

Muckamore Presbyterian Church

Intimate Care Policy

June 2026

Introduction

Muckamore Presbyterian Church is committed to ensuring that all leaders responsible for the intimate care of children will always undertake their duties in an appropriate manner. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain. Children's dignity will be preserved, and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Leaders that provide intimate care to children have a high awareness of safeguarding issues. Leaders will work in partnership with parents / guardians to provide continuity of care.

What does Intimate Care mean?

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure to intimate personal areas. It is the responsibility of all parents to advise church volunteers/staff of the intimate care needs of their child. The church members/volunteers, in turn, have a responsibility to work in partnership with the children and parents.

Intimate personal care tasks can include:

- Body bathing other than to face, arms, and legs below the knee.
- Toileting, wiping and care in the genital and anal areas.
- Assisting with dressing and undressing
- Supporting with the changing of sanitary protection.
- Providing comfort or support for an upset or distressed child.
- Assisting a child who is wet/soiled or has vomited.
- Assisting a child who requires medical care who is unable to help themselves.

Scope Of this Policy

This policy applies to all leaders connected with Muckamore Presbyterian Church who are undertaking personal care tasks with children but particularly to those who are in their early years. In addition to this there are other vulnerable groups of children and young people that may require support with personal care on either a short, longer term or permanent basis due to SEN and disability, medical needs or a temporary impairment. This could include:

- Children and young people with limbs in plaster.
- Children and young people needing wheelchair support.
- Children and young people with pervasive medical conditions.

Our Approach to Best Practice

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The child who requires care will be always treated with respect; the child's welfare and dignity are of paramount importance. Leaders who provide intimate care should be fully aware of best practice.

There is no legal requirement that two adults must be present, however, to completely secure against any risk of allegation, a second leader may be present where resources allow. Where the child is of an appropriate age and level of understanding permission should be sought before starting an intimate procedure.

Procedures in the event of a child requiring Intimate Care

(1) Supporting dressing/ undressing (due to wetting/ soiling/ illness)

- Adults should always encourage children to attempt undressing/ dressing unaided.
- Adults should always ensure they have notified another adult of what is taking place and, if possible, the other individual remains nearby.
- Always give the child the opportunity to change in private.
- If staff/volunteers are concerned in any way parents should be consulted or sent for and asked to assist their child.

(2) Providing Comfort or Support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff/volunteers.

- Where a child requires physical support, staff/volunteers need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum.
- When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the staff/volunteers must ensure that at no time the act can be considered intimate.
- If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff/volunteers must provide care which is suitable to the age, gender and the situation of the child.
- If a child touches a member of staff/volunteer in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way that communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable.
- If a child requires physical comfort from a member of staff/volunteer, this should always be done in the presence of others.

(3) Wetting and Soiling

- Please note that parents will be notified at the earliest opportunity if their child has a soiling incident. Volunteers will contact the parents/guardians giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child.
- If child refuses assistance at any stage and cannot or will not change themselves then a parent will be contacted. The child will be supervised, comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives. If a parent or emergency contact cannot attend, the church will seek the verbal consent from a parent for staff/volunteers to clean and change the child.
- A small supply of underwear will be kept on Church premises.
- If a child's underwear and clothing need to be changed due to a wetting or soiling incident, the child will be asked to change themselves in private and carry out the act themselves.

- If a child is unable to change their underwear perhaps due to soiling, the child will be asked if they would like help with this and two adult volunteers will be present to assist them with this.
- In all instances a record of the incident will be kept, and the parent will be informed by telephone or when collecting their child.
- Wet/soiled clothing will be put into a plastic bag and sent home with the child. The 'borrowed' clothing should be washed and sent back as soon as possible.
- When touching a child, staff/volunteers should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.

Medical Care/Intimate Care Plan

- Children requiring short term or long-term medical care, involving intimate care, will receive this care in line with the individual child's 'Care Plan'. The content of any 'Care Plan' will be discussed and agreed with the relevant medical body and parents/guardians beforehand.
- The needs and wishes of children and parents will be considered wherever possible.
- If it is necessary for appropriate adults to provide the level of medical care required, the individuals, if in agreement, will receive the appropriate training.
- Written permission must always be received from the person with parental responsibility before any medical procedure can be 'carried out' or any medication administered. The person administering the procedure/medication should, if appropriate, be trained.

In developing the plan, the following should be considered:

- Whole church implications
- The importance of working towards independence.
- Arrangements for collection, trips, activities being provided, etc.
- Ensure that there is enough stock of equipment if applicable.
- Who will substitute in the absence of the appointed person?

All plans will be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of expectation, roles and responsibilities.

Guidelines for Leaders/volunteers

If a child requires assistance involving intimate care, as previously outlined and list of contacts are unavailable, volunteers will ensure:

- Parents/guardians are informed as soon as possible. It is recommended practice that information on intimate care should be treated as confidential and communicated in person - telephone or by sealed letter. Every child's right to privacy will be respected.
- Another leader/volunteer is informed and/or involved about the action required.
- Protective gloves are worn (as appropriate).
- The child is consulted, and their wishes/feelings are always respected.
- They are aware of and responsive to the child's reactions.
- The child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible.

- All physical contact should be kept to a minimum when assisting a child. However, a leader/volunteer may be required to come into some level of physical contact to aid the child.
- Privacy is always given to the child.
- They complete a record of the incident on an intimate care form see Personal Care Log - Appendix 1.
- Children who require regular assistance with intimate care will have written care plans (see Appendix 2) agreed by church organisation leaders, parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians of children who attend the creche are required to complete and sign a consent form (see Appendix 3).
- Wherever possible the child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Procedures will be adhered to. All staff/volunteers working unsupervised with the children in Muckamore Presbyterian Church must obtain 'Access NI' clearance before beginning to work in the church. Children's rights to privacy will always be respected when dealing with matters of intimate care.

If any leader has concerns about physical appearance, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate Designated Person.

Further advice will be sought from the PCI Safeguarding Department if necessary. If a child makes an allegation against a member of the church, all necessary procedures will be followed.

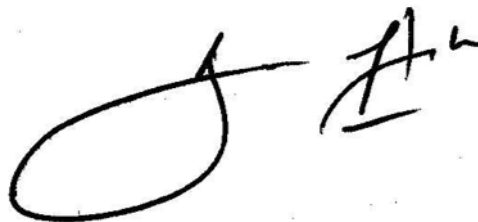
This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date of authorisation by Kirk Session

This policy was adopted by the Kirk Session at a meeting on _____Tuesday 16th June 2026_____



Signature: _____ (Moderator)



Signature: _____ (Clerk of Session)

Appendix 3

Muckamore Presbyterian Church

Intimate Care Policy

June 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian

As part of our duty to safeguard your child/children we have an Intimate Care Policy. This policy refers to any activity which may be required to meet the personal care needs of an individual child. Please read the policy.

This policy applies to assisting our youngest children. Parents/Guardians are asked to complete the consent form for the new academic year.

I _____ (parent/guardian) of

_____ (child) give permission

for any of the volunteers in the Church creche to aid my child in their intimate care as outlined in the policy.

I have read and understood the Intimate Care policy.

Signed: _____ (parent/guardian)

Date: _____