

Intimate Care Policy

St. Anne's School

2025 2026

Introduction

The Board of Management of St Anne's School is committed to taking every precaution to protect pupils and staff from any form of abuse and harm. It is in accordance with Child Safeguarding Procedures and Department of Education (DE) Guidelines. This policy and related policies have been developed bearing in mind that all physical contact between staff and pupils should:

- be aimed at meeting the needs of the pupils,
- respect the dignity of each pupil,
- be consistent with the professional integrity of staff members,
- adhere to government guidelines that pertain to the prevention and management of diseases in schools.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to increase knowledge, enhance skills and promote good practice in this sensitive area. All staff will be made aware of the standards expected of them and are responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to. This policy should be viewed in conjunction with our Child Safeguarding Statement, Administration of Medicine, Stay Safe and RSE policies.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate/personal care can be defined as care of an intimate nature, requiring close personal contact, involving an individual's personal space, associated with bodily functions, personal hygiene and procedures due to medical conditions which require direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of, intimate parts of the body. Examples include: care associated with continence, toileting, menstrual management as well as tasks such as washing and bathing. Direct contact involves physical contact between the pupil 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 pupil to complete personal and intimate care tasks. It does not apply to Personal Care i.e. tasks associated with outer appearance which are by nature less intrusive such as skin care, hair care, washing face, hands and teeth.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

- Parents/guardians should alert the school of intimate care needs on the relevant form contained in the enrolment pack and should request an appointment to write up a care plan with the relevant staff for their child before they commence
- Pupils will arrive to school with clean clothes, e.g. underwear, vests, socks changed daily
- A basic level of hygiene should be carried out at home, e.g. regular shower/bath; nails kept short and clean
- A change of clothes to be provided and kept in school, if deemed necessary.

Nappy Changing

- Protocol will be displayed on the wall next to changing area
- Nappies and wipes to be sent in from home as requested by school
- If use of nappy cream or vaseline is required, parents/guardians need to give written permission prior to using and will be sent in from home
- Nappies, wipes, nappy bags to be kept on a shelf next to changing area in a basket with the pupil's name on them
- Gloves, aprons, masks to be available in changing area
- Toileting records to be kept in a folder, one sheet per child, stating time of changing and whether wet or soiled
- Daily feedback to home
- Spare clothes required in school in case clothes need to be changed.

Toilet Training

St Anne's School recognises that toilet training can be a complex process. As children learn to use the toilet at different stages, the school's approach to toilet training will be parent-led and individual to each pupil. The school will liaise, where deemed necessary, with health professionals and support personnel from external services at the outset of toilet training and at the review stage.

To facilitate toilet training, parents/guardians will be expected to provide up to three changes of clothes for the pupil, which will be stored in school. Soiled clothes will be sent home to be washed and parents/guardians will send replacement clothes into school the next day.

Toileting Programmes

Pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible around toileting needs. This may include requesting to use the toilet where required or independently entering the toilet when needed. At times, it may be necessary to implement a toileting programme for a pupil (where pupils are prompted to use the toilet on timed intervals). This will include hygienic practices of washing hands after going to the toilet. As much as possible, the pupil is given the utmost privacy and is prompted using visual cues or Lámh signs to attend to their toileting themselves. In some cases, the pupil may require assistance such as visual support, verbal or gestural prompts, following urination or a bowel movement. For pupils who require physical assistance, a risk assessment will be carried out and additional measures, such as the wearing of PPE, will be put in place. For older pupils with complex toileting needs, the school will liaise, where deemed necessary, with health professionals and support personnel from external services.

The school's toileting facilities will at all times afford our pupil's privacy and safety. Where it is necessary for a pupil to be assisted in or following use of the toilet in school, they will be assisted by one staff member (for complex pupils, 2 staff members may be required). Cubicle doors are left open and at least one metre distance will be maintained, where possible. A staff member will never close over or lock themselves in a cubicle with a pupil. The toilets situated in classrooms are adequately supervised by school staff. Where a staff member accompanies a pupil to the toilet outside of the classroom and there are no other staff members present (for example during yard times), the staff member should make it clear to another member of staff that they are accompanying that pupil to the toilet.

Where it is necessary for a pupil to use a toilet in a public place (on trips), they will be accompanied by at least two staff members and have at least two children present. The school will use facilities with communal changing areas where pupils can be adequately supervised by school staff and are not left unattended in changing rooms/toilets. Wherever possible and available, the wheelchair accessible toilet should be used with the staff member remaining outside the door. All other principles of intimate care practice will be followed at these times.

Application of sun cream

Parents/guardians will be required to apply sun cream on their child's face before the school day. Staff will not apply sun cream. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to send in sun cream so that pupils can top it during the day, if needed. Staff will supervise pupils applying sun cream.

Sexual Aspects of Intimate Care

As part of normal development, interest in one's own body and other people's bodies may be evident. Children with autism or learning disabilities develop the same feelings and needs as others, although understanding and expressing these may be difficult. If a pupil shows signs of becoming sexually aroused during an intimate care procedure, staff must report this matter to the Principal and class teacher. In such a case, individual guidelines will be drawn up by the relevant personnel. As a general guideline, physical contact will not be undertaken while someone is sexually aroused.

Aspects of Intimate Care Relating to Teenagers

Due to hormonal changes, teenagers need extra care and attention when it comes to intimate care. Starting in the home, teenagers should be aware of having clean underwear, vests and socks each day. They should be showering/bathing daily or every other day. Showering/bathing should be monitored at home to ensure they are using the shower gel correctly and cleaning thoroughly. Pupils should be taught how to use anti-perspirant and have it in their bag coming to school. If the teenager is prone to excess perspiration they should have an extra vest/t-shirt in their bag to change during the day.

