



Building
together
for our future.



Braidside Integrated Primary and Nursery School

Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines

Ms J McAuley
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School Vision Statement

We aim to work together to support each child in reaching their personal and academic potential within a culture of mutual respect.

Introduction

This Intimate Care Policy and guidelines have been developed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children. This policy forms part of the school's pastoral care policy.

Intimate Care may be defined as any activity required meeting 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:

- Oral care
- Washing
- Dressing/ undressing
- Toileting
- First aid and medical assistance
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are 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 intimate levels of care that are as consistent as possible.

School Responsibilities

All staff working with the children will have been vetted through AccessNI.

Only staff who are familiar with the Intimate Care Policy and related policies would undertake intimate care of the children.

Staff should ensure they are familiar with the related child protection policy.

Intimate care arrangements must be agreed by the parents, staff and child and appropriate consent forms should be signed and stored in the child's record file, both in Nursery and then again from Primary 1.

Only in an emergency staff would undertake intimate care procedures that have not been agreed by a parent. This would then be reported to the Principal, Designated Teacher and the parent at the earliest possible opportunity.

If a member of staff has any concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, they should report this to the Designated Teacher for Child protection, Ms McAuley or to the Deputy Designated Teacher, Mrs Bradley.

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 in the intimate care of children. Young children, and those on the SEN register, can be especially vulnerable. Staff who are involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs. Staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some care tasks can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

At Braidside IPS staff will:

1. *Involve the child in their intimate care*

Encouraging independence as far as possible, or where the child is fully dependent talking to them about what will happen and offering a choice where possible.

2. *Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.*

Intimate care should not be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child. In keeping with best practice, a second member of staff should be in the vicinity.

3. *Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.*

As a child can have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parents, carers and staff ensures best practice is consistent.

4. *Be aware of own limitations.*

Staff should only carry out activities they understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If in any doubt, ASK. Some activities/ procedures should only be carried by those who have been formally trained.

5. *Promote positive self-esteem and body image.*

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach taken to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Staff attitude to a child's intimate care is important.

6. *If you have any concerns, report them.*

If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling including the genital area, report immediately to the designated teacher.

If during intimate care of a child staff accidentally hurt them or the child misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident to the designated teacher.

Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child.

A written record of concern must be made and kept within the Child Protection file.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally children would have a choice of carer for their intimate care. However,

given that most staff in Braidside are female, assistance will most likely be female. The child's safety, dignity and privacy are paramount.

The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- Intimate care will be carried out professionally in conjunction with appropriate conduct.
- When intimate care is carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy, they should be appropriately covered, the door closed, or a screen/curtain put in place.
- If the child is in any way distressed or uncomfortable when intimate care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Staff should try to find out why the child may be distressed and provide reassurance.
- All concerns should be reported to the Designated Teacher and a written record made.
- Parents should be informed of any concerns.

Communication with Children

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's level of communication.

To ensure effective communication staff should:

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

Covid-19 Addendum

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the provision of intimate to children, should only be carried out when the member of staff is using items of PPE, to protect themselves and the child involved.

At Braidside IPS, staff should use disposable aprons, disposable gloves, mask and/ or visor as appropriate. All items of PPE are in the Medical Room. After use items should be disposed of in the bin in the medical room.

Braidside Integrated Primary School
Intimate Care Consent Form

At Braidside IPS we encourage children to be independent in developing their own skills for toileting and self-care. However, there may be occasions when a child requires adult assistance in toileting or intimate care; if they have had an accident, they are sick or if they wet/soil themselves.

Children will be encouraged to attend to their own needs in as far as is possible. If necessary, a supervisor, classroom assistant or teacher can and will provide assistance.

Another adult will be close by while the care is on-going.

Any soiled or wet clothing will be placed in a plastic bag for children to take home. If necessary, parents will be contacted to provide a change of clothing.

Parents will be notified if their child has required assistance with intimate care or if they have had an accident. In the circumstances where a child has soiled, the parent will be contacted to collect them.

Where a child is very distressed by wetting/ soiling/ or is being sick and intimate care is not possible, parents/ guardians will be contacted as soon as possible to take the child home.

Volunteers, substitute teachers, students, music tutors nor those at Braidside IPS on placement will not be responsible for intimate care tasks.

(detach slip, complete and return to class teacher)

I give/ do not give permission for my child _____ (name)
to receive intimate care if required.

Signed: _____ (parent/guardian)

Date: _____