



**Glenabbey Safeguarding
Intimate Care Policy**

Reviewed June 2023

Due to be reviewed Sept 24

INTRODUCTION

Intimate Care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, carer and child. (9.26 ACPC Regional Policy Procedures)

Intimate care is any care which involves the following:

- Assisting a child to change his/her clothes
- Changing or washing a child who has soiled him/herself
- Assisting with toileting issues
- Supervising a child in intimate self-care
- Providing First Aid assistance
- Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child
- Feeding a child
- Providing oral care to a child
- Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.*

*In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure. (eg. The administration of rectal diazepam) Parents have the responsibility to advise the church of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

PRINCIPLES OF INTIMATE CARE

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- Every child has a 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;
- All children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- All children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views taken into account; and
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children/young people and staff/volunteers. They apply to every volunteer/staff member involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with Special Educational Needs can be especially vulnerable. Volunteers involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Volunteers also need to be 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. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and volunteers.

- Involve the child in the intimate care. Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and where possible, give choices. Check your practice by asking the child or parent about any preference while carrying out the intimate care.
- Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation. Care should not be carried out by a volunteer working alone with a child.
- Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent. As a child may have multiple volunteers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.
- Be aware of your own limitations. Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by volunteers who have been formally trained and assessed. (e.g. First Aid)
- Promote 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 you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Your attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.

- If you have any concerns, you must report them. If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Representative.

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 Safeguarding Representative. Report and record any unusual emotion or behavioural response by the child.

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 volunteers in Creche/Bible Tots/Little Adventurers and Jr LTA mean that assistance will more often be given by a woman. The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a volunteer 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 the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance;
- Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Representative and make a written record;
- Parents must be informed about any concerns.

COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

It is the responsibility of all volunteers/staff caring for a child 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:

- 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; and
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

Nappy Changing – Creche/Bible Tots/SEN

- Only persons vetted by Glenabbey Church and who are access NI checked can change a baby's nappy.
- Only those persons who are familiar with the Intimate Care Policy and other Safeguarding Policies are involved in the intimate care of children.
- Consent for changing nappies should be sought either written or verbally from parents.
- (where appropriate) a volunteer will signal their intention to change a child's nappy or assist with intimate care and ask for the child's consent and respect the right to withdraw it.
- (where appropriate) the volunteer will speak to the child personally by name so that they are aware of being the focus of the activity and are able to feel safe and secure.
- (Where appropriate) The volunteer will give an explanation of what is happening in a straightforward and reassuring way, this will enable the child to be prepared for and to anticipate events. This will also support their understanding of the toileting procedure.
- Volunteers, where possible, will encourage the child to wipe private parts of the body themselves during intimate care, to encourage dignity and independence.
- Cameras/mobile phones should not be taken in to the creche area or changing area.
- Volunteers will only change children when there is another volunteer in the room.
- We will provide facilities that provide privacy and modesty
- Records will be kept of any nappy changes and intimate care tasks including dates, times and names.

Toileting Children

- Where children are independent, they should be encouraged to independently go to the toilet.
- Only persons vetted by Glenabbey Church and who are access NI checked can take a child to the toilet.
- Only those persons who are familiar with the Intimate Care Policy and other Safeguarding Policies are involved in the intimate care of children.
- Volunteers will encourage the children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required this will be given.

- Volunteers will ensure that they will have another member of the team in [ES1] attendance with them when toileting children
- Volunteers, where possible, will encourage the child to wipe private parts of the body themselves during intimate care, to encourage dignity and independence.
- Cameras/mobile phones should not be taken in to the toileting areas.

CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

- Ensure that the action you are taking is necessary. Get verbal agreement to proceed- CARE – CONCERN – COMMUNICATE.

Pastoral Care Procedures

- Ensure the child is happy with who is changing him/her
- Be responsive to any distress shown.

Basic Hygiene Routines

- Always wear protective disposable gloves
- Seal any soiled nappies in a bag and dispose of in the appropriate area
- Seal any soiled clothes in a plastic bag for return to parents.

PROVIDING COMFORT OR SUPPORT TO A CHILD

There are situations and circumstances where children seek physical comfort. Where this happens, volunteers need to be aware that any physical contact must be kept to a minimum. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, volunteers must ensure that at no time can the act be considered intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, volunteers must provide care which is appropriate to the age and context.

RESIDENTIAL TRIPS – CAMP

Residential trips away are an important part of our church life. Particular care is required when supervising children and young people in this setting.

Although more informal relationships tend to be usual on trips away, our volunteers are still guided by our Safeguarding procedures. Some specific intimate care issues may arise in a Residential context.

Showering

Children/young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

This means volunteers should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless it is required, avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another volunteer is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore volunteers need to be vigilant about their own conduct, e.g., adults must not change or shower in the same place as children.

It is the best practice that when an incident has taken place that has necessitated a volunteer to be present when children are changing that an incident report is made.

Night Time Routines

It is established practice that the children's bedrooms are private spaces and anyone else wanting to enter the room should knock and announce their intention to enter.

At bedtime, children/young people should be given a set amount of time to change and prepare for bed and should be told when the supervising volunteers will visit the rooms to check that all is okay and switch off the lights. A reciprocal arrangement should be followed in the mornings.

There are occasions when incidents take place during the night and the need arises to:

- Assist a child in changing his/her clothes
- Change a child who has soiled him/herself
- Provide comfort to an upset or distressed child
- Assist a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Guidance as above will be followed with the support of an additional volunteer in attendance.

All volunteers over 18 working with children/young people/vulnerable adults are vetted by Access NI when volunteering within a regulated activity.

Only those volunteers who are familiar with the intimate care policy and Safeguarding policies are involved with the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between church and parents and when appropriate and possible, by the child. Consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in a locked filing cabinet/Churchsuite database. Only in an emergency would volunteers undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed upon by the parents and church. Parents would then be contacted immediately. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.

If a volunteer has concerns about another volunteer/church staff's intimate care practice he/she must report this to the Designate Safeguarding Representative.

RECORD OF INTIMATE CARE



Name of Child:	Date and time:	Comments:	Volunteer involved:	Signature: