

Carr Primary School

Intimate Care Policy



From small beginnings come great things

2023

Intimate Care Policy

1. Rationale

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our intimate care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It is one of a range of specific policies that contribute to our pastoral care policy. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Children are generally more vulnerable than adults and staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Intimate care may be defined 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 can include:

- toileting;
- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- menstrual care;
- first aid and medical assistance;
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care; and
- cleaning up a child after wetting/soiling accident.

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

2. 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;
- 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;
- all children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- all children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account; and
- every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

3. School Responsibilities

All members of staff working with children are vetted through Access NI. This includes students on work placement and volunteers.

The Principal must ensure 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 Procedures e.g. ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures 2005, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child. Consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in the child's file (*Appendix 1*)

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.

The school should make provisions for emergencies i.e. a child wets or soils themselves (*Appendix 2 and 3*)

Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed at least 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.

4. 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.

Members of 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 forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff.

1. Involve the child in the intimate care

Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices. Check your practice by asking the child or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.

2. 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 to 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.

3. 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 ensures that practice is consistent.

4. Be aware of your own limitations

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

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.

Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong 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 both efficient and relaxed.

6. If you have any concerns you must report them.

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

5. Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is 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 female to 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 and make a written record;
- parents must be informed about any concerns.

6. 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. Depending on their maturity and levels 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.

Policy Agreed by the Board of Governors

June 2023

(Chair of the Board of Governors)

Review Date: June 2024 or at such times as new guidance becomes available or relevant legislation is passed.

Appendix 1: Intimate Care Parental Agreement

Carr Primary School Intimate Care Agreement

Parent/Guardian confirmation (please complete and return to school)

Name of Child _____

Class _____

I have read the Intimate Care Policy and I am in agreement with the procedures outlined therein.

I shall keep the school informed of emergency contact numbers.

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Date _____

Appendix 2: Intimate Care – Good Practice Checklist for Staff

Such care might be necessary for a child who has wet or soiled themselves or a child who has been hurt and treatment requires removal of clothing:

- Let another member of staff know who requires care and what you intend to do
- Ensure the child's dignity at all times; they should be appropriately covered, door closed
- Reassure the child and tell them what you plan to do
- Listen to the child's wishes
- If they are distressed or protest, stop the care immediately and seek advice or assistance from another member of staff
- Report the duty of intimate care to a senior member of staff following the event and complete the Record of Intimate Care
- Inform the parent about the care that was administered:
 - Bump note
 - Phone/Talk to the parent about the incident
- Male staff should not perform duties of intimate care with a female child
- If you have any concerns regarding the child report them immediately to the Designated Child Protection teacher – Mrs Stevenson or Mrs Knox

TOILETING ACCIDENTS:

- The P1 class teacher will keep a supply of clothing available for P1 children, if their clothes need changed
- Extra clothing will be kept in the staffroom for children from all other classes. If used, this change of clothes should be washed and returned to school as soon as possible

SOILING:

- The staff member will assist by encouraging the child in placing any soiled clothing in a plastic bag to be sent home with the child.
- With any soiling incident, it is school policy to make contact with the parent/guardian to report the incident and to allow the parent to make an informed decision as to what is to happen next in relation to their child
- If at any time the child feels uncomfortable about getting changed, the staff member will inform the Principal/Designated Teacher. Contact will then be made with the parent/guardian to request themselves or a named person to come to the school and change the child as agreed on this policy consent

INVASIVE INTIMATE CARE PROCEDURES:

- In specific situations, where more personal intimate care procedures are required, an appropriate CAREPLAN will need to be drawn up in advance, in consultation with medical staff, parents/guardians and school staff. This CARE PLAN has to be agreed and signed by all parties before any of the invasive intimate care procedures are carried out by any staff member
- The protocol is followed rigidly for each procedure
- If at any time the child feels uncomfortable or does not want the procedure being carried out by staff members, the parent/guardian will be called to the school to assist the child. The parent/guardian must come to the school or send a named person on the protocol as agreed on the written consent of this policy by the parent/guardian

Appendix 3: Record of Intimate Care

Carr Primary School : Record of Intimate Care

(This copy goes to the Parent/Guardian)

Name of Child _____

Class _____

Your child required intimate care today. This was carried out in accordance with our school policy, with respect for the privacy, needs and wishes of the child. When given appropriate attention the child then continued happily with the school day.

Please talk to your child about the incident and contact school if you have any concerns.

Carer: _____

Date: _____

Carr Primary School : Record of Intimate Care

(This copy goes to the Principal)

Name of Child _____

Class _____

Your child required intimate care today. This was carried out in accordance with our school policy, with respect for the privacy, needs and wishes of the child. When given appropriate attention the child then continued happily with the school day.

Please talk to your child about the incident and contact school if you have any concerns.

Carer: _____

Date: _____