

Ballymacward Primary School



Intimate Care Policy

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1. RATIONALE

While we work towards ensuring that our children become independent, we acknowledge that there are times when a child may need support and assistance with intimate care needs, and that there are some children for whom this is an ongoing requirement. We have drafted this policy to ensure that:

- all staff adhere to recognised good practice;
- all children feel safe and cared for;
- parents know that their children's intimate care needs are being met.

Intimate care is any activity that needs to be engaged in by an adult to ensure that a child's intimate care needs are addressed. This could be a one off e.g. after an accident, or could be daily e.g. a child with medical or developmental needs. The most common activities in which staff may be engaged in are toileting activities, including washing and changing clothes when necessary, and assisting children with changing for PE lessons.

Ballymacward PS works in partnership with parents to educate their children. We ask that parents make us aware of any intimate care needs their children may have, and that they discuss with us any specific requirements or strategies that they feel are appropriate.

2. PRINCIPLES

We feel that every child has the right to:

- be safe and cared for;
- dignity and respect, including the right to privacy;
- be involved in their own intimate care according to their personal capabilities, including expressing personal views and being listened to;
- having their intimate care needs met in an appropriate way.

We feel that every adult employee has the right to:

- appropriate training and information regarding children with intimate care needs for whom they will provide care;
- be safeguarded from accusations relating to intimate care practices.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Governors

The BOG will ensure that an appropriate policy is drawn up and approved, and will maintain an overview of its implementation, without receiving details such as names of children or parents without express prior approval by parents.

Staff

All staff are vetted by EA South Eastern Region, including any students, volunteers, substitute teachers and peripatetic staff.

A child's intimate care needs will be taken care of by an adult with whom the child is familiar and who is fully aware of the school policy. Where a child has ongoing intimate care needs there will be an agreement drawn up between school and parents about the details of the care to be given, with the child being aware of what has been agreed – and in some cases with the child's involvement in the planned actions. Intimate care plans for children with ongoing needs should be reviewed at least twice a year to allow for changes for children who have acquired a greater degree of independence or whose care needs may have changed.

Parents of P1 children are asked to give their consent (see Annex A) for staff to help with the intimate care needs of their children should the necessity arise e.g. as result of toileting or other accident.

In the event of an **emergency** staff may assist with an intimate care need where permission has not been given by parents – in the interests of the health, wellbeing and dignity of the child. Parents and the designated teacher would be notified as soon as possible.

All staff have the responsibility to report to the designated teacher any concerns they may have about the practices of other teachers with regard to children's intimate care needs.

Parents

Parents are asked to do the following:

- notify the school of any intimate care needs their children may have, either occasional or daily needs;
- for children with continuous needs – to work with school staff on a plan for their individual child's needs and to ensure that the school has a change of clothing for their child;
- for all parents – to sign a consent form allowing staff to provide intimate care needs when necessary;
- occasionally parents may be asked to provide an item of children's clothing they no longer use – clothing to change children in to in the event of an accident;
- be familiar with the school's policy.

4. GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be followed to maximise appropriate and dignified care for children and to minimise accusations of inappropriate practice against staff:

- Children are at all times to be treated with dignity and respect, with staff being aware of the sensitivities around supporting children with intimate care needs.
- Children should be involved as much as possible in their own intimate care needs. Talk to them about what is happening and allow them to make decisions and to do things for themselves, where appropriate.
- Privacy is paramount – a child should never feel embarrassed about others knowing about his/her intimate care needs.

- It is important to be consistent so that a child will always know what to expect. Where there have been changes to a plan due to changing needs or a child's greater independence the child must know in advance of these changes.
- Try to be relaxed and efficient so that the child will not feel that they are a burden, or will not feel embarrassed. Treat the child with dignity and respect so that s/he feels relaxed and comfortable that his/her needs are being met appropriately.
- and allow the child to have as positive an experience as possible.
- If anything unusual is noted during an intimate care routine it should be reported to the designated teacher e.g. bruising, unusual behaviour by child.
- Keep a record of each instance where action has been required – to ensure parents can be informed, to ensure safeguarding for the staff member concerned, and to maintain a record of the child's needs for medical purposes. Copy to be filed in medical cabinet.
- Staff need to be aware of hygiene issues, and should wear disposable latex gloves when necessary.
- When intimate care is being carried out privacy can be guaranteed by doors being closed, the child being appropriately covered, or screens or curtains being put in place.
- Try to reassure a child who becomes distressed, and stop any activity that is causing distress until the child has calmed down. Reassure the child that what is happening is going to make them feel better.
- If there are any concerns about the child then parents should be informed.

5. PE

P1 and P2 children will be supervised when changing for PE classes and will change in the same room. Any assistance required will be given when children have difficulties, but it is anticipated that children will generally be able to manage the process unaided. Children may be assisted to e.g. tie shoe laces or put on jogging bottoms or tops when necessary, but as an exception rather than a rule.

Children in a P2/3 composite class will change together, as above. P3 children in a single year group class, will change in separate rooms (male / female), and assistance will only be given when a child is having real difficulty and asks for help. Children from P4 onwards change in separate rooms (male / female), regardless of any class combinations.

Children with special needs e.g. medical or learning needs, will be assisted as necessary to change for PE. From P3 onwards this assistance will be provided privately, in keeping with the need for dignity, in a curtained off area or in a different room.

Annex A

BALLYMACWARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

I agree to the school staff taking relevant measures to assist with my child's intimate care needs should the need arise e.g. help with washing, changing or toileting.

I have read and agreed the school's Intimate Care policy.

I understand that staff will keep me informed of any instance where my child's intimate care needs are supported by staff, including the circumstances that led to the situation, and how my child was supported.

Name of child: _____

Class: _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____