

Fairview Primary School



Intimate Care Policy

Date Ratified: September 2016
Last Review Date: August 2026
To Be Reviewed: August 2029

Fairview Primary School

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

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 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.

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

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 NEELB 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.

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 room.

Period Dignity Policy

See separate policy.

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;

- 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 and voice in the sequence of care;
- be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions.

Safeguards for children

All staff in Fairview Primary School 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. Children's rights to privacy will always be respected when dealing with intimate care issues.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2029 or as relevant guidance (including Child Protection) dictates to ensure that it is fit for purpose.