

Ballysillan Primary School

Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

This policy represents the agreed principles for **'intimate care'** throughout Ballysillan Primary School.

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 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.

Aims

- 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/carers how intimate care is administered;
- to ensure parents/carers are consulted regarding the intimate care of their children.

Definition

Intimate care is one of the following:

- supporting a pupil with **dressing/undressing**;
- providing **comfort or support** for a distressed pupil;
- assisting a pupil requiring **medical care**, who is not able to carry this out unaided;
- cleaning a pupil who has **soiled him/herself**, has vomited or feels unwell.

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 aid a child dressing or undressing (particularly in Early Years) due to an accident, soiling themselves or due to a medical condition. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

If staff are concerned in any way, parents/carers will be consulted or sent for and asked to assist their child.

Staff will always ensure that they have a colleague in attendance when supporting dressing/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.

Please note that parents/carers will be notified at the earliest opportunity if their child has had an intimate care incident.

Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Early Years).

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' (if one is in place). The content of any 'Care Plan' will be discussed with the parents, child, school SENCO, teachers and assistants.

Parents/carers as a first option will be asked to provide medical procedures that involve intimate care unless other provision is made available by the EA. If this is not possible, the school will seek the necessary advice from the EA and/or medical professionals.

If it is possible for the staff of the school 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.

Mrs Chambers and Miss Hamilton are the school first aiders and any children requiring medical attention must be seen by one of these teachers who will decide the appropriate action to be taken.

All parents receive a medical form to fill out at the beginning of every school year and it is the parents' responsibility to ensure the school is aware of any special medical needs their child may have.

Soiling

Staff will use common sense approach when tending to a child who has soiled themselves during the school day.

If a child's underwear requires changing due to a soiling incident, the child will be asked to do this in private and if possible carry out the act themselves.

If a parent/carer or emergency contact **is able to attend**, the child will be comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent/carer arrives.

Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent/carer 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/carer or emergency contact **cannot attend**, the school will seek to verbal consent from a parent/carer for staff to clean and change the child if appropriate.

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 by staff is kept to a minimum when carrying out the necessary cleaning;
- privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation.

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and 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;
- all intimate procedures should be carried out in the presence of two members of staff;
- allow the child a choice in the sequence of care;
- be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions;
- a record of the incident should be recorded in the school's Intimate Care Book. (Both members of staff present should sign the entry in the Intimate Care Book which is kept in the Principal's office, in the locked Child Protection filing cabinet.)

Safeguard for children

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

Review

This policy has been approved by the Board of Governors and will be reviewed in September 2023 or as relevant guidance (including Child Protection) dictates to ensure that it is fit for purpose.