



Intimate Care Policy
&
Guidelines Regarding Children

CURRENT PRACTICE IN St Mary's Primary School

In St Mary's, Mrs Ingram is responsible for the provision of Intimate Care which is viewed as an integral part of Pastoral Care. If children wet themselves we provide clean underwear and trousers/skirt to change into and parents are asked to return these items to school after they have been laundered (not underwear). If the incident is of a soiling nature, parents are immediately contacted to collect the child and the child is made as comfortable as possible during the interim. If children are physically sick over their clothing, again they are encouraged to change themselves and fresh clothing is provided. Their own clothes are put into a sealed bag and given to parent/guardian. We ask parents once again to launder and return any clothing provided by school. Older girls in school are informed that if their period starts unexpectedly when they are at school they can see Mrs Ingram who will supply them with the necessary items and underwear if required. If Mrs Ingram is not in school then Mrs Dolan will act in her place. The aforementioned items are located in Mrs Ingram's office and are also brought in a First Aid Bag when travelling on a trip.

INTRODUCTION

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.

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
- 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.
- 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 levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- All staff working with children must be vetted by the school. This includes students on work placement and volunteers. Vetting procedures are carried out by WELB, CCMS or DE via Access NI.
- Only named school staff should undertake the intimate care of children. (Classroom assistants/ lunchtime supervisors as well as teachers.)
- Managers must ensure that all staff undertaking the intimate care of children are familiar with, and understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines.
- All staff must be fully understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines within the context of their work.
- Intimate care arrangements must be agreed by the school, parents/carers and child (if appropriate).
- Intimate care arrangements must be recorded in the child's personal file and consent forms signed by the parents / carers and child (if appropriate).
- Staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed between the school, parents / carers and child (if appropriate).
- School needs to make provisions for emergencies i.e. a staff member on sick leave.
- Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed at least annually. The views of all relevant parties, including the child (if appropriate), should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.
- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice they must report this to the Designated teacher - Mrs Ingram or Deputy Designated - Mrs Dolan

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

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. Talk with them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible.
- **Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.** Normally care would be provided by one person but two people would ensure greater comfort / safety of the child.
- **Make sure practice in intimate care 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.
- **Promote positive self-esteem and body image**
- **If you have any concerns you must report them** - If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration of skin or swelling, report immediately to the designated teacher.

Please refer to:

- *Regional Area Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures - April 2005*
- *DENI Child Protection and Pastoral Care Guidance 1999*
(<http://www.deni.gov.uk/dc1999-10circular-3.pdf>)
- *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007*
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2007/1351/contents/made>)

WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER

Principles:

- There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children.
- The individual child's safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance.

(However the current ratio of female to male staff means we are far less likely to be able to offer the choice of same gender carer to male children.)

General Care

- (a) Liaising with families.
- (b) Co-ordinating of and contribution to a child's review.
- (c) Meeting the development, emotional and recreational needs of the children.
- (d) Escorting the children between sites and on outings.

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 e.g. words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing.

To ensure effective communication:

- Ascertain how the child communicates e.g. consult with child, parent/carer and if appropriate, communication needs must be recorded consult with the child's Speech and Language Therapist.
- 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.

PROCEDURES FOR PERSONAL CARE WHEN CHANGING A CHILD

As staff are in the role of 'loco parentis' it is accepted that they will carry out necessary changing routine as a parent would, provided that the parent has completed the Parental Consent Form.

In situations where the consent form has not been completed the school will contact the parent to explain the circumstances of the situation. Continual accidents will be discussed with SENCO/Principal and school nurse may be contacted.

The immediate care is carried out by one staff member with the support of another member of staff.

If a child is unable to toilet/dress independently an agreed care plan will be drawn up between parent and staff.

In the event of a pupil informing a member of Staff or a member of Staff noticing that a child needs changed due to soiling/wetting the following procedures will be followed:

- Acknowledge and reassure the child and receive the child's consent for changing.
- A member of staff will notify another member of staff that they will be facilitating the changing of a child and will be supported by that staff member.
- The member of staff will provide alternative clothes for the child. In line with the Health and Safety Policy Staff will use disposable gloves, wet wipes if required.
- The member of staff will encourage the pupil to change independently. When appropriate the member of staff will talk the process through e.g. remove shoes, trousers, then underwear etc.
- The member of staff will wash their hand and encourage the pupil to do so too.
- In line with Child Protection Policy, the member of staff will report to Mrs Ingram the Designated Officer. If Mrs Ingram is not in school then Mrs Dolan Deputy Designated Officer will act in her place and note any unusual marks noticed when a child is being changed. The child will continue to be monitored or, if necessary will be referred straight to Social Services.
- The member of staff will record any changing of a child, the reason why it was necessary to change the child and ask parent to sign and date it.

St Mary's P.S Mullymekser

Just a note to let you know that:

Your child _____ had an accident today _____

and was changed by/ supported in changing by _____

Their belongings are in their school bag.

Many Thanks.

St Mary's P.S , Mullymesker

Reply:

I have been informed that my child was changed by school staff/supported in

changing on _____

Signed: _____:Parent of _____

St Mary's Primary School

Permission for staff to change/support children with changing when needed.

I *do /do not give permission for school staff to change my child/to support my child with changing should the need arise.

If you do not consent to school staff changing your child or supporting your child with changing if needed, please read and tick the box below.

I understand that school staff will contact me to come to the school to change my child myself. However in the event that staff are unable to make contact with me or any of my child's named contacts, I understand that school staff may have to change my child so as to ensure that my child is comfortable and not in any distress.

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian of _____

Date: _____

*Please delete as appropriate.