



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR

LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

INTIMATE CARE POLICY AND ASSOCIATED APPENDICIES

Policy Area	Child Protection/ H&S
Version	2.0
Date	Created: April 2024 Reviewed: November 2025
Monitored	Every 3 years
Responsibility	Principal
Approval	Board of Management
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Limerick Community Special School Dromdarrig Mungret Co Limerick V94DN77	Roll Number: 20579B Phone Number: 0862014881 Email: lcss@lcetb.ie Website: limerickcss.ie
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1. Relationship to School's Mission Statement:

Limerick Community Special School is a co-educational, multi denominational special school which is underpinned by the core values of excellence in education, care, equality, community and respect.

In Limerick Community Special School, we are dedicated to helping each student to achieve their individual potential. The school policies are central to ensuring the provision of quality education in a holistic manner.

This policy applies to students who are unable to carry out a procedure in intimate personal areas because of physical difficulties or other additional needs. The policy also applies to supervision of students involved in intimate care.

This Intimate and Personal Care Policy has been developed by the management of Limerick Community Special School (LCSS) in consultation and collaboration with parents and staff to ensure that the needs and rights of students and staff are maintained and that the highest standards of best practice are always ensured around intimate and personal care assistance. The level of assistance required will reflect the needs of each individual student at any given time and flexibility as required to support needs as they present themselves.

The Board of Management of Limerick Community Special School is committed to taking every precaution necessary to protect students and staff from any form of abuse and harm. This policy is in accordance with the ethos and value of our Patron Body, LCETB (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board) and is in accordance with Child Safeguarding Procedures and DES Guidelines.

Limerick CSS (Child Safeguarding Statement) is conscious of the increased vulnerability of our students due to their additional needs. This may be due to:

Limited communication skills

Limited sense of danger

Need for intimate care such as washing and toileting

Reliance on adults for many of their needs

Limited understanding of sexuality or sexual behaviour

Limited understanding of keeping themselves private in social settings.

2. Aims:

- To ensure that the dignity, privacy and care of the student involved is paramount.
- To deliver high quality care and support to students in a personalised manner.
- To ensure collaboration with Parents is at the centre of planning for intimate care needs.
- To develop a framework of procedures whereby intimate care requirements are dealt with in an appropriate and dignified manner.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of the students in Limerick Community Special School.
- To ensure that the care needs of the students are being met.
- To ensure that all staff responsible for the intimate care of students will always undertake their duties in a professional manner as it is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust.
- To ensure that a child who requires intimate care is provided with a positive experience and is not attended to in a way that causes pain or distress.

3. Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people carry out themselves, but some students are unable to do so because of physical difficulties or other special educational needs. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting, and dressing. Attending to a student when he/she is undressed or partially dressed,

washing (including intimate parts), helping to use the toilet, changing nappies/pull-ups or carrying out a procedure that requires direct or indirect contact with an intimate area of a student. The supervision of students while they are dressing or undressing will also be considered as intimate care.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The following fundamental principles upon which the Policy is based pay due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):

- 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 considered.
- Every child has the right to have a level of intimate care that is appropriate and consistent.

4.1 Board of Management:

The Board of Management will ensure that this policy is cognisant of the Child Safeguarding Statement. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of students will always undertake their duties in a professional manner. The Board of Management acknowledges that these adults are in a position of great trust.

4.2 Principal:

It is the responsibility of the Principal to safeguard and promote the safety and welfare of the students in Limerick Community Special School and in particular reference to this policy, those students' who require intimate care.

The Principal has delegated to the Classroom Teacher(s) to contact parents/guardians and other relevant professionals to discuss the intimate care needs of the children and be involved in devising a care plan. The classroom team (SNA Team) under the directions of the Classroom Teacher will provide for intimate care needs. The Principal will ensure appropriate and safe accommodation is provided for students who require intimate care. Appropriate training has been and will continue to be sourced by the Principal for staff involved in providing intimate care. The Principal will act as the Designated Liaison person in the event of any reports received relating to Child Protection.

4.3 Staff

Staff at Limerick CSS are expected to familiarise themselves with the Intimate Care Policy and be aware of the standards of expected practice.

All staff involved in supporting children with intimate care needs, will work in close partnership with parents/guardians and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care. Information on intimate care of individual students will be treated as confidential.

Where possible, events requiring intimate care assistance will be identified in advance. Should an emergency arise where assistance is required and/or where surroundings are less than ideal, the principles of privacy and dignity will be respected.

Levels of staffing for the provision of intimate and personal care assistance will be organised based on the individual needs of the students in each classroom. Flexibility in staffing levels is allowed for and agreed in care plan between Class Teacher, SNA Team and Parents to respond to student's intimate care needs.

