



Intimate Care Policy

June 2022

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Bunscoil Bhríde on **13th March 2012**.

Children with disabilities are very vulnerable. All staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to the child's individual needs. The approaches used in relation to intimate care should be consistent in so far as is possible and should be clearly communicated.

Children with Specific Toileting/Intimate Care Needs:

- In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care, a meeting will be convened after enrolment and before the child starts school
- Parents/guardians, Principal, class teacher, SNA and if appropriate, the pupil, will attend
- The specific care needs of the child and how the school will meet them, will be clarified
- Personnel involved in this care will be identified and written consent will be granted by the parents/ guardians via the Aladdin Connect app (see appendix)
- Provision for occasions when SNAs are absent will be outlined (e.g. substitute SNAs will not generally be involved in intimate care if possible - this will not always be possible, particularly in the Bluebells Classroom). Any change of personnel will be discussed with the pupil, if appropriate
- Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care needs
- Any changes will be discussed with parent/guardian and pupil and noted in writing to the pupil's file
- As far as possible the pupil will be involved in identification of her personal requirements, wishes, changes etc.
- Parents will be notified of any changes from agreed procedures
- At all times the dignity and privacy of the pupil will be paramount in addressing intimate care needs
- Staff will wear protective gloves

Toileting Accidents:

- At the junior infant induction meetings, the school procedures will be outlined to parents.
- A supply of clean underwear, track-suit bottoms etc. will be kept in the school
- In the first instance, the pupil will be offered fresh clothing to clean and change themselves
- If, for any reason, the child is unable to clean or change themselves, two members of staff, familiar to the child will attend to her
- Parents will be notified of these accidents

- A record of the incident should be kept

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

Try to avoid doing things for a child that she can do alone. If the child is able to, help ensure they are given the chance to do so. Support the child is doing all they can for themselves. If a child is fully dependent on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give them choices where possible.

Be responsive to a child's reactions.

Check your practice by asking the child, particularly a child you haven't previously cared for, e.g. "Is it ok to do it this way?", "Can you wash there?", "How does Mummy/Daddy do this?". If a child expresses dislike of a certain person carrying out their intimate care, try and find out why. The child should give their consent.

Make sure practice in intimate care is as consistent as possible.

The Principal has the responsibility for ensuring their staff has a consistent approach. This does not mean that everyone has to do things in an identical fashion, but it is important that approaches are not markedly different between staff. Individual needs should be identified and discussed. Each child who has intimate care needs must have her own records chart. This chart should be shown to parents at regular intervals and always on request.

Never do something unless you know how to do it.

If you are not sure how to do something, ASK. If you need to be shown more than once, ask again. Certain intimate care or treatment procedures must only be carried out by nursing or medical staff. Other procedures such as intermittent catheterisation must only be carried out by staff that have been formally trained and assessed as competent by parents of the child.

If you are concerned, report it.

If, during the intimate care of a child you accidentally hurt the child, or the child seems unusually sore or tender in the genital area, report any such incident as soon as possible to the class teacher, Principal and parent and make a brief note of it on the child's chart.

Encourage the child to have a positive image of her own body.

Confident, assertive children who feel their body belongs to them can be less vulnerable to abuse. The approach you take to a child's intimate care can convey lots of messages to them.

This includes the basics like privacy and dignity. Positive attitude to the child's intimate care is important.

Appendix

Consent Form for Intimate Care Needs

We give permission to _____, _____

and _____ to provide help to _____

with her intimate care needs, which are:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

_____ **Date: _____**

Parents / Guardians