



## Intimate Care Policy

### **A. Rationale**

Holywood Primary School continues to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our Intimate Care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It is one of a range of specific policies that contribute to our Pastoral Care. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Children can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Intimate care is defined 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. This may involve help with eating, drinking, dressing, first aid and medical assistance and matters of personal hygiene such as washing and toileting. In some instances, more specialised intimate assistance may be needed for children with physical or medical needs.

All parents and carers who enrol their child at Holywood Primary School are provided with this policy. They are asked to confirm receipt and support its implementation including regular or occasional intimate care that may be provided to their child by members of staff during their time at Holywood Primary School.

### **B. Aims**

The aim of this document is to help put in place a policy and procedures that:

- Safeguard the dignity, rights, and well-being of children;
- Provide guidance and support to staff; and
- Reassure parents and carers that their child is cared for and protected.

### **C. Principles of Intimate Care**

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy is based.

Every child in Holywood Primary School has the right to:-

- be safe;
- personal privacy;
- be valued as an individual;
- be treated with dignity and respect;
- 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; and

- have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

#### Parents and carers

- have the right to information regarding this policy and procedures used which are designed to meet the need of their child.
- have a responsibility to ensure that all relevant information is provided to help the school assist their child in an appropriate way.
- must make themselves aware of the members of staff who will provide intimate care to their child.
- should contact the class teacher if they have a query or concern about a situation regarding the intimate care of their child
- must support the school when considering alternative arrangements to allow their child to participate in school activities e.g. PE, performances, sports, etc. and also activities outside school (e.g. educational visits, transport, etc).

#### School staff must

- work closely with parents and carers to ensure all aspects of the care procedures are shared and understood
- make parents and carers aware of the members of staff who will provide intimate care to their child
- ensure any additional information is relayed to parents and carers in the event of members of staff who provide intimate care being absent
- gain additional information and written permission from parents and carers for regular intimate care being provided (Appendix 1).
- be trained in the specific types of regular intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the Intimate Care Policy and guidelines within the context of their work
- only enter the pupils' toilet area for a reason regarding safety, well-being or discipline.

When completing cleaning and maintenance duties, the Building Supervisor ancillary staff or EA employees will only enter the toilet or changing areas after first making sure that no pupils are present.

All members of staff working with children are vetted by the Education Authority (ACCESSNI). This includes students on work placement and volunteers who are in contact regularly or on a day-to-day basis with children.

Members of staff are 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.

All members of staff must report concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice to the Designated Teacher or in their absence speak with another member of the Safeguarding Team.

## **D. Regular & Occasional Intimate Care**

### **i) Regular intimate care**

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

A meeting is arranged between parents or carers and members of staff to discuss the detail and completion of an Intimate Care Plan. Following this consent forms are signed and record sheets completed. They are stored in the child's file. (Appendix 1 & 2)

Intimate care arrangements for any pupil who requires this support on a regular basis will be reviewed at regular intervals.

The views of all relevant parties is sought and considered to inform future arrangements. Any amendments to the arrangements will be recorded and made available for all parties involved. e.g. if a member of staff is on sick-leave another member of staff will undertake specific intimate care tasks.

### **ii) Occasional intimate care** (e.g. Changing after a toilet accident or fall)

From time to time in school children may need assistance with intimate care, i.e. help with changing of clothes and cleaning after a wetting, soiling or vomiting incident or fall.

It may be that they need general help or that they have had an accident that requires an adult to help with intimate care. When helping children with intimate care, we will provide them with the appropriate level of caring support whilst minimising as far as possible the level of physical contact with the child in intimate body regions.

It should be noted that by the time a child starts school they will normally be expected to be independent in terms of their use of toilet facilities.

Children may be upset and need to be comforted. They may have a toileting accident or fall and need to have their clothes changed.

In order to safeguard the child and protect staff also, the following code of conduct will be followed at all times in Holywood Primary School:

- Children will be encouraged to adjust clothing, etc. themselves when using the toilet
- Children who wet their clothes after a toileting accident or fall will be given clean replacements and depending on the child's level of independence, will be encouraged to change themselves in the privacy of a cubicle in the toilet area.
- Assistance, products and replacement clothes will be provided in a dignified manner to those pupils who require help with managing their menstrual period.
- The school will provide resources to adults to ensure that appropriate procedures are carried out and done so hygienically. This may include using disposable aprons, gloves, wipes and medicated handwashing products.

