

# THE SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH MOTOR IMPAIRMENTS



## Intimate Care of Children and Young People: Policy and Guidance

Revised: July 2025

Due for review: June 2028

# INTIMATE CARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – POLICY AND GUIDANCE

## 1. Introduction and Context

All children and young people attending Craighalbert may require intimate care from our staff due to their age and/ or their additional support needs.

Craighalbert's policy and guidance relating to intimate care identifies the parameters and procedures associated with such care, based on national guidance, accepted good practice and the practical experience of staff working with children and young people requiring intimate care and articulates the:

- Rights of the children/ young people receiving intimate care within the Centre;
- Principles which underpin our practices;
- Responsibilities of staff involved in the delivery of intimate care; and
- Procedures which will be followed to ensure a consistent approach in providing intimate care.

This policy is one of a package of policies relating to the care, safety and health and wellbeing of children and young people engaging with our programmes. It will be reviewed every 3 years or more frequently if required in order to take account of feedback, operational changes and changes in legislation.

## 2. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

This policy is underpinned by the UNCRC, in particular:

Article 2 – All children have equal access to their rights and be protected against discrimination;

Article 3 – When adults make decisions, they should think how they will affect children and do what is best for them;

Article 5 – Families should help children to know and use their rights;

Article 12 – When adults make decisions that affect children, they should ask them what they think and consider their views; children should be supported to give their views in a way that is best for them;

Article 16 – Children have the right to privacy;

Article 23 – Disabled children should be supported to reach their full potential in all areas of development;

Article 24 – Children have the right to the best health possible and to medical care and to information that will help them stay well;

Article 28 – Children have the right to an education;

Article 29 – Education should help a child develop their personality, talents and abilities; and

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Article 30 - Children have the right to use their own language, customs and religion.

## 3. Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children carry out for themselves but which some are unable to do due to physical disability, additional support needs associated with learning difficulties, medical needs and/or needs arising from a child's stage of development.

At Craighalbert, intimate care frequently involves procedures related to activities of daily living and personal hygiene including e.g:

- Administration of medicines/ oxygen;
- Application of topical creams;
- Changing wound dressings;
- Eating, drinking, and enteral feeding;
- Facilitation of learning/ therapeutic activities;
- Dental/ oral hygiene;
- Dressing/ undressing;
- Personal, toileting and menstruation hygiene;
- Removal of nasal and oral secretions; and
- Washing.

Intimate care may be undertaken throughout the Centre, e.g. in class/ therapy rooms, bathrooms, dining area and pool changing room, and in similar environments during trips out with the Centre.

## 4. Aims

The aims of this policy and associated guidance are:

- To safeguard the rights and wellbeing of children and young people;
- To ensure the dignity, privacy, choice and safety of each child/ young person;
- To ensure that children and young people are treated consistently when they experience intimate personal care;
- To provide guidance, training, supervision and reassurance to staff and to ensure safe practice in the provision of intimate care;
- To ensure that parents and carers are involved in planning the intimate care of their child and are confident that their preferences and the individual needs of their child are taken into account;

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- To ensure that each child or young person's choices are considered in the development of their individual Intimate Care Protocol; and
- To reassure parents and carers that staff are knowledgeable about intimate care.

### **5. Principles**

The policy and associated guidance are informed by a number of principles including:

- Promoting the wellbeing of individual children and young people;
- Keeping children and young people safe;
- Putting the child at the centre;
- Taking a whole child approach;
- Building on strengths and promoting resilience;
- Promoting opportunities and valuing diversity;
- Providing additional help which is appropriate, proportionate and timely;
- Working in partnership with families;
- Supporting informed choice;
- Respecting confidentiality and sharing information appropriately;
- Making the most of each employee's expertise; and
- Building a highly competent workforce to promote children and young people's wellbeing.

### **6. Establishing Best Practice in the Delivery of Intimate Care**

The provision of intimate care requires detailed planning and raises a number of practical and ethical issues, therefore Craighalbert will ensure that at all times a child/ young person's safety, dignity, privacy, personal (and where appropriate parental/ carer) choice and confidentiality will be guiding factors:

- Functional independence in intimate care will be encouraged;
- Each child/ young person will be enabled to care for themselves as far as possible;
- Planning for independence in carrying out aspects of intimate care will be integral to supporting each child/ young person's personal and social development;
- Outcomes and milestones may be identified to support the development of such life skills;
- Facilities and equipment appropriate to each child/ young person's age and individual needs will be provided;
- All staff will have an understanding of and take into account a child/ young person's personal and their family's cultural preferences;

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- Staff will be aware of and responsive to each child/ young person's reactions, including non-verbal communication, during intimate care procedures;
- Staff will work in a reassuring, supportive and focused manner with a child/ young person when providing intimate care; and
- Staff will use the opportunities that arise during intimate care to teach children/ young people about their bodies, development and changing intimate care needs, to promote personal safety skills and foster self-esteem.

