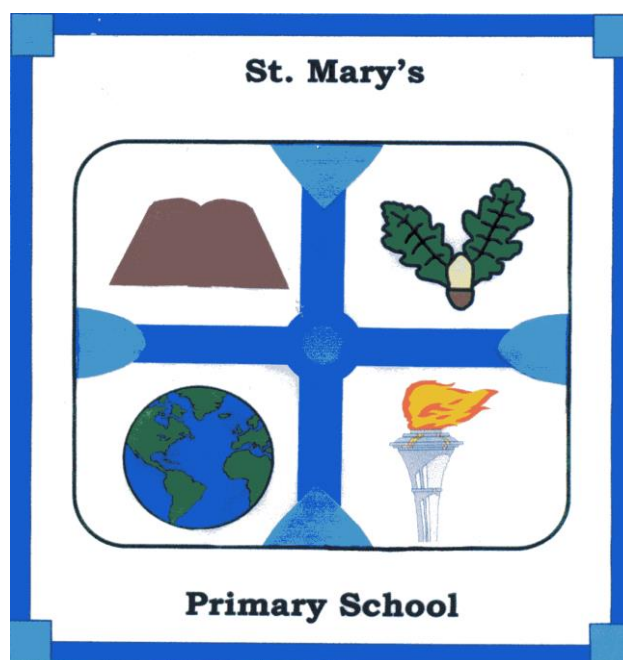


St. Mary's Primary School

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Intimate Care Policy

Signed: Mr Seamus Doyle
(Chair of Governors)

Date: 3rd September 2019

Next Review Date: Summer 2021

This policy represents the agreed principles for 'intimate care' throughout the school. This policy has been agreed by all staff and governors.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

- To safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of the children
- To ensure children are treated with sensitivity and respect, and in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one
- To safeguard adults required to operate in sensitive situations
- To raise awareness and provide a clear procedure for intimate care
- To inform parents how intimate care is administered
- To ensure parents are consulted in the intimate care of their children

Please note that in this policy the term 'parent' refers to the person with parental responsibility for the child.

Principles:

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position. Given the right approach, intimate care can provide the opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self-esteem. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young person's right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

Definition:

Intimate care is one of the following:

- Supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing
- Provide comfort or support for a distressed child
- Assisting a pupil requiring medical care, who is not able to carry out this unaided
- Assisting a pupil who is wet/soiled themselves or has vomited.

Supporting dressing/undressing

The school considers that helping a child with an outer layer of clothing (eg. A sweatshirt or coat) is not an intimate act and therefore acceptable. Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to help a child dressing or undressing (particularly in Foundation Stage) due to an accident, soiling themselves or due to a medical condition. Staff will always encourage children to attempt dressing and undressing unaided. If staff are concerned in any way parents will be sent for and asked to assist their child. Staff will always ensure that they have a colleague in attendance when supporting dressing and undressing and will always give the child the opportunity to change in private unless the child is in such distress that it is not possible to do so.

Providing comfort and support.

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Foundation Stage). Where children require physical support, staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff must ensure that at no time can the act be considered intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is suitable to the age, gender and situation of the child. If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable. If a child requires physical comfort from a member of staff, this should always be in the presence of another member of staff or adult.

Medical Care

Pupils requiring short term and long term medical care involving intimate care, will receive this care in line with the child's 'Care Plan'. The content of any 'Care Plan' will be discussed with the relevant medical body.

Parents as a first option will be asked to provide medical procedures that involve intimate care. If this is not possible, the school will seek the necessary advice from the Education Authority and/or the school nurse.

If it is possible for the staff to provide the level of medical care required, the staff member/s will receive the appropriate training. Written permission must be received from the person with parental responsibility before a medical procedure can be carried out.

Wetting or Soiling

Staff will use common sense when tending to a child who has wet or soiled themselves during the school day. If a child's underwear is changed due to a wetting or soiling incident the child will be asked to change their underwear in private and carry the act out themselves. A record of the incident will be kept in school and the parent will be informed. If a child has a medical condition which is likely to lead to wetting or soiling and subsequent staff intervention, the parents will be asked to sign a permission form so that staff can clean and change their child if necessary. If a parent does not give permission, the school will contact the parents or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. If the parents or emergency contact is able to come within a short time, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives. Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent to arrive, an adult will stay with them giving comfort and reassurance. The child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed. If a parent or emergency contact cannot attend, the school seeks to gain verbal consent from parents to clean and change the child. This permission will be sought on each occasion that the child wets or soils him or herself. If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be contacted, the Principal will be consulted.

When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings. If a child needs to be cleaned, staff will make sure that:

- Protective gloves are worn
- The procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process
- The child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible
- Physical contact is kept to a minimum when carrying out the necessary cleaning
- Privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation
- Wet/Soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child

Hygiene

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and must have access to protective, disposable gloves.

Protection for staff

Members of staff need to have regard to the danger of allegations being made against them and take precautions to avoid this risk. These should include:

- Gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- allow the child a choice in the sequence of care
- be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions

Safe guards for children

All staff and volunteers in St. Mary's Primary School must gain Access NI clearance before working in the school. Children's rights to privacy will always be respected when dealing with intimate care issues.

(Please return this slip to school)

I have read the Intimate Care policy. I give/do not give permission for the staff of St. Mary's Primary School to help my child _____ (child's name) change if the need arises.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____