



St. Comgall's Primary School
23 Brunswick Road
Bangor
Co. Down
BT20 3DS

St Comgall's PS, Bangor

Intimate Care Policy



A Pastoral Care Policy

A. Higgins (DT)



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Rationale

St Comgall's PS is a caring, Catholic school where each individual is treated as unique and special, made in the image and likeness of God.

At all times the child's dignity, self-esteem and respect for their body is of paramount importance and must be protected.

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however we recognise that there will be times when adult help is required. Our Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It forms part of the school's Pastoral Care Policies. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Children are generally more vulnerable than adults therefore, staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Intimate care may be regarded as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Such activities may include:

- ❖ Supporting a child with dressing/undressing
- ❖ Providing comfort or support for a distressed child
- ❖ Assisting a child requiring medical care who is not able to carry this out unaided
- ❖ Cleaning/assisting a child who has soiled himself/herself, has vomited or feels unwell
- ❖ Supporting a child experiencing symptoms of puberty, menstruation etc

This list is not exhaustive and the school will respond sensitively at all times with compassion and care to meet the needs of individual children.

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

Principles of Intimate Care

In line with the UNCROC and as a Rights-Respecting School, the following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based.

Every child has the right to:

- Be safe;
- Personal privacy;
- Be valued as an individual;
- Be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- Express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account;
- Have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent;
- Be treated with dignity and respect

School Responsibilities

All members of staff working with children will be vetted by Access NI - this includes students and volunteers. Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school should be involved in the intimate care of children.

Anticipated intimate care arrangements which are required on a regular basis are agreed between the school and the parents, and when appropriate and possible, by the child.

In such cases an Intimate Care Plan (Appendix B) and consent forms (**Appendix C**) are signed and stored in the School's Intimate Care Folder – under lock by Designated Teacher.

All Parents are asked annually via the **General Permissions Form** to give permission for staff to attend to the intimate care of their child (with particular reference to toilet accidents or illness) should the need arise.



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Only in an emergency (where parents cannot be reached) will staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been previously agreed by parents. This act of intimate care would be reported by a member of staff to the parents at the earliest possible opportunity following the event.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report it to the Principal, **Mrs C Hunter**, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, **Miss A Higgins** or the Deputy Designated Teacher, **Miss J A Mullally**.

Guidelines for Good Practice

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated as individuals. 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.

All incidents of intimate care should be documented using the Record of Intimate Care form (**Appendix A**).

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

Staff will endeavour to:

1. Involve the child in the intimate care

Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her own intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices

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

Care should not be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child.

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 all parties ensures that the 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.

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image

Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach you take with intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about 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 you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling, report it immediately to the Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident to the DT or DDT. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child's personal file.

Hygiene

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection and should ensure the use of appropriate protective equipment when necessary, for example, disposable gloves and apt waste disposal or storage of soiled goods etc.

Parents are encouraged to provide spare underwear/clothing as required but the school also holds some replacement underwear, clothing and sanitary products if required.

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.



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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, the door closed or screen/curtains put in place;
- If the child appears to be 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 DT or DDT
- 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 level of stress, children may communicate using different methods – words, signs, symbols, body movements etc.

To ensure effective communication:

- Make eye contact at the child's level;
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary;
- Wait for a 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.

It is important to note that in addition to the information in the Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to the guidance in the Safeguarding: Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies.

If there is a child attending the school who is likely to need regular assistance of this nature then an individual Intimate Care Plan (**Appendix B**) should be implemented.

Policy last reviewed:	Sept 2018	C Hunter / A Higgins	(No changes)
Policy Review due:	Sept 2019	completed – C Hunter / A Higgins	<i>*Addition of Puberty/Menstruation provision</i>
Policy Review due:	Sept 2020		



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Appendix A**Record of Intimate Care**

Date & Time	Child's Name	Incident- What, where, etc	Action Taken	Name / Signature of person who dealt with the incident

Appendix B

Individual Intimate Care Plan

Pupil:		Class:	Date:
<u>Diagnosis Summary / Circumstances:</u>			
<u>Assistance Required:</u>			
Timetable:			
Persons Assisting:			
Alternative Arrangements:			
<u>Location/Equipment:</u>			
Designation	Signature	Date	
Parent / Carer			
Pupil			
Assistant(s)			
Designated Teacher			
Principal			

Appendix C**Permission for Specific (known) Intimate Care Assistance**

Child:		DoB:	
<u>Address:</u>			
<u>Parent/Carer details:</u>			
<p>I / We give permission for the assistance detailed in the Intimate Care Plan to be provided to my/our child and will advise the school of any change that may affect this provision.</p> <p>Signatures:</p> <p>Date:</p>			
<p>I, the Child, give permission for the assistance outlined in my Intimate Care Plan to be provided to me.</p> <p>Signature:</p>			
<p>We, the Staff supporting the child, consent to supporting this child's intimate care needs in line with the approved plan.</p> <p>Signature(s):</p> <p>Date:</p>			



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