Staffing levels should be reviewed with the relevant staff during the school year as required.

4.4 Parents/Guardians

All Parents/Guardians will have access to the Intimate Care Policy on the school website or by contacting the school office.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to collaborate with the Class Teacher to ensure the intimate needs of the students are communicated to staff. Parents/guardians are required to complete Appendix 1 of this policy at the beginning of each school year.

Parents/Guardians will complete and sign the school outline of care needs form and give consent to form the care plan (Appendices 1 & 2).

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to supply the school with resources to carry out toileting and intimate care needs of their child.

Resources may include, but are not limited to:

- Nappies/Pull-ups
- Wipes
- Creams
- Body Wash
- Towels
- Nappy Sacks
- Sanitary Towels

- Spare Underwear
- Spare Clothes
- Gloves

5. *LCSS Guidelines for Intimate Care:*

To ensure the dignity of the student and to ensure safeguarding measures are implemented it is recognised by the Board of Management of Limerick Community Special School that the following procedures are to be used to promote good practice when providing intimate care needs.

1. Students who require regular assistance with intimate care, the school will create a care plan devised by the Classroom teacher with input from SNA team parents/guardians and any other professionals actively involved.. The plan should be reviewed as necessary, but at least annually, and at any time of change of circumstances, e.g. for trips or staff changes (where the staff member would like more information on providing intimate care). They should also consider procedures for educational visits/day trips. Other items to be included in the care plan are:

- Specific Intimate Care Needs
- Level of staff required and when flexibility around staffing level may be needed
- Additional equipment required
- Students' preferred means of communication to include agreed terminology for body parts and bodily functions.
- Students' cognitive ability and understanding
- Cultural and/or religious sensitivities
- Signature of class teacher
- Signature of parent/guardian
- Signature of Principal
- Date of Care Plan

2. Where a care plan is not in place, parents/guardians will be informed the same day by the Principal or the Deputy Principal or Class Teacher if their child needed help with meeting intimate care needs (e.g. has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled him/herself). A record of this will be kept in the home school diary. Where children may require ongoing support for their intimate care needs such as toileting, parents/guardians will be asked to sign a consent form at the beginning of the school year and a care plan will be formed.

- Staff involved with intimate care need to be vigilant to any issues that may require referrals to external agencies such as CDNT/HSE. In these circumstances accurate records should be kept. It should be noted that referrals are to be made by the Principal.
- All students will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each individual student to do as much for his/herself as possible. Care will be done with the student, and the focus of the staff will be fostering independence and agency of the student.
- Staff who provide intimate care should be made aware of best practice regarding infection control, including the requirement to wear disposable gloves and aprons where appropriate. The school refers staff and parents to the Health Service Executive(HSE) guidelines on the Management of Infectious Disease in Schools.
- There must be careful communication with each student who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc) to discuss their needs and preferences. Where the student is of an appropriate age and level of understanding, permission should be sought before starting an intimate care procedure. Staff who provide intimate care should speak to the student personally by name, explain what they are doing and communicate with all children in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner. Care needs are met with the student not to the student. Every student's right to privacy and modesty will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each student's situation to determine who and how many staff might need to be present when s/he needs help with intimate care. Wherever possible, the student's wishes and feelings should be sought and considered.
- Adults who assist students with intimate care must be employees of Limerick and Clare ETB, not students or volunteers.
- All staff should be aware of confidentiality. Sensitive information will be shared only with those who need to know.

- All waste should be double bagged and disposed of in designated nappy bins. A company is procured to empty these bins.
- Under no circumstances will a member of staff use a mobile phone, similar device whilst providing intimate care. A phone call for extra support needed will only occur in an emergency situation. In no circumstances will a camera/video/recording app be used in the bathrooms.
- Staff will change or toilet students, one at a time. Ensure supplies of fresh clothes are to hand so that the student is not left unattended while items are found.
- 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 student to assist another student with his/ her intimate care needs.
- A staff member will never close over or lock themselves in a cubicle with a student. Where a staff member accompanies a student to the toilet the staff member should make it clear to another member of staff that they are accompanying that student to the toilet.

5.1 Toileting Training

As children learn to use the toilet at different stages, the school's approach to toilet training will be parent and professional (Nurse, OT, MDT Team) led and individual to each student. Parents must provide additional changes of clothes when a child is being toilet trained and for any child prone to accidents. Toilet training needs to be the family's main goal and the family are committed to the process. Toilet training works best when family and school work together. Parents must commence the toilet training process at home first.

