

Cabinteely Community School



Intimate Care Policy

Ratified April 2022

1. Intimate Care

1.1 Definition

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/carers. Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral care
- Washing
- Dressing/undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual Care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

1.2 Child Protection

In a situation where an issue of concern arises while carrying out an intimate care task, the staff member will report this concern immediately to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Such issues may include:

- The student seems unusually sore, tender or bruised
- The student seems to misinterpret what is said or done
- The student has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause
- The student makes an allegation against a staff member

Any concerns will be dealt with by the DLP in accordance with Children First and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools.

1.3 Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are 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.

1.4 School Responsibilities

Cabinteely Community School, Cabinteely is committed to working with parents / guardians, health professionals and other agencies to provide a supportive environment for students who require assistance with intimate care. All staff working with children must be appropriately vetted.

- The Principal must ensure that all staff undertaking the intimate care of students are familiar with and understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines together with associated policies and Procedures.
- The SNA team will liaise with the SENCO and parents in order to implement an Intimate Care Plan with the parents/guardians and student, and other health professionals if appropriate.
- Ongoing intimate care arrangements must be agreed by the school, parents / carers and students (if appropriate).
- Ongoing intimate care arrangements must be recorded in the student's support file and consent forms signed by the parents / carers and student (if appropriate).
- Staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed in the Intimate Care plan between the School, parents /carers, and student (if appropriate).
- Intimate care arrangements that have been specially agreed with a parent are reviewed annually. The views of all relevant parties, including the child (if appropriate), are sought, and considered to inform future arrangements.
- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, they must report this to the DLP or Deputy DLP (Designated Child Protection officers)

1.5 Guidelines

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

Students with a physical disability can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs and follow agreed care plans. Involve the student in their intimate care. Try to encourage the student's independence as far as possible in her intimate care.

Where the student is fully dependant talk with them about what is going to be done and give them a choice where possible. Check your practice by asking the student/ partner any likes or while carrying out intimate care. Treat the student with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the student's age and situation.

Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent and only carried out by the named staff according to the Intimate Care Plan.

Sensitive information about a child's intimate care is confidential. 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.

Promote positive self-esteem and body image. Confident self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable. 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 relaxed, enjoyable and fun.

If you observe any unusual marks, bruises or swelling including the genital area, report immediately to the DLP or DDLP for Child Protection. Complete a written record of concern. If during the intimate care of a student you accidentally hurt them, or the child misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure her safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard Students and staff.

Some procedures must only be carried out by staff who have been formally trained, if required.