. This policy has been agreed by all staff and governors within the school.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

- to safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of the children;
- to ensure all 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 in how intimate care is administered;
- to ensure parents are consulted in the intimate care of their children.

Please note that in this policy the term ‘parent’ refers to the person with parental responsibility for the child.

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. The following are fundamental principles upon which our policy is 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.

Definition

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child, including:

- 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
- supervision of a child involved in self-intimate care, or cleaning a pupil who has *soiled him/herself*, has vomited or feels unwell

- Menstrual care
- Photographs

Supporting Dressing/Undressing

The school considers that helping a child with an outer layer of clothing (e.g. a jumper, cardigan or coat) is not an intimate act and therefore acceptable. Sometimes, however, it will be necessary for staff to aid a child dressing or undressing (particularly in Early Years) due to an accident, soiling themselves or perhaps due to a medical condition. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. If staff are concerned in any way, parents will be sent for and asked to assist their child. As far as practicable, staff will ensure that they have a colleague in attendance/support when assisting a pupil with 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.

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 inappropriate. If physical contact is deemed necessary, 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 (as far as practicable) be in the presence of another member of staff or adult.

Medical Care

Pupils requiring short term and long term medical care involving intimate care, will receive this care in line with the child's individualised 'Care Plan'. The content of any 'Care Plan' will be discussed with the Principal and relevant school staff and agreed with the relevant medical body. Parents as a first option will be asked to provide medical procedures that involve intimate care. If this is not possible, the school will seek the necessary advice from the EA and/or the school nurse.

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.

Soiling

Acting in 'loco parentis', staff will use common sense when tending to a child who has soiled him/herself during the school day. The school maintains a selection of boys' and girls' underwear in the event of changes being needed. If a child's underwear is changed due to a soiling incident, the child will be asked to change their underwear in private and carry out the act themselves. A record of the incident will be kept in school and the parent will be informed.

If a child has a medical condition which is likely to lead to soiling and subsequent staff intervention, individual arrangements required can be discussed with the Principal and relevant school staff. The child's parents will be asked to sign a permission form so that staff can provide any necessary support. If the parent/s does not wish to give consent, the school will contact the parent/s or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. The child will be comforted and kept from the other children to preserve his/her dignity until the parent or emergency contact arrives. Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent 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. (There will be two adults with the child at the time of changing).

If a parent or emergency contact cannot attend, the school will seek to gain verbal consent from parents for staff to clean and change the child. This permission will be sought on each occasion that the child soils him or herself. If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be contacted the Principal will be consulted. If put in a situation where the child is at risk, staff will act in what they consider to be the child's best interests and this may involve some level of physical contact in order to aid the child. If physical contact is involved, staff will always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings. When a child needs to be cleaned, staff will ensure 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 is kept to a minimum whilst carrying out the necessary cleaning;
- privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation;
- 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.

Menstrual Care

Puberty can be an anxious and unsettling time for children, when they require sensitivity and support to deal with changes in their bodies. Pupils will be made aware of sanitary products which are available to them and how to access these discretely. Staff will reassure pupils and in a sensitive manner allow time for pupils to access products as and when needed.

Photographs

GDPR guidelines, the Staff Code of Conduct and all safeguarding policies will be adhered to in all instances where photographs are taken of pupils.

Hygiene

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 medical cabinet.

Our Responsibilities

- All staff in Ballykeel Primary School & Nursery Unit must gain Access NI clearance before working in the school.
- Long term volunteers or work placement students who are in for a prolonged period will also be subject to Access NI clearance.
- Child protection training will be provided ensuring all staff are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Children's rights to privacy will always be respected when dealing with intimate care issues.
- SLT will ensure that staff are 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 are agreed by staff, parents / carers and child (if appropriate)

- Intimate care arrangements must be recorded in the child's personal folder, or class medical file along with consent forms signed by the parents / carers and child (if appropriate). This information is stored in secure filing cabinets in classroom stores
- Staff will not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed with parents / carers and child (if appropriate)
- Additional members of staff will be trained to undertake specific intimate care tasks in the case of emergencies or absences
- Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed at least six monthly. The views of all relevant parties, including the child (if appropriate), should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.
- As a child can have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parents / carers / staff members ensures practice is consistent.
- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice they must report this to a member of the safeguarding team
- Resources and equipment to protect staff and pupils will be provided and maintained to accommodate all intimate care needs

Safeguarding 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 verbal agreement from another member of staff about action to be taken;
- making sure another adult is in the vicinity;
- allowing 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;
- allowing the child a choice and voice in the sequence of care; 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.
- being aware of, and responsive to, the child's reactions. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made and kept in the child's records
- being aware of own limitations - only carry out care activities you understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If in doubt, ASK.
- Reporting any concerns, such as unusual markings, discolourations or swelling, report immediately to the DT following guidance set out in the child protection policy.
- Parents and carers will be informed of any concerns.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2023/24 or as relevant guidance (including Child Protection) dictates to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Ballykeel Nursery Unit **Guidelines for Intimate Care**

(These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the primary school's full policy on Intimate Care).

Principles

In Ballykeel Nursery Unit the children will be encouraged and shown how to access the toilet independently. However, if a child has a toileting accident or needs changing following a play accident he or she will be helped to change in a manner which ensures his or her dignity, self-respect and protection.

Statement Of Intent

The nursery team will change children in a manner which protects and promotes each child's dignity, privacy and personal welfare.

Procedures

- All parents will be asked to sign a consent form giving permission for nursery staff to be allowed to assist a child when changing their clothing, in the absence of the parent.
- If a child has a toileting accident or requires changing following a play accident, he or she will be assisted by a member of the nursery team so long as parents have signed the consent form.
- When a member of staff is leaving to assist the child, she will inform another member of staff and request that this person remains in the locality of where the child is being changed for the protection of both the child and the staff member.
- As far as possible, children will be encouraged to be independent by taking off and putting on their own clothes and by using baby wipes when necessary.
- Staff will be conscious of maintaining a degree of privacy for that child whilst also respecting the child's dignity.
- If the child is uncomfortable with being changed by the member of staff, his or her parents will be contacted and asked to come to the nursery.
- If the child is having continual toileting accidents, a meeting will be arranged with the child's parent/carer to agree appropriate strategies for dealing with the situation.
- All parents are requested to provide a change of clothes for their child at the beginning of the year in advance of a possible accident.
- In the event of no clothes being supplied children will be given clothes owned by the nursery. These must be washed, dried and returned to nursery as soon as possible.
- Written records will be made following the changing of each child outlining the date, child's name, nature of the accident and signatures of the staff members.

Ballykeel Primary School
Permission for intimate care

Child:	
DoB:	
Address:	
Parent/Guardian:	
I/we give permission for the assistance detailed overleaf to be provided to my/our child, and will advise the school of any change that may affect this provision.	
Signed:	
I, the child, give permission for the assistance detailed overleaf to be provided to me.	
Signed:	

School: Ballykeel PS		
Individual Intimate Care Plan		
Pupil:	DoB:	
Diagnosis:		
Assistance:		
Timetable:		
Persons Assisting:		
Alternative Arrangements:		
Location/Equipment:		
Designation	Signed:	Date:
Parent		
Pupil		
Assistant/s		
Principal		

