



## Intimate Care Policy

### **A. Rationale**

Hollywood Primary School will 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 policy. 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. Such activities can include:

- toileting;
- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- catheter
- menstrual well-being and period dignity
- first aid and medical assistance; and
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

Parents have a responsibility to advise the staff at Hollywood Primary School of any known intimate care needs relating to their child. Staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents.

### **B. Principles of Intimate Care**

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

## **C. School Responsibilities**

All members of staff working with children are vetted by the Education Authority. This includes students on work placement and volunteers. Vetting includes criminal record checks and two references.

All staff must be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the Intimate Care Policy and guidelines within the context of their work.

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.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

A member of staff will only enter the pupils' toilet area for a reason regarding safety, well-being or discipline.

## **D. Good Practice**

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. This policy is designed to safeguard children and staff and applies to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care must be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

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

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

Members of staff will encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her 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 or parent 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 great comfort or safety for a child.

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

As child can have multiple carers 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 when they understand and feel competent with the procedures. If in doubt, 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.

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. 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.

## **E. 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 boys and girls 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 and a written record completed;
- parents must be informed about any concerns.

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

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

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

A meeting is arranged between parents and members of staff to discuss the detail of Intimate Care required. 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 least every six months.

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 )

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

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 and need to have their clothes changed. To fail to do these things for a young child would be negligent.

In order to safeguard the child and protect, the following code of conduct will be adhered to 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 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.
- 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 to request that they are changed by a parent or another adult who has the parents' consent to clean and change the child
- In all toileting accidents, the child's parent/s will be informed by the class teacher, the classroom assistant or school secretary. We will keep a written record of the incident(s) on our 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).
- The Building Supervisor and Cleaners will only enter the toilet areas after first making sure that no pupils are present.

If a parent or carer has concerns about a child or questions about a situation in school, they should contact their child's class teacher who will deal with the concern or query promptly.

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

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

It is important to note that in addition to the information in the Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to the Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies

The Intimate Care policy is based on the guidelines from the publication Regional Area Child Protection Committees' Child Protection Procedures – April 2005.

### **Covid-19 Addendum –Intimate Care Policy September 2020**

Following the DE Re-opening Schools revised Guidelines in August 2020 the following amendments to the existing Intimate Care Policy will be followed.

1. Any member of staff engaging in intimate care with some pupils must wear PPE provided.
2. If a member of staff has been identified as vulnerable and instructed to not provide personal/intimate care as a result of their risk assessment, they must not engage in an activity that would pose a threat.
3. If a second member of staff is required to assist, they must adhere to social distancing guidelines.
4. Soiled clothes should be double bagged and kept in a safe area at least 2m away from staff and pupils.

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

Hollywood Primary School will review, evaluate and update this policy in 2023 or before if necessary.



**HOLLYWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**Permission for Intimate Care**

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>CHILD'S NAME</b>	
<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	
<b>ADDRESS</b>	
<b>NAME OF PARENTS(S) / GUARDIAN(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** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Signature of member (s) of staff** \_\_\_\_\_







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