

## **Tullygally Primary School & Nursery Unit**



### **Intimate Care Policy**



**April 2026**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In line with our school ethos, we aim to provide a happy, caring and safe learning environment. Our Intimate Care Policy and guidelines regarding children have been developed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Tullygally Nursery Unit has two full- time classes with 26 children in each class between 2 and 4 years old. Children with statements of special educational needs may be admitted in addition to these numbers. While it is expected that children will be toilet trained by their starting time, there will be occasions when they will need additional assistance with their intimate care needs.

This policy is written in line with Guidance from Southern Area Child Protection Committee on Disabled Children and its Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children, The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, SELB Child Protection Policy, The School's Pastoral Care Policy and Child Protection Policy and The Human Rights Act.

## **DEFINITION OF INTIMATE CARE**

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child. Intimate care may involve washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up after a child has soiled him/herself), that most children can carry out for themselves, but with which some are unable to do due to physical disability, special educational needs associated with learning difficulties, medical needs or needs arising from the child's stage of development. Parents have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their child, and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents.

Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral care
- Washing
- Dressing/undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual Care
- Photographs
- Treatments such as enemas, suppositories, enteral feeds
- Catheter and stoma care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children will have a high awareness of child protection issues. All staff provide intimate care to children as required and all staff have completed child protection training, will be vetted through Access NI and have read the Child Protection Policy. Staff at Tullygally nursery will work in partnership with Parents/Guardians to provide continuity of care to children wherever possible.

Our Nursery is committed to ensuring that staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional and consistent manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

## **PRINCIPLES OF INTIMATE CARE**

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are based:

- Every child has the right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

## **GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE**

At Tullygally Nursery Unit, we expect that the majority of children will be independent at using the toilet and changing themselves and this independence will be encouraged at all times. However, we accept that there may be times when children will need adult support with changing and intimate care. Intimate Care arrangements will be agreed by the school, Parents / Guardian and child. Before their child starts school Parents/ Guardians will be provided with a copy of the Intimate Care Policy, and will be asked to sign to say that they have, read, understood and agree with this policy as well as to give written consent for staff to change their child in the event of a toileting accident or other event which would require their child to be cleaned / changed. Parents /Guardians have a responsibility to advise staff of the personal needs of their child and to provide a full change of clothes (non uniform) to be kept in the nursery cloakroom. The needs and wishes of children and Parents will be carefully considered alongside any restraints e.g. staffing and equal opportunities legislation. If a Parent / Guardian does not agree they will be contacted in the event of a toileting / other accident and asked to change the child's clothes/ take them home as appropriate. If for some reason the parent / Guardian cannot be contacted staff will then change the child in line with their duty of care. Parents/Guardians will be involved with their child's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis; a clear account of the agreed arrangements will be signed by Parents/Guardians and kept on record by staff.

Staff who provide intimate care are fully aware of best practice. They will read the Intimate Care along with the Child Protection and other nursery policies in August before children start school and will regularly reread it. There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication and between members of staff. The child is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it. As a basic principle, children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can. Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. Agreements between the school, those with parental responsibility and the child concerned should be documented and easily understood. The child's views must also be actively sought and, in particular, any discomfort with the arrangements addressed.

Each child's right to privacy, safety and dignity will be respected at all times. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many adults might need to be present when a child needs help with intimate care. Where possible one child will be cared for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for

having two adults present. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented. At all times another member of staff will be present in the room and aware of the level of care being provided. Where possible the child will be changed in the toilet area of the nursery class. If the toileting issue happens at a time when there is not an appropriate level of staffing available to ensure the protection of the child and member of staff (e.g. when the class is in P.E etc.) another member of staff will be sought from the other nursery class to be present. If this is not possible due to staffing levels and the risk to the safety of other children, the child may be brought to the other nursery changing area as a last resort.

All staff working with children will be vetted through the Access NI checks- if the checks are not completed by their starting date, then the member of staff will be supervised at all times by another member of staff and will not carry out the changing of children until this is in place.

Wherever possible, there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, while at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

Management will ensure that all staff undertaking the Intimate Care of children are familiar with and understand the Intimate Care Policy and guidelines.

## **THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

Education Child Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures will be accessible to staff and adhered to. Where appropriate, all children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their development and understanding.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc she/he will immediately report concerns to the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection-in nursery this is Miss Redpath. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection in the Primary School is Mrs Black. The Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection in the Primary School are Mrs Logan-Hall, Mr Price and Mrs Devlin. The Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection in Specialist Provision is Mrs Haughian. A clear record of the concern will be completed using the Child Protection Incident Report form and referred to social care and/or police if necessary. Parents will be asked for their consent or informed that a referral is necessary prior to it being made unless doing so is likely to place the child at greater risk or harm.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/Guardians will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue is resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed and relevant policies applied.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Staff who work with young children who have special needs will realise that the issue of intimate care is a difficult one and will require staff to be respectful of children's needs.

Children with special needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty must be considered

with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, those with parental responsibility and the organization should be easily understood and recorded.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of the child. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

All staff engaged in the care and education of children and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact.

The expectation is that staff will work in "limited touch" cultures and that when physical contact is made with pupils this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the child, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny.

Extra caution may be required where a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and leave staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse.

### **PROVIDING COMFORT/ SUPPORT**

Children may seek physical comfort from staff. Where children require physical support, staff need to be aware that physical contact is to be kept to a minimum and be child initiated. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff's hands should always be seen and a child should not be positioned close to a member of staff's body, which could be regarded as intimate.

