



# **St. Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit, Killyclogher**

## **Intimate Care Policy**

Review of Policy	September 2024
Ratification of Policy by the Board of Governors	November 2024
Next Review Date	November 2027

The 'Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children' have been developed to safeguard children and staff in school and apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

## **DEFINITION**

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child. Parents have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their child and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents.

Intimate care can include:

- Toileting
- Feeding
- Oral Care
- Washing
- Dressing
- Changing soiled clothing
- Menstrual Care
- Photographs
- Treatments such as enemas, suppositories, enteral feeds
- Catheter and stoma care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

## **PRINCIPLES OF INTIMATE CARE**

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are based:

- Every child has the right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are consistent as possible.

## **OUR SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The school undertakes Vetting procedures as required, including:

- Access NI checks;
- Pre-employment checks;
- Two independent references.

The Principal ensures that all staff undertaking the intimate care of children are familiar with and understand the 'Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines' together with associated Policy and Procedure eg. ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures 2005, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. All staff fully understand the 'Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines' within the context of their work. Some staff in school undertake specific intimate care tasks for pupils with identified needs.

Intimate care arrangements are agreed by the school, parents/carers and child (if appropriate).

Staff do not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed between the school, parents/carers and child (if appropriate).

Intimate care arrangements are recorded in the child's personal file and consent forms signed by the parents/carers and child (if appropriate).

## **GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE**

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Staff are aware that some adults may use intimate care as an opportunity to abuse children. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

### **Involving the child in their intimate care**

The school tries to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his/her intimate care. Where the child is fully dependent, the staff talk with them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible.

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Depending on their maturity and level of stress, children may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc.

To ensure effective communication:

- Make eye contact at the child's level;
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary;
- Wait for response;
- Continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response; and
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

### **Treating every child with dignity and respect and ensuring privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation**

The practice of providing one-one intimate care of a child alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the child or the child prefers two persons to be present.

### **Making sure practice in intimate care is consistent**

As a child can have multiple carers, a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parent/carers/agencies ensures practice is consistent.

### **Being aware of own limitations**

The school will only carry out activities that staff understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. Some procedures must only be carried out by staff that have been formally trained and assessed.

### **Reporting concerns**

When administering intimate care, if a member of staff observes any unusual behaviour, markings, discolourations or swelling, this will be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Carole McAuley (Principal). A written record of concerns will be made and kept in the child's personal file. Parents/carers will be informed about concerns.

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER**

- The individual child's safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance.
- There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children.
- Ideally, every child should have the choice of carer for all their intimate care.

The intimate care of a pupil can be carried out by a member of staff with the following provisions:

- The delivery of intimate care will be governed by the school's professional Code of Conduct in conjunction with school policy and procedures.
- When intimate care is being carried out, **all** children have the right to dignity and privacy, i.e. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screens/curtains put in place.
- If a child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Staff will then try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance. Staff will also report concerns to the school's 'Designated Teacher for Child Protection' and make a written record. Parent/carers will be informed about concerns.

## **SUMMARY OF EMERGENCY ACTION WHERE CHILDREN REQUIRE INTIMATE CARE**

Should your child require emergency intimate care, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) Contact will be made with a parent to arrange for the parent to come to school.
- 2) If a parent cannot be contacted or cannot come to school promptly, two members of staff will undertake intimate care duties in line with the school's Policy and Guidelines. For a child who can independently change, staff will supervise this. For a child that requires help, this will be provided.

## **MENSTRUAL WELL-BEING AND PERIOD DIGNITY**

St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery, Killyclogher, is committed to supporting Period Dignity which is communicated to parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

### **Promotion of Period Dignity**

- Create a culture where periods are understood, accepted and normalised.
- Ensure the dignity and access to good quality, safe products to people who need them.
- Enable learners to achieve their potential by reducing any barriers they may experience due to periods, having a positive impact on pupil confidence, well-being and attendance.
- Reduce stigma/taboo in relation to periods by providing all pupils with relevant, age-appropriate information on periods.
- Enable learners to understand how to deal with period issues, hygiene and disposal of period products.

# Intimate Care Flowchart

