Thornleigh Educate Together National School

Intimate Care Policy

October 2025

Applewood Village, Swords, Co. Dublin
Roll Number: 20302E

Introduction
This policy was formulated by the staff of Thornleigh Educate Together National School in conjunction with parents and the Board of Management. The ethos of the school and respect for the needs and dignity of the school's pupils are central to this policy.

Intimate Care is defined as "care tasks associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the sexual parts of the body". (HIQA 2013) In addition to this, intimate care may also include tasks such as: help with feeding, oral care and hair care.

This policy is designed to ensure that all children attending the school, their families and school staff feel that pupils are treated with respect and that their right to privacy and dignity is upheld and actively promoted, while also ensuring that staff feel supported and safe while working with pupils. This is particularly important when dealing with the issue of Intimate Care needs.

Guiding Principles
At Thornleigh Educate Together NS, the following Principles guide all Intimate Care Procedures:

- It is essential that every pupil with an additional need is treated as an individual when intimate care is being provided and that appropriate time is taken for intimate care.
- It should enhance the quality of life of the individual receiving care and should be provided as gently and sensitively as possible, while respecting their privacy and dignity at all times.

Thornleigh Educate Together NS will adhere to the basic principles which should be borne in mind when providing intimate care: (taken from HIQA Guidance 2013)

1. Individuals should give their consent prior to the provision of intimate care
2. Individuals have a right to feel safe and secure.
3. All individuals have the right to personal privacy.
4. All individuals receiving intimate care should be respected and valued as individuals. Individuals should be listened to and their views taken into account. They should be treated courteously at all times and know who is looking after them.
5. Individuals have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and a professional approach from staff when meeting their needs.
6. Individuals have the right to information and support to enable them to make appropriate choices.
7. All individuals have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
8. Individuals have the right to be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture or beliefs.
9. All individuals have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
10. Individuals have the right to know how to complain and have their complaint dealt with.
11. An individual's personal care plan should be designed to lead to independence. Intimate care may involve touching intimate parts of an individual's body and may leave staff vulnerable to accusations of abuse. It is unrealistic to eliminate all risk but this vulnerability places an important responsibility on staff to act in accordance with agreed policies and procedures which protects all parties involved.

Good Practice Procedures

- Establishing effective working relationships with families, parents and carers is a key task to ensure each individual's needs are properly identified, understood and met.
- Plans for the provision of intimate care will be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of expectations, roles and responsibilities. These plans are recorded using the template which can be found in appendix 2 of this document.
- Records will also reflect arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of intimate care plans.
- The procedure for dealing with concerns arising from the intimate care processes will be clearly stated and understood by all those involved.
- Monitoring of plans will take place at least annually or at times of significant change.
- Where possible, staff will work with individuals of the same sex in providing intimate care.
- Religious and cultural values will always be taken into account.
- Staff will demonstrate their respect for the dignity, modesty and privacy of all individuals through their general demeanour, through the manner in which they address and communicate with each individual, and through discretion when discussing the individual's medical condition or treatment needs. Staff understand that lapses are unacceptable.

Practical Procedures - Specific Toileting/Intimate Care Needs

- In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting / intimate care, a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school.
- Parents/Guardians, Class Teacher, a member of the in-school management team, SNA and if appropriate, the pupil, will attend.
- The specific care needs of the child, and how the school will meet them, will be clarified.
- Personnel involved in this care will be identified.
- Any possible training needs will be identified and training sought.
- Provision for occasions when usual staff are absent will be outlined. Any change of personnel will be discussed with the pupil, if appropriate. As far as practicable and possible staff will be known to the pupil.
- Two members of staff will be present in the same area when dealing with intimate care needs.
- Any changes will be discussed with parent/guardian and pupil and noted in writing to the pupil's file.
- As far as possible the pupil will be involved in identification of his/her personal requirements, wishes, changes etc. Independence is encouraged as much as possible.
- A written copy of the agreed procedures will be kept on the pupil's file.
- Parents will be notified of any changes from agreed procedures.
- At all times the dignity and privacy of the pupil will be paramount in addressing intimate care needs, staff will focus on the procedures and carry out procedures as efficiently and quickly as possible.
- Staff will wear protective equipment, including gloves and disposable aprons where required.

Practical Procedures - Toileting Accidents

- At the School Admissions Meetings, the school procedures will be outlined to parents and guardians.
- A supply of clean underwear, wipes, track- suit bottoms etc. provided by the families will be kept in the school.
- In the first instance the pupil will be offered fresh clothing and an opportunity to clean and change themselves.

- If, for any reason, the child is unable to clean or change themselves, staff will give required assistance.
- If staff must clean /change the child, two members of staff, familiar to the child will attend to him/her.
- Parents/guardians will be notified of these accidents.
- A record of the incident will be kept by the class teacher.

Record Keeping
A log (appendix 1) should be completed on each occasion where assistance with intimate care is required by a pupil. The document is to be retained by the class teacher and submitted to the office when the page is full, or at the end of each term. These logs are sensitive and should be stored confidentially, in line with the school's GDPR policy.

Success Criteria
Implementation of good practice where the dignity and safety of the pupil is of central importance and where staff feel secure in providing intimate care will determine the success of the Intimate Care Procedures.

Ratification, Review and Communication
This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2025. These procedures will be reviewed in 2029, or sooner if required.

This policy is available on the school website and shared drive.

Signed: _____	**Date:_____**
(Chairperson Board of Management)	
Signed:_____	**Date:_____**
(Principal)	

Appendix 1: Intimate Care Log

This log should be completed on each occasion where assistance with intimate care is required by a pupil. This document is to be retained by the class teacher and submitted to the office when the page is full, or at the end of each term.

Pupil Name:			
Date	Time	Staff Initials	Notes

Appendix 2: Intimate Care Plan

Name of Pupil	
Date of Care Plan Formation	
Can this pupil use the toilet independently?	
If yes, have parents provided a spare set of clothes in case of toileting accidents?	
If no, outline current toileting arrangements:	
Does the pupil require any specific toileting equipment or products? If so, have arrangements been made between the school and parents for their supply?	
Have parents been provided with a copy of the school's Intimate Care Policy, and have the procedures outlined in it been explained to them?	
Additional Comments:	

I confirm that I have discussed my child's intimate care needs with his/her class teacher and that I am aware of the procedures outlined in the school's Intimate Care Policy.
I will keep the school informed of any change in my child's intimate care needs.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Parent/Guardian