



Kilcooley Primary School and Nursery Unit

Intimate Care Policy

May 2025

'The rights of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.' **UNCRC, Article 3**

'Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all manners affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.'

UNCRC, Article 12

'Every child has the right to privacy.'

UNCRC, Article 16

Introduction

In Kilcooley Primary School & Nursery Unit, the safeguarding and welfare of the children in our care is paramount. This policy has been established to safeguard children and staff. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

We are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain.

It is our aim to develop independence in each child; however, we recognise that there will be times when help is required. This may be due to the following reasons:

- The pupil is in the foundation stage of school or Specialist Provision classes
- The pupil has a physical disability
- The pupil has a learning difficulty
- The pupil may temporarily need support due to an accident or illness

Aims

- To provide reassurance to staff and parents/carers
- To safeguard the dignity, rights, and well-being of children
- To assure parents that staff are knowledgeable about intimate care and that their child's individual needs and concerns are taken into account

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care includes any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child either on a regular basis or as a one-off incident.

This may include :

- toileting
- feeding
- oral care
- washing
- changing clothes
- first aid and medical treatment
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care, including menstrual care

Parents have the responsibility to advise the school in writing of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

Principles

This policy embraces the principles of relevant child protection and safeguarding legislation, including The Children (NI) Order 1995, Co-operating to Safeguard Children 2003, The Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures 2005, 'Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children'.

We believe every child has the right to :

- feel safe and secure
- be treated as an individual
- remain healthy
- privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff
- information and support to make informed choices
- be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their ability
- be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture, or beliefs
- receive information and procedures for any complaints or queries regarding intimate care
- have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent

Guidelines for Good Practice

The following guidelines are followed in Kilcooley Primary School & Nursery Unit :

1. Involve the child in the Intimate Care

- Staff will encourage children to do as much for themselves as they can
- The needs and wishes of children and parents/carers will be taken into account, when possible, within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation
- Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children, taking into account their developmental stage

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

- The child's welfare and dignity will always be of paramount importance
- Children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy possible given their age and abilities
- Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children, taking into account their developmental stage
- One child will be cared for by two adults, unless there is a reason for having more adults present. If this is the case, the reasons will be clearly documented

3. Make sure practice in Intimate Care is consistent

- As a child may have multiple carers, a consistent approach to care is essential

4. Be aware of your own limitations

- Staff should only carry out activities they understand and feel competent to carry out
- Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image

- Confident, self-assured children, who feel their body belongs to them, are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach adults take to intimate care can convey messages to a child about their body worth. Staff's attitude to a child's intimate care is important.

6. Communicate Clearly

- Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers regularly and recorded on the child's Intimate Care Plan
- It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication
- Staff should be aware of how they respond to the child's method of communication

7. If you have any concerns, you must report them

- If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling, report this immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal.
- Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's Intimate Care practice, they must report this to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs. K. Maguire, or the Principal, Mrs. P. Brown.

Responsibilities of the school

- Only members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school will be involved in the intimate care of children
- All members of staff will be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the policy within the context of their work
- Anticipated intimate care arrangements which are required on a regular basis are agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child. Staff will not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed
- Relevant consent forms are signed and stored in the child's record file
- The school will make provisions for emergencies, eg a member of staff on sick leave, and ensure that another trained member of staff will be available to undertake specific intimate care tasks, where possible. When this is not possible, parents/carers will be informed
- Intimate care arrangements for any child who requires this support on a regular basis should be reviewed at least every six months. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform any future arrangements. Any amendments to arrangements should be recorded for all parties involved
- Parents of children starting Nursery or Primary One are asked to give permission for staff to attend to the intimate care of their child (with particular reference to toilet accidents or illness) should need arise.
- Parents of P4 – P7 pupils will be asked to give permission for staff to provide assistance before or after swimming lessons.

Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. The act of intimate care would be reported to a member of staff and parents at the earliest possible time following the event.

Changing Clothing

We understand that, on occasions, children may require some assistance with changing if, for example, they have an accident at the toilet, get wet outside or vomit on their clothes etc.

Staff will always encourage children to attempt dressing and undressing unaided; however, assistance will be given if required. 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. If staff are concerned in any way, parents will be informed and may be asked to come to school to assist their child.

Toileting

If a child wets themselves :

- the child will be taken to the toilets to preserve their dignity and privacy
- two members of staff will be present at all times
- the child will be given guidance and/or assistance to change their items of clothing (age dependent)
- parents/carers will be informed by the teacher

If a child soils themselves :

- 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 they should be comforted and reassured throughout.

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

- protective gloves are worn
- the procedure is discussed in an age-appropriate, friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process
- the child is encouraged to care for themselves as far as possible
- physical contact is kept to a minimum in order possible to carry 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
- school will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare uniform for this purpose. (A supply of clean underwear and spare uniforms are available in the smaller Parents' Room)
- if a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to contact the emergency contact to inform them of the situation
- if the emergency contact is able to come to school within an appropriate time frame, the child will be accompanied and supported by a staff

member until they arrive. The child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed. This avoids any further distress and preserves dignity

- if the emergency contact cannot attend, we will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child. If none of the contacts can be reached, the Principal is to be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child
- the member of staff who has assisted a pupil with intimate care will complete the Record of Intimate Care Intervention (Appendix 2).

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'. The content of any 'Care Plan' will be discussed 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 Education Authority.

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.

Swimming lessons

Our Primary 4 - 7 classes participate in a swimming programme at Aurora Leisure Centre. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes; however, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

Where a child needs additional support for changing, parental permission will be sought and a personal care plan will be drawn up so as to maintain dignity but increase independence.

Environmental guidelines

Where children have a long-term incontinence or a disability requiring regular intimate care, the school may require specially adapted facilities. Specialist advice from medical or therapy staff will be sought when considering space, heating, ventilation and lighting.

Additional considerations we have in place include:

- Facilities with hot and cold running water
- Protective clothing, including disposable protective gloves
- Labelled bins for the disposal of wet & soiled nappies/pads
- Supplies of suitable cleaning materials; anti-bacterial spray, sterilising fluid, deodorisers, anti-bacterial hand wash
- Supplies of appropriate clean clothing, nappies, disposal bags and wipes
- Changing mat or changing bench
- An effective system to alert staff for help in an emergency

Hygiene

All staff must :

- be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection
- follow basic hygiene procedures
- have access to protective, disposable gloves and aprons (These are stored in the smaller Parents' Room.)

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 and checking if prior parental written permission has been provided
- endeavouring to contact the parent by telephone to inform them
- allowing the child a choice in the sequence of care
- being aware of and responsive to the child's reactions

Working with Parents

Partnership with parents is an important principle in our school and is particularly necessary in relation to children needing intimate care.

Prior permission must be obtained from parents/carers before intimate care procedures are carried out. Parents/carers are encouraged to work with staff to ensure their child's needs are identified, understood and met and to share information of any religious/cultural sensitivities. This will include involvement with PLPs, Health Care Plans and any other plans which identify the need for intimate care where appropriate.

Information concerning intimate care procedures should be shared by parents/carers through appropriate channels (such as face-to-face contact, telephone or written correspondence). Information concerning intimate care procedures should not be recorded in home/school books as it may contain confidential information that could be accessed by people other than the parent/carer and named staff member(s).

Staff will complete a Record of Intimate Care Intervention, which will be sent home with the child to ensure that the parent has a written notification that the child has been changed. A copy will be retained in school.

Communication with Children

In Kilcooley Primary School & Nursery Unit, we agree to use the appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions.

It may be possible to determine a child's wishes by observation of reactions to the intimate care. Where there is any doubt that a child is able to make an informed choice on these issues, the child's parents/carers are usually in the best position to act as advocates.

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Depending on their maturity and level of stress, children may communicate using different methods; such as, words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing.

Staff will ascertain the agreed method of communication and identify this in the agreed Intimate Care Plan.

To ensure effective communication, staff will :

- make eye contact at the child's level
- use simple language and repeat if necessary
- wait for child to respond
- continue to explain to the child what is happening, even if there is no response
- treat the child as an individual, with dignity and respect

Writing an Intimate Care Plan

An intimate care plan should be agreed upon in discussion with the child, school staff, parents/carers and relevant health personnel. The plan should be signed by all who contribute and should be reviewed on an agreed basis.