If physical contact is deemed to be necessary, staff must provide care which is suitable to the age and gender and situation of the child. If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child is unacceptable.

### **EQUIPMENT PROVISION**

Parents of a child with special needs have a role to play when their child is still wearing nappies. A specific care plan will be discussed and agreed between Parents / Guardians and the school, and may be adapted and reviewed as the child's needs change.

Regardless of age and ability, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special needs should be actively sought in regular reviews of these arrangements. Hygiene

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and have access to protective, disposable gloves.

## **CHANGING FACILITIES**

When children need to be changed in nursery this procedure should not necessarily cause the school a great deal of extra expense. The dignity and privacy of the child should be of paramount concern. Children will be changed in the toilet area which has been made private by use of a screen or by closing over a toilet door but not locking it. Before starting to change a child, the adult involved will inform another member of staff who will be responsible for monitoring procedures.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Staff should always wear an apron, face mask, eye protection and gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled or when changing a soiled nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste.

Guidance to safeguard children and education staff with regard to situations which may lend themselves to allegations of abuse (physical contact, first aid, changing clothes).

## **PROTECTION FOR STAFF**

Members of staff need to have regard to the danger of allegations being made against them and take precautions to avoid this risk. These include:

- Gaining verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- Talk to the child about the care they are providing and ask them for consent
- Allow the child a choice in the sequence of care
- Be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions

## **MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

If it is necessary for a child to receive medicine during the school day, parents/ guardians must fill out a permission slip, and discuss their child's need with a member of staff before the school agrees to administer medicine. It must be made clear to parents/ guardians that any administration of medication by staff is voluntary.

Any member of staff giving medication to a pupil should check:

- The pupil's name
- Written instructions provided by the doctor
- The prescribed dose
- The expiry date

Particular attention should be paid to the safe storage, handling and disposal of medicines. The Principal has prime responsibility for the safe management of medicines kept at school. This duty derives from the Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 [COSHH- Control Of Substances Hazardous To Health ]. School staff are also responsible for making sure that anyone in school is safe. Medicines should generally be kept in a secure place, not accessible to pupils but arrangements must be in place to ensure that any emergency medication is readily available.

## **FIRST AID AND INTIMATE CARE**

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the main primary school and Nursery Unit First Aid Policies. Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other children are present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

## **CHANGING PROCEDURES IN TULLYGALLY NURSERY**

**All children should be toilet trained by their starting date. However, we do accept that children may have the occasional accident, be sick or get wet in the course of play. In the event of this happening we will-**

- Encourage children to come to an adult if they need changed
- Inform another adult in the room what we are doing and remain visible to that adult where possible- e.g. outside of the toilet cubicle.
- Adult will put on appropriate PPE- disposable gloves, disposable apron, disposable face mask and cleanable visor which will be disinfected after use. Each member of staff will have their own visor.
- Provide reassurance and encouragement at all times
- Help child get their change of clothes from their bag in the entrance hall
- Ensure child has privacy e.g. in toilet cubicle with door closed/screened area as appropriate
- Provide a plastic bag and help child put wet/soiled clothes in
- Talk child through process of changing clothes, if necessary, encouraging them to be as independent as possible. If a child is able to change and clean themselves then they should be encouraged to do so
- The adult will ensure that all waste materials including PPE are disposed of in a separate lidded bin.
- Provide a higher level of support if required, and at the same time make sure another adult is informed of what is going on. Where a child is unable to cope with changing, the adult will gain verbal consent from the child before helping them. They should explain to the child what they are doing through each part of the changing process. They will step in to help clean / change the child provided written consent from parent / Guardian has been provided. If a child has soiled, then a parent / Guardian may be contacted by the class teacher if appropriate- e.g. if they have had a very messy toileting accident and require extra cleaning or where diarrhea is suspected.
- Where consent from a parent / Guardian for staff to change their child has been refused then the parent / Guardian will be contacted to come and change / collect their child as appropriate. Staff will apply duty of care if parent/Guardian cannot be contacted and will change the child. Keep appropriate records.
- If a child becomes distressed and does not wish to be changed by a member of staff, we will reassure the child, contact the parent / Guardian and leave the child unchanged. Staff will apply duty of care if parent/Guardian cannot be contacted and will change the child, keeping appropriate records.
- Record all actions and pass on to Parents/Guardians in writing, keeping a record in nursery

**TULLYGALLY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT**

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                             |              |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Child's Name                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                             |              |
| Was changed today                                 | <b>Date:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                             | <b>Time:</b> |
| Reason for change<br>(Circle as appropriate)      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Soiled / Wetting accident</b></li> <li>• <b>Clothes wet / dirty through play</b></li> <li>• <b>Sickness</b></li> <li>• <b>Other- Please specify</b></li> </ul> <hr/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                             |              |
| Did Parent / Carer need to be contacted?          | <b>Yes / No</b><br><b>If yes, give reason</b><br><hr/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                             |              |
| Level of care required<br>(Circle as appropriate) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Able to change / clean themselves</b></li> <li align="center"><b>OR</b></li> <li>• <b>Needed help to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Clean themselves</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Remove wet / soiled pants, trousers, skirt, dress, shoes, socks, tights, t-shirt</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Put on clean pants, trousers, skirt dress, shoes, socks, tights, t-shirt.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Other</b> <hr/> |                             |              |
| Change of clothes needed?<br>Please list          | <b>Yes / No</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                             |              |
| Changed by:<br>Signature Key Worker               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Supervised by:<br>Signature |              |

Reviewed April 2026 N Redpath (in consultation with nursery staff and SLT)