### **7. Management Responsibilities**

Craighalbert's leadership team will:

- Ensure staff receive initial and ongoing training in good working practices associated with the provision of intimate care which comply with health and safety regulations and include hygiene procedures, moving and handling, awareness of medical conditions, first aid measures and child protection issues;
- Ensure new staff receive appropriate mentoring and other forms of assistance from colleagues to provide the children/ young people with the intimate care outlined in their individual protocols;
- Maintain a record of training undertaken by staff and ensure that refresher and update training is provided where required; and
- Provide all necessary facilities and equipment to ensure intimate care takes place in an appropriate, clean and hygienic environment which ensures safety and personal privacy.

### **8. Staff Responsibilities**

- a) Learning Care and Therapy Practitioners (LCTPs) and Lunchtime Support Assistants (LSAs) will be responsible for facilitating the intimate care of children/ young people including all aspects of personal hygiene, on a regular and ongoing basis.
- b) Teaching and therapy staff will not normally undertake personal hygiene care for children/ young people on a day-to-day basis, however all will be involved in supporting the development of a child/ young person's abilities within the context of intimate care in its wider sense to maximise agency and independence, therefore will work collaboratively with LCTPs and LSAs to facilitate intimate care.

All Craighalbert staff therefore have responsibilities and accountabilities related to the provision of intimate care, including:

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- Ensuring they are familiar with our Intimate Care of Children and Young People Policy and Guidance and all associated guidelines and procedures;
- Adherence to all health and safety and intimate care policies and procedures and associated guidelines and procedures, reporting any health and safety concerns to their line manager;
- Active engagement in education and training associated with any aspect of intimate care;
- Understanding and giving due cognisance to the rights and wellbeing of each child/ young person, with particular regard for their safety, dignity, privacy and choice;
- Giving due cognisance to and, wherever possible, acting upon individual concerns;
- Ensuring the child/young person (where appropriate) and parents/ carers are actively involved in the development of intimate care protocols;
- Liaising with parents/ carers and other appropriate services regarding the development and implementation of a child/young person's agreed individual intimate care protocol; and
- Liaising with other professionals regarding specific aspects of intimate care and ensuring their advice is included in the child/young person's individual intimate care protocol.

### c) Students

Craighalbert offers placements to students undertaking further/ university education in early learning, therapy and social care. The involvement of such students in the provision of aspects of intimate care will be at the discretion of their Craighalbert mentor/ practice educator, subject to:

- The focus of their training and future professional responsibilities;
- The nature and duration of their placement; and
- The identification of goals, agreed with their mentor/ practice educator, and opportunities to foster e.g. learning/ functional independence through the context of intimate care that will enhance a child's experiences and outcomes.

It is anticipated that all such students will undertake, with supervision, some aspects of the provision of intimate care, e.g. eating and drinking, facilitation of therapeutic/ learning activities, dressing/ undressing and washing. Some, with the prior agreement of the Centre Leadership Team, will also undertake, with supervision, personal and toileting hygiene and dental hygiene (early learning and childcare students) and the removal of nasal/ oral secretions (physiotherapy students).

Students will not administer medicines/ oxygen, apply topical creams, change wound dressings, provide enteral feeding or provide menstruation hygiene.

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### 9. Communication regarding Intimate Care

To ensure excellence it is vital that effective and appropriate communication is undertaken prior to and during the provision of intimate care.

#### a) Communication with parents/ carers

Permission from parents/ carers will be sought before any form of intimate care can be undertaken, i.e. during their child's admission to the Centre.

Personalised intimate care requirements will be identified in consultation with parents/ carers and reviewed regularly as part of our child's plan processes.

All staff working with a child/ young person must know that permission has been given and be familiar with any personalised intimate care requirements before undertaking any intimate care.

#### b) Communication with children/ young people

All aspects of intimate care will be undertaken in a manner that encourages and enables a child/ young person to participate as actively as possible, therefore staff will work in a reassuring, supportive and focused manner, taking into account each child/ young person's choices and preferences and using appropriate language and AAC at all times.

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## APPENDIX 1

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children carry out for themselves but which some are unable to do due to physical disability, additional support needs associated with learning difficulties, medical needs and/or needs arising from a child's stage of development.

At Craighalbert, intimate care frequently involves procedures related to activities of daily living and personal hygiene including e.g:

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- Facilitation of learning/ therapeutic activities;
- Dental/ oral hygiene;
- Dressing/ undressing;
- Personal, toileting and menstruation hygiene;
- Removal of nasal and oral secretions; and
- Washing.

Intimate care may be undertaken throughout the Centre, e.g. in class/ therapy rooms, bathrooms, dining area and pool changing room, and in similar environments during trips out with the Centre.

Please complete the consent form overleaf and return to a member of the administration team.

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## Permission for Craighalbert Staff to provide Intimate Care

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for Craighalbert to provide all appropriate intimate care to my child.

Additional comments:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_