

## **Intimate Care Policy** **Reviewed 2023**

This Intimate Care Policy has been developed by the staff of St. Dymphna's School in consultation with the Board of Management to ensure that the needs and rights of students and staff are maintained and that the highest standards of best practice are ensured at all times in the area of intimate personal assistance.

This policy applies to all staff involved in supporting students attending this school with regard to their intimate care needs. The intimate care needs of students are usually carried out by SNA's, but teachers may also be involved.

Each student has the right to physical care assistance in order for him or her to participate fully in school life. The level of assistance required will reflect the needs of each individual student at any given time.

### **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- the dignity and welfare of students and staff are respected and maintained.
- the rights of students and staff are protected.
- best practice is promoted throughout the school within the framework of the current policy.

What is intimate care?

Intimate care refers to all aspects of support to a student whether by direct or indirect contact, which are associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene involving intimate body parts.

Direct contact involves physical contact between the student and the staff member. It may involve touching of both intimate and non-intimate body parts.

Indirect contact involves the supervision, observation and prompting of the student to complete personal and intimate care.

Intimate care is any care which involves one or more of the following :

- Assisting a student to change his/her clothes
- Changing or washing a student who has soiled themselves
- Assisting with toileting issues of menstrual care difficulties
- Supervising a student involved in intimate self-care
- Providing first aid assistance
- Feeding a student
- Assisting a student who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. Parents have the responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their student.

### **Principles of Intimate Care**

**The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which are guidelines are based**

1. Every student has a right to be safe.
2. Every student has the right to personal privacy.
3. Every student has the to be valued as an individual.
4. Every student has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
5. All students have the right to be involved and consulted about their intimate care to the best of their abilities. The appropriate means of communication should be used by staff to explain to the students what they are doing any why.
6. Every student has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.
7. All students have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views considered.

**Students with specific toileting/intimate care needs**

The class teacher and class SNA's will meet with the parent of the student when they start school or when the need arises.

The specific care needs of the student will be discussed and how the school will meet them. An intimate care plan should be drawn up which details the student's intimate care needs and the support the student will need to meet these needs.

**Staff Guidelines**

• Levels of staffing for the provision of intimate care assistance will be organised based on the individual needs of the students and availability of staff.

Staffing levels should be reviewed with the relevant staff when necessary.

Every effort will be made to provide two staff, at any time, for intimate care assistance.

However, this may not always be possible.

• In a situation where a staff member is obliged to undertake intimate care assistance on his or her own, other staff can be called on if further assistance is deemed necessary for the greater comfort / safety of the student / safety of staff.

• As a reasonable precaution and in keeping with best practice, a staff member will, where possible, make their intention and purpose known to another staff member, before commencing an intimate care task.

• Short term substitute staff, students on work placement or voluntary staff working in the school will not attend to toileting or intimate care needs.

**The expectation is that when staff make physical contact with students it will be:**

- For the least amount of time necessary (limited touch)
- Appropriate, given the student's age, stage of development and background
- In response to the student's needs at the time

• Within current resources, staff of either gender may be required as part of their duties to attend to the intimate care needs of students both male and female.

Female staff only will attend to students requiring assistance with menstrual needs. Staff will not be involved in any way in the use by students of internal sanitary protection.

• Staff should at all times follow best practice in relation to Manual Handling.

• Staff should never carry out an intimate care procedure unless they know how to do so correctly and will ask for the relevant advice from the principal when required.

• Staff should ensure supplies of toiletries, towels and fresh clothes etc. are to hand so that the student is not left unattended while items are found. If supplies run out while a staff member

is using bathroom facilities, then the staff member should replace the toiletries with supplies from the appropriate person/storeroom.

- Staff should at all times follow best practice in relation to infection control
- Staff should be discreet in the use of intimate care items, and these should not be visible outside of designated areas.
- Intimate care assistance will at all times take place in the designated areas.
- An agreement should be in place for parents/guardians to provide spare nappies/pads, cleaning wipes, disposable nappy sacks, underwear and clothing, and any medical supplies required such as syringes, catheter tubes etc.
- All staff supporting students with care needs, especially where the student is non-weight bearing, or has specific medical needs, will receive appropriate information from the parents. If requested, parents should ensure that specialist nursing and health care professionals provide any relevant medical information, training and advice to staff if necessary.
- Parents should alert the school of intimate care needs in the enrolment form and should request an appointment to write up a care plan with the relevant staff for their student without delay.

### **Student Welfare**

- Every student should be treated with dignity and have their privacy respected at all times
- An intimate care plan will be drawn up for students who have significant support needs with regards to intimate care. The plan will identify:
  - Intimate care tasks required by the student
  - Student's level of ability
  - Support needs to carry out each task, including number of staff required
  - Identification of staff members required
  - Resources required to carry out each task
  - In drawing up the plan consideration will be given to the wishes of the student concerned and where relevant the preferences of their parents/guardians.
  - Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/guardians on a regular basis.
    - The needs and wishes of students and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing.
    - The needs and challenges presented by individual students will be taken into consideration
    - Intimate care needs should be reviewed annually at the IEP/Parent/teacher meeting, or at a more frequent interval if required.
    - Only relevant staff will be aware of the routine and procedures. No unnecessary staff should be present, and no other staff should interrupt the care procedure.
      - Physical contact (if necessary) during intimate care assistance should be affirmative and supportive
      - While assisting the student, staff will explain what is happening in a straightforward and reassuring manner and will involve the student as far as possible in their own intimate care programme while being sensitive to their reactions and responsive to their communication (both verbal and non-verbal) abilities.
      - Discreet observation will be used to check if a student need changing.
      - The needs and challenges presented by individual students will be taken into consideration.
      - Staff will check in advance that suitable facilities exist for intimate care procedures when on outings.

### **Reporting**

If during the provision of intimate care assistance:

- the student is accidentally hurt
- the student seems unusually sore, tender or bruised
- the student appears to misinterpret what is said or done
- the student has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause. The staff member(s) involved in the intimate care assistance should immediately report any such incident to the class teacher.

The incident should also be reported as soon as possible to the Principal/Deputy Principal. Parents may be contacted, and an incident report may be completed where Child Protection Guidelines indicate that this step is necessary. Follow up will take place as required.

The National Student Protection Guidelines will be followed at all times. Staff should refer to the Schools Safeguarding Statement and Risk assessment and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)

### **Parental Consent**

This policy is available on our website.

Parents/Guardians will be made aware of the school's Intimate Care Policy and must give consent for the student to be changed, or the intimate care procedures to be carried out in the school. This is discussed with the parents when their child enrolls at the school.

### **Toileting Accidents**

Parents will be made aware of the school's policy on intimate care needs when they enrol at the school.

If a student has an accident, they will firstly be offered fresh clothes to change into and reassured that everything is ok.

If a student is unable to change their clothes without help, two members of staff known to the student will provide assistance. The staff will always encourage students to do as much as they can independently.

Parents will be notified and may be asked to bring in fresh clothes if none are available in school.

### **Review and Implementation**

This policy is available from the school and on the website. It will be reviewed every two years or as required.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management at a meeting on 25 October 2023

Signed: *[Signature]*  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *[Signature]*  
Secretary/Principal

Date: 25 October 2023

Date: 25/10/23

**Name:**

**Care plan**

**2023-24**

<b>Level of ability</b> 1. Independent 2. Some support/supervision 3. High level of support 4. Totally dependent on adult for care needs	<b>Care Needs</b>	<b>Staff Required</b>	<b>Resources</b>