5.2 Medical Supports around Toileting

Students who have additional needs may require assistance with invasive or non-invasive medical supports for intimate care needs. Where medical supports are required during intimate care needs:

A procedure will be discussed with parents/guardians, this will be documented in the care plan and will only be carried out by staff who have been trained to do so.

It is particularly important that these staff should follow appropriate infection control guidelines and ensure that any medical items are disposed of correctly.

5.3 Child Protection

The Board of Management and staff of Limerick Community Special School recognise that students with Moderate General Learning Disabilities are particularly vulnerable to all types of abuse. Therefore, the school's child protection procedures will be strictly adhered to.

From a child protection perspective, it is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching private parts of a student's body. In Limerick Community Special School best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those who are involved in intimate care and others in the vicinity) will be encouraged to always be vigilant, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.

Where appropriate, students will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a student's presentation, e.g. unexplained marks, bruises, etc s/he will immediately report concerns to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection. From here the Child Protection Procedures will be followed.

If a student becomes unusually distressed or very unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, this should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection. The matter will be investigated at an appropriate level and outcomes recorded. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue/s is/are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a student, or any other person, makes an allegation against an adult working at the school this should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection. From here the Child Protection Procedures will be followed.

Inappropriate sexualised behaviours

It may be more challenging for students with a Moderate General Learning Disability to learn when it is appropriate to touch private body parts. As part of normal development, interest in one's own body and other people's bodies may be evident. If a student shows signs of becoming sexually aroused during an intimate care procedure, staff must report this matter to class teacher. In such a case, individual guidelines will be drawn up by the relevant personnel. Physical contact will not be undertaken while someone is sexually aroused.

6. Alternative Therapeutic Interventions:

Limerick Community Special School also recognises that students with additional needs may require therapeutic interventions that could lend themselves to intimate care.

6.1 Physiotherapy

If students require physiotherapy whilst at school, the programme needs to be agreed with parents/guardians. School staff should only undertake physiotherapy techniques/programmes with students under the advice and guidance of the physiotherapist.

Under no circumstances should school staff devise and carry out their own exercises or physiotherapy programmes.

Any concerns about the regime or any failure in equipment should be reported to the physiotherapist.

6.2 Occupational Therapy

If students require occupational therapy whilst at school, the programme needs to be specified by the Occupational therapist and consent must be given by the parents/guardians/ for the programme to be delivered during school time. School staff should only undertake occupational therapy techniques/programmes with students under the advice and guidance of the occupational therapist.

Under no circumstances should school staff devise and carry out their own exercises or occupational therapy programmes.

Any concerns about the regime should be discussed with the occupational therapist.

6.3 Massage

Massage is now commonly used with students who have complex needs and/or medical needs to develop sensory awareness, tolerance to touch and as a means of relaxation.

It is recommended that massage undertaken by school staff should be confined to parts of the body such as the hands, shoulders, feet and face to safeguard the interest of both adults and students.

7. Link to other policies

The Intimate Care Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies of the school e.g., Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection Policy, etc.

8. Timeframe for Implementation

This Policy will commence in November 2025.

9. Timeframe for Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. Early review will be undertaken if feedback indicates that any aspect of the policy requires revising.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on
(date)

Signed:



Mr Michael MacCurtain, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:



Ms Deirdre Bourke, Principal

Next review date: November 2028

Reference Document:

Guidance for Designated Centres: Intimate Care (GDE4), Health Information and Quality Authority

Appendix 1: Parent /Guardian Outline of Care Needs

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please outline your child's care needs in respect of the following whether they need assistance or supervision with each

<u>Task</u>	<u>Assistance v</u>	<u>Supervision v</u>
Dressing/undressing		
Toileting		
Menstrual		

Please outline the steps required to support your child in these areas:

Dressing/Undressing:
Toileting:
Menstrual Care:
Any other things to note:

I will attend a meeting/hold a phone call to create a care plan for my child
_____ to be provided Intimate Care and Personal Care support
in line with school policy as needed during the school day.

Signature: Parent/Guardian.....

Date.....

Appendix 2: Personal Intimate Care Form and consent

Student's Name:	
Date of Care Needs Meeting:	
People Present:	
Level of Ability:	
Additional Equipment Needed:	
Means of communication:	

1. Review of outline of care needs by parents	
2. How independent is he/she regarding these needs?	

<p>3. For each care need, breakdown of steps of support required</p>	<p>Dressing/Undressing:</p> <p>Toileting:</p> <p>Menstrual Care:</p>
<p>4. Outline any likes or dislikes when your child is helped with intimate care</p>	
<p>5. Is there any further information the school needs to know about? e.g.: Cultural and/or religious sensitivities</p>	

