

# St Dallan's Primary School Warrenpoint



## Intimate Care Policy

## **Introduction**

This document outlines the approach to Intimate Care in St Dallan's Primary School. The Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines regarding children has 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 meeting the personal needs of each child. Parents have the responsibility to advise staff of the Intimate Care needs of their child and staff have the 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
- Cleaning up a child after wetting/soiling accident

## **Principles of Intimate Care**

The following are the fundamental principles on 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. This includes students on work placement and volunteers.  
Vetting includes Access NI checks.  
Only vetted staff identified should undertake the Intimate Care of children.  
**Substitute teachers and students on placement must not undertake the Intimate Care of a pupil (see Student Handbook and Substitute Teacher Handbook).**
- 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.
- All staff must be trained in the specific types of Intimate Care that they carry out e.g. stoma care, and fully understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines within the context of their work.
- On-going Intimate Care arrangements must be agreed by the school, parents and carers and child (if appropriate).
- On-going 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).
- The school may need to make provisions for emergencies i.e. if a child wets or soils themselves. At the start of each school year parents/carers in Foundation Stage are informed of our provision and procedures in this area and consent is requested and recorded. In the event of consent not being given parents will be contacted to administer Intimate Care. Children in P3 – P7 will be encouraged to independently change their clothing and parents/carers would be informed of the incident. It is essential that the adult who is going to change the child informs the teacher and/or another member of staff that they are going to do this.  
***There is no written legal requirement that two adults must be present, however, in order to completely secure against any risk of allegation, a second member of staff should be present where resources allow.***
- Where specific Intimate Care is needed e.g. stoma care, additional trained staff should be trained to undertake this type of care – it cannot be assumed that someone else can do the task.
- Intimate Care arrangements that have been specially agreed should be reviewed 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 for child protection.

## **Parents/Guardians Responsibilities**

*'Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early year's settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning.'*

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Card 2.2 Positive Relationships: Parents as Partners**

If a parent/guardian has given permission for intimate care to be carried out in school they must:

- Ensure a change of clothes, wet wipes etc are available to the school
- Agree to inform the school if the child has any marks, a rash etc
- Agree to review the arrangements for on-going intimate care in discussion with the school when necessary.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an important issue. Sensitive information about a child should be shared only with those who need to know, such as parents or other members of staff who are specifically involved with the child. Other members of staff should only be told what is necessary for them to know to keep the child safe. Parents and children need to know that where staff have concerns about a child's well-being or safety arising from something said by the child or an observation made by the staff then the school's Designated Teacher for child Protection will be informed. This may lead to the procedures set down in the school's Child Protection Policy being implemented. (see St Dallen's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

Information concerning intimate care procedures should not be recorded in a home school diary, as the diary is not a confidential document and could be accessed by people other than the parent/carer and member of staff.

It is recommended that communication relating to intimate care should be made by sealed letter, personal contact or a telephone call.

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.

## **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.

Children with special needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their Intimate Care need to be sensitive to their individual needs and follow agreed care plans.

Staff also need to be aware that some adults may use Intimate Care as an opportunity to abuse children. It is also 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 Children in their Intimate Care**

Staff should 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 a choice where possible. Check your practice by asking the child/parent about 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 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.

### **Make sure practice in Intimate Care is consistent**

As a child can have multiple assistants a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parents/guardians/school ensures practice is consistent.

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

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If uncertain ask for advice or assistance from another trained member of staff or Designated/Deputy Designated Officers.

### **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.

### **If you have any concerns you must report them**

If you observe any unusual markings, discolourations or swelling including genital area, report immediately to your Designated/Deputy Child Protection teacher(s).

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, stop the Intimate Care and seek the assistance of a member of the Safeguarding team. Report the incident immediately to your Designated/Deputy Child Protection teacher(s) and Record the incident on the Child Protection report sheet.

Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by a child to the Designated/Deputy Designated teacher(s). A written record of any concerns must be made, given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher(s) and kept in the child's medical notes/personal file. Parents/guardians should be informed about any concerns about a child.

Please refer to:

Regional Area Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures April 2005  
DENI Child Protection and Pastoral Care Guidance 1999  
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2000

## **Working with Children of the Opposite Sex**

Principles:

- There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children
- Ideally, every child should have the choice of carer for all their Intimate Care
- The individual child's safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance.

The practical guidelines set out below, are written in the knowledge that the current ratio of female to male staff means we are far less likely to be able to offer the choice of same sex carer to male children.

### **Intimate Care**

Wherever possible, boys and girls should be offered the choice of carer and second carer. Where there is any doubt that a child is able to make an informed choice on these issues, the child's parents are usually in the best position to act as advocates.

### **Male members of staff should not perform duties of Intimate Care with a female child**

It may be possible to determine a child's wishes by observation of their reactions to the Intimate Care they receive. Do not assume that a child cannot make a choice.

The Intimate Care of boys/girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- The delivery of Intimate Care by professionally qualified staff will be governed by their professional code of conduct in conjunction with school policy and procedures.
- Staff who are not governed by a professional code of conduct must follow policy and procedures in operation with their agency and direction and agreement must be provided by the principal.
- 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 a child appears distressed or uncomfortable when the Intimate Care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
- Report concerns to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher(s) for child protection and make a written record.
- Parents/guardians must be informed about 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 e.g. Words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing.

To ensure effective communication:

- Ascertain how the child communicates e.g. consult with the child, parent/guardian
- Make eye contact at the child's level
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary
- Wait for a 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.

## **Related School Policies**

Safeguarding – Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding – Code of Conduct

Student Handbook

Substitute Teacher's Handbook

### Emergency Intimate Care

#### Good Practice Checklist for Staff

Such care may be necessary with:

- A child who has wet or soiled themselves
- A child who has been hurt and treatment requires removal of clothing
- Inform another member of staff as to who requires care and what you intend to do
- Another member of staff should be present if possible, if resources allow
- Ensure the child's dignity at all times, they should be appropriately covered, door closed
- Reassure child and tell them what you plan to do
- Listen to the child's wishes
- If they are distressed or protest, stop immediately and seek advice or assistance from another member of staff and contact parents/ guardians
- Report the duty of Intimate Care to another member of staff following the event and record
- Inform the parent about the care that was administered
- 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/Deputy Child Protection Teachers(s).



## Appendix Two

### St Dallan's Primary School Record of Intimate Care Intervention

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class/ Year Group \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Staff Involved \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time	Procedure	Signature



## Appendix Three

### Parental permission for Intimate Care

Should it be necessary, I give permission for my child: .....

to receive Intimate Care (e.g. 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 discretely should the occasion arise.

Signed: .....

Adult with parental responsibility for: .....

Teacher: .....

Class: .....

Date:.....