- If assistance is required to help a child change, if possible, the member of staff should be accompanied by a second member of staff. If not possible, the adult supporting the child will inform another member of staff as to their whereabouts and the need to help a pupil.
- If a child vomits or soils themselves, their previously given contacts will be telephoned in the order given, relaying the details and also to request that they are changed by a parent, carer or another adult who has the parents' consent to clean and change the child
- In all toileting accidents, the child's parent or carer will be informed by the class teacher, the classroom assistant, Office staff or another member of staff. A written record of the incident(s) will be kept on the official form – see Appendix 3. We will use children's initials to provide anonymity and we will also use the code letters W, S and V (Wetting, Soiling or Vomiting).

**Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents or carers. This act of intimate care would be reported to a member of staff, parents and carers at the earliest possible time following the event.**

## **E. Good Practice**

### **1. Involving the child in the intimate care**

Members of staff will encourage a child's independence as far as possible in their intimate care. Where a child is fully dependent, staff will talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices.

The child, parent or carer will be asked about any preferences before staff carry out intimate care.

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

Intimate care can be carried out by one member of staff alone with one child. Two adults may be required to provide greater comfort or safe handling for a child.

### **3. Making sure practice in intimate care is consistent.**

A child can have an agreed number of members of staff supporting them but a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.

### **4. Being aware of your own limitations**

Activities will be carried out by Holywood Primary School staff who must understand and should feel competent with the procedures. If in doubt, they must ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

## **5. Promoting 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 taken to provide intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. The attitude of Holywood Primary School staff towards a child's intimate care is important.

## **6. Concerns must be reported.**

Staff observation of any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling must be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher or in their absence, a member of the Safeguarding Team.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Teacher or in their absence, a member of the Safeguarding Team. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be given to parents and kept in the child's personal file.

These procedures are designed to protect both pupils and staff. At Holywood Primary School we will operate a consistent approach to intimate care.

We believe that the positive working relationship between home and school is a major factor in providing care and safety for the children. This working relationship thrives upon openness, effort and trust. We will promote this in our dealings with children, parents, carers and the wider community.

## **F. 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 but the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman.

The intimate care of pupils 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 screens/curtains put in place;
- if a child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Members of staff will provide reassurance if a child is distressed;
- any concerns must be reported to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or in their absence, a member of the Safeguarding Team. and a written record completed; parents and carers must be informed.

## **G. Communication with Children**

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child in Hollywood Primary School 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 members of staff at Hollywood Primary School will:

- 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.

## **G. Confidentiality**

- Information regarding agreed regular intimate care procedures must be treated confidentially and recorded only in the child's school file.
- Information should not be disclosed or discussed with any adults other than those with responsibility for the child's personal care, and should not be referred to in the presence of other children.
- Appropriate terminology for parts of the body and bodily functions should be clarified between the child, parents/carers and the adults involved.

It is important to note that in addition to the information in the Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to other Safeguarding Policies.

The Intimate Care policy is based on guidelines provided by EA. If applicable, additional procedures (e.g. COVID or any other extreme situation) must be followed as advised by DE/ EA/ PHA or any other relevant public body.

Intimate Care Policy devised:	January 2011
Reviewed :	2014
Reviewed:	2017
Reviewed:	2020
Reviewed:	2024

Hollywood Primary School will review, evaluate and update this policy in 2027 or before if necessary.



**HOLYWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**Permission for Regular Intimate Care**

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>CHILD'S NAME</b>	
<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	
<b>ADDRESS</b>	
<b>NAME OF PARENTS(S) / CARER(S)</b>	

**I/ we give permission for the assistance detailed below to be provided to my / our child and will advise the school of any change(s) that may affect this provision.**

**Signature (s)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**INTIMATE CARE PLAN**

(Details of assistance given listed below. i.e. time, location, equipment used in school.)

<b>DIAGNOSIS</b>	
<b>DETAILS OF AGREED ASSISTANCE REQUIRED</b>	
<b>PERSON(S)</b>	

<b>ASSISTING</b>	
<b>LOCATION / TIME / EQUIPMENT REQUIRED</b>	
<b>ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION</b>	

**Name & Signature of member (s) of staff**

**NAME**

**SIGNATURE**

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**Principal** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



<b>DATE &amp; TIME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>SIGNATURE OF CARER</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>