In developing the plan, the following should be considered :

- **Whole School Implications**
 - focus on the importance of working towards independence
 - consider arrangements for home-school transport, sports day, school performances, school trips
 - ensure that there is enough stock of equipment, such as nappies
 - make arrangements for who will substitute in the absence of the appointed person
- **Classroom Management**
 - a system for the child to leave class without disruption to lesson
 - avoidance of missing the same lesson all year due to medical routines
 - awareness of a child's discomfort which may affect learning
 - implications for physical play; for example, discreet clothing, additional time for changing
 - strategies for dealing with pressure from peers; for example, teasing/bullying

All plans will be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of expectation, roles and responsibilities. They will reflect all methods of communication, including emergency procedures between home, school and medical services. A procedure will also be included to explain how concerns from the intimate care process will be addressed.

Links with other agencies

When developing school-based plans, we will take into account the knowledge, skills and expertise of other professionals and will ensure the child's wellbeing is paramount.

Recruitment

Parents must feel confident that relevant staff have been carefully vetted and trained, helping to avoid potentially stressful areas of anxiety and conflict.

- All staff must gain Access NI clearance before working in our school
- Candidates will be made fully aware of what will be required and detailed in their job description before accepting the post
- Relevant staff will be carefully vetted and trained
- Staff will receive training in health & safety, safeguarding/child protection and specific types of intimate care

Staff Professional Development

- Staff will receive training in working practices which comply with Health & Safety
- All staff will receive Safeguarding/Child Protection training as part of whole school training
- Staff will 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
- Newly appointed staff will be supervised until completion of a successful probationary period
- The school will keep an up-to-date record of all training undertaken
- The school will ensure staff understand the needs of children from different racial and cultural backgrounds and specialist advice sought when necessary.

Protection of Children

The School's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to if a member of staff has any concerns about changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. Concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal. Further advice will be sought from outside agencies, if necessary. If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed.

Vulnerability to Abuse

Children should be encouraged to recognise and challenge inappropriate assistance and behaviour that impacts their dignity and self-worth. It is essential that all staff are familiar with the school's Child Protection policy and procedures.

Staff should be aware that the following factors can increase a child's vulnerability:

- Children who need help with intimate care are statistically more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse
- Children with disabilities may have less control over their lives than others
- Children may experience multiple carers
- Children may not be able to distinguish between intimate care and abuse
- Children may not be able to communicate.

If a child is hurt accidentally, they should be immediately reassured. An adult should check that they are safe and the incident reported immediately to the designated line manager.

Specialist Provision Classes

This additional information applies to pupils within our Specialist Provision setting :

- If a child is in nappies, parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring the school has a supply of nappies, wipes and nappy bags
- Parents of children who regularly soil themselves will be required to provide a change of clothes in a named bag on a daily basis
- If a child is having frequent accidents, a plan will be drawn up with parents/carers on how to move forward
- Parents will be supported with toilet training by school staff

Mainstream Nursery Unit

This additional information applies to pupils within our mainstream Nursery setting :

- The Nursery Unit will endeavour to work in partnership with parents/carers to help children become independent in their use of the toilet and to meet children's individual personal needs
- The entrance to the children's toilets is in the main play area. All children are encouraged and permitted to use the toilet whenever they need to. There are 2 toilet cubicles, 1 disabled toilet cubicle, 5 wash hand basins, soap dispensers, paper towel holders and a wastepaper bin – all at child height
- Staff will assist children who require help and encourage them to become independent
- Children are encouraged to wash their hands every time they use the toilet.
- At the start of the school year, parents/carers are asked to give written consent allowing staff to change their child's clothes when/if the occasion arises
- Children will be changed by a permanent member of staff.
- There are spare clothes and underwear available in the Nursery Unit to change children into as required
- Children will be encouraged to remove their own wet clothes and clean themselves. Staff will offer assistance if required
- Wet wipes and disposable gloves are available for staff to use
- Wet or soiled clothes are sent home with an explanatory note. Parents/carers are asked to wash borrowed clothes and return them to the Unit as soon as possible
- A detailed record is kept in the Nursery Unit, giving the date and time of the incident, what happened, the action taken and signed by a member of staff
- All pre-school children may occasionally have toileting accidents; however, if a child persistently had to be changed daily then the teacher will discuss this matter with parents/carers to agree a plan of action that meets the needs of the child
- Due to staff ratios in the Nursery, it will not be possible for two members of staff to be present when providing intimate care
- Due to staff ratios, we are unable to change any child who attends Nursery wearing a nappy. Parents/carers will be contacted and asked to come and change their child using our facilities.

Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies, including:

- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safe Handling Policy
- Administration of Medicine
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-bullying Policy

Appendices

- Record of Agencies Involved
- Record of Intimate Care Intervention
- Working Towards Independence Plan
- Toilet Management Plan
- Agreement Between Child and Classroom Assistant
- Permission for School to Provide Intimate Care

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly, taking into account the views of governors, staff, parents and children (if appropriate).

APPENDIX 1



RECORD OF AGENCIES INVOLVED

Child's Name: _____

DOB: _____

Address: _____

Parent/Carer: _____

GP: _____

School Nurse/ Health visitor: _____

Continence Advisor: _____

Physiotherapist: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Hospital Consultant: _____

Physical/Sensory Service: _____

Social Worker: _____

Others: _____

APPENDIX 2



RECORD OF INTIMATE CARE INTERVENTION

Child's Name: _____

DOB: : _____

**Name of support staff
involved:** _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Procedure: _____

Further comments: _____

Signature(s): _____

APPENDIX 3

WORKING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE PLAN



Child's Name: _____

DOB: _____

Date of Plan: _____

Name of support staff involved: _____

I can do: _____

I will try to do: _____

Review date: _____

Parents/Carer: _____

Child (if appropriate): _____

Classroom Assistant : _____

Principal/ SENCO: _____

APPENDIX 4



TOILET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Child's Name: _____

DOB: _____

Date of Plan: _____

**Name of support staff
involved:** _____

Area of need: _____

Equipment required: _____

Location of suitable toilet facilities: _____

Support required: _____

Frequency of support: _____

Signed:

Parent/Carer: _____

SENCO: _____

APPENDIX 5

AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHILD AND CLASSROOM ASSISTANT



Child's Name: _____

DOB: _____

Classroom Assistant: _____

Date of Agreement: _____

As the **classroom assistant** helping you in the toilet, you can expect me to do the following:

- When I am the identified person, I will stop what I am doing to help you
- I will avoid all unnecessary delays
- I will treat you with respect and ensure privacy and dignity at all times
- I will ask permission before touching you or your clothing
- I will check that you are as comfortable as possible, both physically and emotionally
- If I am working with a colleague to help you, I will ensure that we talk in a way that does not embarrass you
- I will look and listen carefully if there is something you would like to change about your Toilet Management Plan.

As the **child** who requires help in the toilet, you can expect me to do the following:

- I will try, whenever possible to let you know a few minutes in advance, that I am going to need the toilet so that you can make yourself available and be prepared to help me
- I will try to use the toilet at break time or at the agreed times
- I will tell you if I want you to stay in the room or stay with me in the toilet
- I will tell you straight away if you are doing anything that makes me feel uncomfortable or embarrassed
- I may talk to other trusted people about how you help me. They too will let you know what I would like to change

We will review this agreement on: _____

Child (if appropriate): _____

Parent/Carer: _____

Classroom Assistant: _____

Principal/SENCO : _____

APPENDIX 6



PERMISSION FOR KILCOOLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY UNIT TO PROVIDE INTIMATE CARE

- I give permission to school staff to provide appropriate intimate care support to my child e.g. changing soiled clothing, washing, toileting, administering medication.
- I understand that the staff at Kilcooley Primary School & Nursery School will, to the best of their ability, meet these needs whilst following the Intimate Care Policy and Safeguarding Policy.
- I will advise the Principal of any medical condition my child may have which affects issues of intimate care.

Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Child's name: _____

DOB: _____

Address: _____

Tel. Number(s): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____