



# St Fergal's College

## Intimate Care Policy

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## **1. Policy Statement and Rationale**

St. Fergal's College is committed to ensuring that all students are treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity, in an environment that safeguards their wellbeing and promotes inclusion. We recognise that a small number of students may require assistance with personal and intimate care needs such as toileting, personal hygiene, changing of clothes, or menstrual care. This policy sets out the framework for the provision of such support in a safe, consistent, and respectful manner.

This policy ensures compliance with the following legislation and guidelines:

- Children First Act (2015)
- Child Protection Procedures for Schools (2025)
- Education Act (1998)
- Equal Status Acts (2000–2018)
- Data Protection Acts (2018–2023)
- Disability Act (2005)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004)
- Health and Safety at Work Act (2005)
- Department of Education Circulars on Child Protection and SEN

The policy is underpinned by the values of care, respect, inclusion, and integrity that guide all aspects of school life at St. Fergal's College and is informed by guidance from the Department of Education, the HSE, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), and the Laois Offaly ETB.

## **2. Scope and Definitions**

This policy applies to any member of staff who may be required to assist a student with intimate care, whether on a planned or emergency basis. It also applies to all students who may require assistance in this regard.

Intimate care is defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of a student that involves physical contact or close supervision. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Toileting and continence management
- Changing of clothes
- Menstrual care
- Washing, bathing, or showering
- Application of medical creams or personal hygiene assistance
- Dressing or undressing
- Assistance with medical or mobility aids related to hygiene

### **3. Guiding Principles**

The following principles underpin the implementation of this policy:

- The safety, welfare, and dignity of each student are paramount.
- Students are supported to develop independence and autonomy in personal care wherever possible.
- Consent from parents/guardians, and assent from the student, are obtained prior to any planned care.
- Two vetted staff members are present for all intimate care procedures to protect both student and staff.
- Staff follow infection prevention and control protocols, including the use of PPE.
- All actions are documented using the Individual Intimate Care Plan (IICP) and associated logs.
- Communication with families and professionals is open, respectful, and confidential.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Board of Management ratifies and reviews this policy, ensuring resources, training, and facilities are adequate.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal oversee implementation, designate staff, and approve all IICPs.
- The SENCo/ASD Coordinator coordinates IICPs, liaises with parents, external professionals, and ensures reviews.
- SNAs and teachers involved in intimate care follow procedures, maintain records, and immediately report any concerns.
- Parents/Guardians provide relevant medical and care information, supply necessary items, and consent to care plans.
- Students are encouraged to express their preferences and to develop independence where possible.
- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP manage all child protection concerns that arise.

### **5. Planning and the Individual Intimate Care Plan (IICP)**

An IICP will be developed for any student requiring ongoing support with intimate care. The plan is created collaboratively by the SENCo, relevant staff, parents/guardians, and where appropriate, the student. The plan includes:

- The specific tasks required
- Staff assigned to each task
- Location and facilities used
- Equipment and PPE required
- Communication preferences
- Procedures for emergencies or unexpected incidents

- Arrangements for school trips and extracurricular activities
- Review schedule and consent signatures

A consent form, signed by parents/guardians and staff, is appended to each plan. Plans are reviewed at least annually or as the student's needs change.

## 6. Procedures

Staff must ensure that procedures are carried out discreetly, respectfully, and safely. All care must take place in designated private areas with appropriate facilities. Procedures include the following steps:

1. Explain to the student what is happening and seek assent.
2. Ensure two vetted staff members are present.
3. Use gloves, aprons, and PPE as appropriate.
4. Dispose of waste safely and hygienically.
5. Clean any equipment and surfaces used.
6. Record the care provided in the care log.
7. Report any concerns or incidents to the DLP.

Where intimate care needs arise unexpectedly, staff should maintain the student's comfort, ensure safety, notify the Principal and parents/guardians, complete a record of the incident, and arrange an IICP if ongoing support is likely.

## 7. Communication and Student Voice

The views and preferences of the student are central to the care process. Staff must use age-appropriate language and communication methods, including Lámh, PECS, or visual supports where necessary. Students have the right to express a preference regarding the gender of the staff involved and to indicate consent or discomfort.

