

**Botanic Primary School**  
**and**  
**Nursery Unit**

**INTIMATE CARE POLICY**  
**2025**

## **Rational**

At Botanic primary School it is our intention to develop every child's independence, however, there will be occasions when assistance is required. Assistance will be provided in a sensitive and supportive manner, ensuring all pupils feel valued and respected. This is in line with our school ethos, and links to other school policies.

Our intimate care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. This policy is in line with multiagency guidance as found in the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and the Department for Health (2006) Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

## **Introduction**

Intimate care may be defined as any activity

*"Involved in meeting the personal care needs of a child" (NSPCC 2025)*

Such activities may be required to be carried out a regular basis or during a one-off incident.

Intimate care activities may include:

- changing outer layers of clothing
- prompting the use of / helping to use the toilet
- feeding / drinking
- oral care
- washing hands and other non-intimate body parts
- changing clothes
- first aid and medical assistance
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

- providing comfort to an upset or distressed child
- menstrual care

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

### **Principles of Intimate Care**

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based. They take into account the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

- 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

### **School Responsibilities and Permission**

Permission to support children with intimate care will be **sought as children enter nursery and P1**

Consent forms are signed by the parent / carer and are stored in the school office (Appendix 1).

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements will be agreed between the school and parents / carers and, when appropriate and possible, by the child.

Staff will keep records of intimate care, one off and daily support given. Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed frequently. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.

Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents and school. Parents would then be contacted immediately.

### **Safeguarding**

All members of staff working with children are vetted through Access NI. This includes students on work placement and volunteers.

Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school are involved in the intimate care of children.

Students and volunteers will not be tasked with performing intimate care procedures.

Staff need to be aware that they are placing themselves in a vulnerable position when providing intimate care. They can take safeguarding measures by following the guidelines for good practice.

### **Guidelines For Good Practice**

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children. Young children and

children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Members of staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care, as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation.

Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff;

1. Involve the child in the intimate care.

Try to encourage a child's independence as much as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices. Check practice by asking the child or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care

2. Treat every child with dignity and respect

Ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.

3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.

As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between school and home ensures that practice is consistent

4. Be aware of your own limitations.

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask. 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

The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Your attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed

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

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, they must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

### **Basic Hygiene Routines**

- Always wear protective disposable gloves.
- Seal any soiled clothing in a plastic bag and return to parents.

### **Assisting a child to change their clothes**

This is more common in the Nursery or Foundation Stage. A child may require assistance with changing if, for example, they have had a toilet accident, they get wet during play activities or have become unwell and vomited on their clothing.

Staff will always encourage children to attempt undress and dress unaided.

Privacy will be given to the child while changing.

If a child is unable to change independently staff will provide support, ensuring they talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices.

If the child becomes distressed or if staff are concerned in any way, parents will be contacted and asked to assist their child.

Staff will ensure that a colleague is in close proximity when supporting a child.

All intimate care independent and supported will be recorded in the intimate care record (Appendix 2)

### **Changing a child who has wet / soiled his/herself**

If a child soils him/herself in school a professional judgement will 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 in the toilets
- Clean underwear and spare uniform are available throughout the school in a range of sizes. Nursery children are encouraged to keep a change of clothes in school for this purpose
- If a child is not able to complete this task independently, 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. This avoids any further distress and preserves dignity
- If the emergency contact cannot attend, school will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child. If none of the contacts can be reached the Principal or member of Senior Leadership Team 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 intimate care record (Appendix 2)

### **Working with Children of the Opposite Sex**

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care however the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman. The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- when intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy, i.e. they should be appropriately covered or the door closed, adult waiting outside
- if the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance
- report any concerns to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and make a written record
- parents must be informed about any concerns

### **Communication With Children**

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. Depending on their maturity and levels of stress children may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc.

To ensure effective communication:

- make eye contact at the child's level
- use gestures and simple language; repeat if necessary
- wait for response

- 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.

### **Providing Comfort or Support**

Children may seek physical comfort, particularly children in Nursery and Foundation Stage. If physical contact is deemed appropriate it must be suitable to the child's age. Staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum and be child initiated.

### **Swimming**

Our P5, P6 and P7 classes participate in swimming lessons as part of the curriculum. Children are entitled to respect and dignity when changing their clothes. Pupils change in a group changing facility, which is not accessible to the public. Staff are required to supervise changing from the changing room door, in order to safeguard children and to promote positive behaviour. Staff who are supervising children at swimming lessons are required to read and adhere to "Swimming lessons – Guidance for staff" (Appendix 3)

### **Period Dignity and Menstrual Wellbeing**

Period dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a menstruating pupil in conjunction with the removal / breaking of stigma and taboo arounds periods.

Pupils and staff will be made aware of the following;

- free products are available to those in need during school

- the location products and our 'take what you need' approach
- the location of wipes and spare clothing
- products are available to those who require them outside of school

Please refer to Botanic Primary School's "*Period Dignity Policy*" for more information.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed 2028

## Appendix 1

### Permission form for the Provision of Intimate Care

Sometimes children, particularly younger children need help if their clothes become wet, dirty or soiled. This may be through play, 'hands on' activities, toilet accidents or illness.

Staff can help children in a sensitive way, encouraging them to do things for themselves when possible. If you prefer staff can contact you or your emergency contact, who will be asked to attend without delay.

Botanic Primary School's Intimate Care Policy is available to view on our website ([www.botanicprimary.com](http://www.botanicprimary.com)) or ask for a copy from the office.

Please complete the form below stating your preference and return to school.

#### **SIGN ONE:**

\*I give consent for \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) to be changed and cleaned by staff if they wet/soil themselves or their clothing is dirty, and they require support.

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_

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\*I would prefer the school **contact me** or my emergency contact and I will organise for my child to be cleaned and changed. I understand that in the event that I (or the emergency contact) cannot be contacted the staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to assist my child.

Signature of Parent / Carer \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

In line with the school's Intimate Care Policy this letter is to inform you that your child received help with intimate care today.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please contact the school if you have any questions (028 90328346)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the Child: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### Swimming Lessons – Guidelines for Staff

The risk Assessment for PEC has been reviewed and updated.

The following guidance is to safeguard both the children and the supervising adults:

- ☒ No mobile phones should be seen at PEC. They must remain hidden in bags or zipped in a pocket
- ☒ Adults are not to assist with changing
- ✓ Keep group change door wedged open
- ✓ Stand by the door as much as possible
- ✓ Soft encouragement and instructions for getting dressed
- ✓ Some children will benefit from visual aids as an additional support
- ✓ When pupils are ready it is fine to assist with swimming and goggles if required
- ✓ Keep positive behaviour policy in mind - report any issues to the class teacher

When there is only one adult of a particular gender:

We have organised an extra measure to be in place to safe-guard staff when only one member of a particular gender is available - most likely male!

-a radio will be provided for him at reception so that any issues can be communicated safely and immediately

-another staff member should stand by the external door between the male changing room and the corridor to be 'on hand' for any issues.

