

# TEMPO PRIMARY SCHOOL



## INTIMATE CARE POLICY

February 2025

Chair of Board of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## RATIONALE

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. The Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children have been developed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Disabled children can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

The Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools" guide.

## 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:
- ❖ Feeding
- ❖ Oral care
- ❖ Washing
- ❖ Dressing/undressing
- ❖ Toileting
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ No member of staff should take a photograph or make a video or other recording of a child during a change of clothing or an intimate care procedure. Recording devices (e.g. a camera, camcorder or mobile phone) must not be in the vicinity, when undertaking an intimate care procedure.
- ❖ 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 on 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 as consistent as possible.
- ❖ All staff assisting with a change of a child's clothing or undertaking the intimate care of a child must be familiar with, and implement, Tempo Primary School 'Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines' and abide by the associated 'Child Protection Policy'.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff working with children must be vetted by the EANI. This includes students on work placement and volunteers.

- ✓ Vetting includes:
- ✓ Access NI checks
- ✓ Pre-employment checks
- ✓ Two independent references

**Only** those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school should undertake the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, if appropriate, by the child. Consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in the child's file. Only in emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents and school. Parents would then be contacted immediately.

Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed annually. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the designated teacher for child protection (Mrs Watters).

## **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.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly 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 / treatments can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

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

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

Check your practice by asking the child / parent any likes / dislikes while carrying out intimate care and obtain consent.

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

A lot of care is carried out by one staff member / carer alone with one child. 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.

### **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 / agencies ensures practice is consistent.

### **Be aware of own limitations**

Only carry out care activities you understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If in doubt, ASK. Some procedures must only be carried out by staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

### **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 you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Your attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be relaxed, enjoyable and fun.

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

If you observe any unusual markings, discolourations or swelling including the genital area, report immediately to your designated teacher (Mrs Watters).

If during the intimate care of a child you accidentally hurt them, or the child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to your designated teacher.

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

A written record of concerns must be made and kept in the child's nursing / medical notes / personal file.

Parents / carers must be informed about concerns.

### WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

#### **Principles:**

There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care, but the current ratio of male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman.

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

- 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 the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance;
- Report any concerns to the designated teacher for child protection (Mrs Watters) and make a written record; and
- Parents must be informed about 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 method and level of communication.

Children communicate using different methods depending on their maturity and levels of stress e.g. words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing.

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.
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

### Swimming

Our Key Stage 2 classes participate in a swimming programme at Fivemiletown College. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes, however, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

Where a child needs additional support for changing parental permission will be sought and a personal care plan will be drawn up so as to maintain dignity but increase independence.

## **Residential Trips**

Residential educational visits are an important part of our Primary 6 and 7 school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting.

As with Extra-Curricular Activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Child Protection procedures, Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Policies. Some specific Intimate Care issues may arise in a Residential context.

## **Showering**

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations, and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

This means that staff should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct, e.g. adults must not change in the same place as children or shower with children.

It is best practice in our school that when an incident has taken place that has necessitated a member of staff to be present when children are changing that an incident report is made.

## **Night Time Routines**

It is established practice that the children's bedrooms are private spaces and anyone else wanting to enter the room should knock and announce their intention to enter. At bedtime, children are given a set amount of time to change and prepare for bed and will be told when the supervising teachers will visit the rooms to check all is okay and switch off the lights. A reciprocal arrangement is in place in the mornings.

There are occasions when incidents take place during the night and the need arises to:

1. Assist a child to change his / her clothes
2. Change a child who has soiled him / herself
3. Provide comfort to an upset or distressed child
4. Assist a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Guidance as above will be followed with the support of an additional member of staff in attendance.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed tri-annually.

Tempo Primary School

Dear Parent,

In order to safeguard your child and the staff in school, we need your permission if we are to help change your child. Your child may need his/her clothing changed for a number of reasons, for example, through toileting accidents, through play or through illness.

Alternatively, we can contact you, the parent/guardian, to come to school to change your child.

All contact with children follows the school Intimate Care Policy.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Erskine

Principal

.....  
Please circle and sign your preferred option.

(a) I give permission for teachers, or classroom assistants to help change my child in school, if necessary.

.....Signed parent/Guardian

Date.....

(b) I wish to be contacted if my child needs changing in school.

.....Signed parent/Guardian

Date.....

Please ensure the school has 3 emergency contact numbers.