## 8. Collaboration with External Agencies

St. Fergal's College recognises that effective support often involves collaboration with external professionals such as occupational therapists, public health nurses, physiotherapists, or NEPS psychologists. Advice from these professionals may inform IICPs, risk assessments, or staff training requirements.

## 9. Training, Equipment, and Facilities

All staff involved in intimate care will receive relevant induction and refresher training. Training may include manual handling, infection control, child protection, and medical care awareness. The school provides adequate equipment, including PPE, cleaning supplies, and changing facilities. Maintenance and hygiene standards are monitored regularly by the Principal or designated staff.

## **10. Health, Safety, and Risk Management**

Risk assessments are completed for all intimate care arrangements to ensure the safety of students and staff. Staff must follow procedures for infection prevention, proper lifting and moving techniques, and emergency response. Emergency procedures (e.g., illness, injury, or evacuation) are documented within each IICP.

## **11. Record Keeping and Data Protection**

Records of intimate care are maintained in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and GDPR. Access is restricted to authorised personnel only. All data will be securely stored, retained for the required duration, and disposed of confidentially.

## **12. Safeguarding and Child Protection**

All staff must remain alert to possible child protection concerns that may arise during intimate care. Any concerns, disclosures, or unusual observations (e.g., unexplained marks, behavioural changes) must be reported immediately to the DLP in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Schools (2025). Staff must never investigate but record and report objectively.

## **13. Complaints and Review**

Any concerns regarding the provision of intimate care should be addressed through the school's Complaints Policy. Parents and students are encouraged to raise issues promptly. The Principal, SENCo, and Board of Management will review the implementation of this policy annually, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the School Self-Evaluation process. Data outcomes, student feedback, and teacher input will inform revisions to ensure the initiative continues to be effective and engaging.

Reviewed by staff:	Date:
Reviewed by students:	Date:
Approved by BOM Chairperson:	Date:

## 14. Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Personal Care Checklist

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilities	Discussed	Action
Suitable toilet identified		
<b>Adaptions required:</b>		
Changing mat/table (easy clean surface)		
Grip Rails		
Step		
Easy operate locks at a suitable height		
Accessible locker/press with supplies		
Mirror at a suitable height		
Accessible taps		
Hot & Cold Water		
Disposal unit		
Moving and handling equipment		
Emergency help		

Supplies Provided by Parent/Guardian		
	Discussed	Action
Pads		
Catheters		
Wipes		

Spare Clothes		
Other (Specify)		

<b>Supplies Provided by School</b>		
	<b>Discussed</b>	<b>Action</b>
Toilet rolls		
Bin for Disposal		
Bowl/Bucket		
Wipes		
Antiseptic Handwash		
Paper Towels/Hand Dryer		
Disposal Gloves/Apron		
Disposal bags for the bin		

<b>Training and Communication</b>		
	<b>Discussed</b>	<b>Action</b>
Advice sought from Medical professionals, Manual Handling for staff		
Parental involvement in the plan		
Student involved in the plan		
Any Preference for gender of carer		
Specific training for staff in the personal care role		
Awareness raising for all staff		
PE staff		

## Appendix B

### Intimate Care Plan

Child's name	
Class	
D.O.B	
Medical diagnosis or condition	
Start Date	Review Date

Details of assistance required
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Facilities and equipment: (Clarify responsibility for provision of supplies e.g. parent/carer/school/other)
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Staffing:
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Arrangement for trips:
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Procedures for monitoring and complaints: (including notification of changing needs by any relevant party)
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<b>Current plan has been agreed by:</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Student		
	Parent		
	Parent		
	Staff		

## Appendix C

### Parental/Guardian Consent

I/We, the undersigned, understand the purpose and content of the St. Fergal's College Intimate Care Policy and the associated Individual Intimate Care Plan. I/We give consent for the staff members named above to assist my/our child with the agreed personal care tasks as necessary.

I/We understand that:

- All intimate care will be carried out respectfully and in line with the school's policy.
- I/We will be informed of any changes, incidents, or concerns that arise.
- This consent may be reviewed or withdrawn at any time by notifying the school in writing.

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### **Signatures**

<b>Print Parent/Guardian Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

<b>Print Parent/Guardian Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

<b>Print Student Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

<b>Print SENCO/ASD Teacher Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

### **Appendix D**

#### **Care Log**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Comment</b>