Inappropriate Sexualised Behaviours

If inappropriate sexualised behaviour is an issue with your child, please make the school and your child's teacher aware so it can be added to your child's Intimate Care Plan and Student Support Plan.

Menstruation

The pupil may require the opportunity to rehearse hygiene routines previous to menstruation as well as instruction during menstruation at home. This instruction may include the use of visual, verbal or gestural prompts, social narratives and so on. If the pupil is unable to carry out these routines independently, assistance may be accessed through school or external agencies. All assistance should always be provided by a female member of staff. For pupils who require physical assistance, a risk assessment will be carried out and additional measures will be put in place. Each pupil should have their own toiletry bag containing intimate care items that they are proficient in using at home, e.g. pads with/without wings, and/or wipes, spare underwear if needed. Tampons must not be used except in situations where the pupil can independently attend to their own menstrual needs.

The Board of Management will make every effort to ensure that all staff are trained and supported in the area of intimate care. The staff at St Anne's School are expected to familiarise themselves with the *Intimate Care Policy* and be aware of the standards expected of them. The staff will establish good working practices regarding physical transfer (manual handling), wearing of protective clothing (e.g. gloves and aprons) and ensure safe practice in relation to procedures carried out. Where possible, events requiring intimate care assistance will be identified in advance. Risk assessments where necessary will be carried out and safety measures will be put in place. Should an emergency arise where assistance is required (e.g. out of school activities) and where surroundings are less than ideal, the principles of privacy and dignity will be respected.

All staff members are expected to:

- Encourage the pupil towards independence
- Get to know the pupils in their class and gain an appreciation of his/ her / their moods, likes/ dislikes and verbal and non-verbal communication
- Have a knowledge and understanding of any religious or cultural sensitivity related to aspects of intimate care for the pupils in their class
- Explain what is happening in a straightforward and reassuring way. In this way, the pupil is prepared for and can anticipate your assistance. Initially approach the pupil from the front, make eye contact and use their name
- Be careful that in intimate care, the touch should be affirmative and supportive, not rough or insensitive
- Use visual cues such as pointing to a prompt, use a picture schedule or board or any other appropriate aid to signal intention to wash or change (where necessary)
- Use discreet observation to monitor changing needs, for example in the case of a nappy or sanitary pad
- Bathe, change or toilet pupils, one at a time. Ensure supplies of fresh clothes are to hand so that the pupil is not left unattended while items are found
- Use only the pupil's own clothing
- Access protective gloves and ensure that they are used where necessary
- Take special precautions when disposing of soiled materials
- Check in advance where possible that suitable facilities exist for intimate care procedures when on school trips, etc.
- Never carry out an intimate care procedure unless the staff member knows how to carry it out correctly. If in doubt, staff will seek help or advice before commencing.
- Do not allow a pupil to assist another pupil with his/ her/ their intimate care needs.
- Intimate care procedures will be carried out in a manner which treats the pupil in a dignified and respectful way and allows the pupil the maximum level of privacy.

St Anne's School accepts that at times, intimate care support is provided by one staff member on their own with an individual pupil. This places additional responsibility on the school in terms of child safeguarding. As a reasonable precaution and in keeping with best practice, a staff member **must** make their intention and purpose known to another staff member in the building, before commencing a procedure involving intimate care. **The door must be left slightly open.** This must be balanced by the need for privacy for the individuals concerned. In some cases, two members of staff may be required to assist with intimate care needs and these cases will be identified by the class teacher, in keeping with all other practices outlined above.

Reporting

If during the provision of intimate care assistance:

- the pupil is accidentally hurt
- the pupil seems unusually sore, tender or bruised
- the pupil appears to misinterpret what is said or done
- the pupil 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.

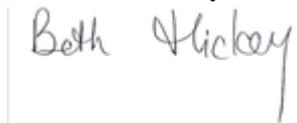
Parents/guardians may be contacted, and an incident report may be completed where Child Protection Guidelines indicate that this step is necessary. Follow up will take place as required. The National Child Protection Guidelines will be followed at all times.

Parental/Guardian Consent

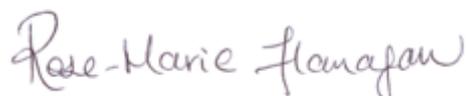
Parents/Guardians will be made aware of the school's Intimate Care Policy and must give consent for the pupil to be changed, or the intimate care procedures to be carried out in the school in the Enrolment Form (Appendix A).

Review, Ratification and Implementation

It was ratified by the Board of Management on the 20th of November 2025.



Beth Hickey
Chairperson B.O.M



Rose-Marie Flanagan
Principal

Appendix A: Intimate Care Consent Form

Pupil Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Class/Teacher: _____

Purpose of the Form:

This form seeks parental/guardian consent for staff to provide intimate care to the above-named pupil when necessary. Intimate care may include support with toileting, changing clothes, personal hygiene, and medical needs, in line with the school's Intimate Care Policy.

Types of Intimate Care That May Be Required (tick as appropriate):

- Toileting assistance/nappy changing
- Changing of clothes
- Changing/Cleaning after accidents
- Other (please specify): _____

Consent Statement:

I understand that staff will follow the school's Intimate Care Policy and will treat my child with dignity, respect, and sensitivity. I give consent for appropriately trained staff to provide intimate care to my child when necessary.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____