

St. Malachy's Primary School Armagh



Intimate Care Policy

Rationale

In St. Malachy's Primary School, we seek to promote independence in each child re self-care, however we recognise that there will be times when help is required in this area. Our Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It forms part of the school's overall Pastoral Care Portfolio of policies. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children and focuses on being sensitive to children's individual needs.

Intimate care may be regarded as any activity that is required -

- *to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident.*

Such activities may include assisting with:

- toileting;
- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- first aid;
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based. Every child has the right to:

- be safe;
- personal privacy;
- be valued as an individual;
- be involved in and consulted with re their own intimate care to the best of their ability;
- express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account;
- have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent;
- be treated with dignity and respect.

Parental responsibility

- Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child at their earliest possible opportunity.
- Medical advice re such needs should also be shared with the class teacher.

School Responsibilities

Whilst all members of staff working with our children are vetted appropriately including students and volunteers, **only employed** members of staff will be involved in the intimate care of our children. It is important to note that in addition to the

information in the Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to the Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies.

- At the start of each academic year Parents of pupils in Primary One are asked to give permission for staff to carry out intimate care for their child (with particular reference to toileting accidents.) These consent forms (appendix 1) will be stored in the child's record file.
- Known intimate care arrangements which will be required on a **regular** basis will be agreed between the school and parents, and when appropriate by the child. These arrangements will be reviewed when moving to the next year group. The views of all relevant parties will be sought and considered to inform any future arrangements and any amendments will be shared with all parties.
- Only in an emergency and with the approval of Mr Duggan or Mrs Kearney will staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. Such an act of intimate care will be recorded (see appendix B) and reported to parents at the earliest possible opportunity afterwards.
- When staff are administering intimate care, they will implement the following **Good Practice Guidelines, striving to:**

1. Involve the child in his/her intimate care

Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, the adult will talk about what is going to be done and where possible, give choices.

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

Care should never be carried out behind a closed door by a member of staff alone with a child. The door should be kept ajar and another adult should be told that intimate care is being provided to ensure that additional help will be available if needed. If a child has an appropriate degree of independence, the adult will assume a role of supervision and will straddle the doorway providing verbal assistance whilst affording as much privacy as possible. The child will be told that 'hands on' help will be available if needed.

3. Communicate well with Child throughout the process

To ensure effective communication and support:

- 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.

4. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent

As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties will ensure that the practice is consistent.

5. Be aware of their own limitations

Only carry out activities they understand and feel competent and comfortable with. If in doubt, they must ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained.

6. Promote positive self-esteem and body image among our children

Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach we take with intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Our attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.

7. Promote good quality Hygiene practice.

All staff involved in intimate care will wear appropriate PPE including an apron, gloves and face shield/mask. Staff are also familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection e.g. where the child has suffered cut/broken skin - and must ensure the use of appropriate protective equipment when necessary, for example, protective, disposable latex/vinyl gloves. Pupils will be shown how to wash their hands thoroughly following participation in their own intimate care.

NB if the child has had a toileting accident that has involved bowel movements and the soiling has been significant, contact will be made with home so that the child can be brought home to have a shower and be washed properly. All interim steps will be taken until parent arrives to clean child to the highest and most hygienic standard possible using baby wipes and toilet roll. However, in our effort to promote good hygiene it would be very important that this is followed up with a shower/bath at home.

8. Work with children of the opposite sex in a manner that leaves pupils and adults comfortable and safe

The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex unless the staff member, child or parent has requested otherwise.

9. Report any concerns that may arise

If staff observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it

immediately to the Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident to the DT or DDT. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child's personal file.

NB if the child appears to be 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 DT or DDT and make a written record;
- parents must be informed about any concerns.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report it to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Kearney or the Deputy Designated Teacher Mrs Donnelly.

Footnotes to policy proper:

Arrangements for menstrual care with older female pupils:

Care of this nature will be provided in a very sensitive manner:

Parents of senior pupils will be urged at the start of year parents' meetings to notify school, class teacher (if female teacher) or head of pastoral care, Mrs Kearney, if their daughter begins to menstruate or if they feel the same is imminent.

Following such communication with a parent, the staff member will urge parents to explain that a little box of sanitary care requisites is kept in Mrs Donnelly's storeroom and a sani-disposal bin is in one cubicle in the girl's toilets upstairs, in the event of emergencies. Alternatively, the staff member will ask the parent if it would be fitting to make reference re this to the child and explain the arrangements to her. Parents will decide which approach will work best for their daughter and it will be enacted accordingly.

In the event of a girl's menstrual cycle starting unexpectedly in school for the first time and her confiding in a member of staff, the class teacher, if female, or Mrs Kearney will chat to her, reassuring her and providing practical assistance. The adult dealing with the situation will then contact the child's parent/ guardian to inform them of what has happened and how it has been handled.

Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing policy:

This Policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and formally reviewed every three years.

Appendix B

Record of Intimate Care administered that had not been agreed with parents.

Name of child:

Date:

Time:

Staff involved:

What happened:

Additional comments:

Signature(s): _____

Parental permission for Intimate Care

Dear parent/guardian,

As we commence our school year with your precious child we wish to assure you that we will take care of him/her in the event of a toileting accident, which as we all know can happen from time to time in the busy classroom.

I assure you of our staff's commitment to undertake such aspects of intimate care with discretion, kindness and compassion for your child.

I ask that you complete the attached permission slip and return to school with a spare set of underwear clearly marked with your child's name.

Should you have any queries, or if your child has an ongoing need that would require regular intimate care please contact me, so that I can have the appropriate information on hand and can make a suitable plan for meeting your child's needs.

Yours in partnership
Mr Duggan

Principal

Dear Mr Duggan,

Should it be necessary, I give permission forto receive intimate care (i.e. help with changing or following toileting).

I understand that staff will endeavour to encourage my child to be independent.

I understand that I will be informed appropriately should the occasion arise.

I understand that staff will wear PPE to administer intimate care.

Signed:

Parent/ Guardian of _____ P1