

INTIMATE CARE POLICY



ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MAGHERY

Ratification Sept 2020
Reviewed November 2023

Intimate Care Policy

Introduction:

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 all staff involved in the intimate care of children.

Whilst it is our intention to develop independence in each child there will be occasions when help is required. 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
- Washing
- Changing clothes
- First Aid and medical assistance and
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.
- Menstrual Care

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school on any known intimate care needs relating to their child at the earliest possible opportunity. Medical advice in relation to such needs should also be shared with the class teacher who will pass this on to other staff on a "need to know" basis.

Parents are also asked to ensure that the child has good independent toileting skills and is able to clean him/herself after going to the toilet.
(at P1 Induction)

Principles of Intimate Care

Every child has the right to:

- **Be safe**
- **Personal privacy**
- **Be valued as an individual**
- **Be involved in and consulted with regarding their own intimate care to the best of their ability**
- **Have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent**

Guidelines for Good Practice:

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 age, maturity and levels of stress children may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc., to ensure effective communication:

1. **Involve the child in his/her intimate care**
2. **Make eye contact at the child's level**
3. **Use simple language and repeat if necessary**
4. **Wait for response**
5. **Continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response**
6. **Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect. 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 the 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.**

7. If a child soils him/herself, staff will make the child as "comfortable" as possible, and will immediately ring a parent or contact to come to school and change or collect the child.
8. If a child becomes distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
9. Staff should always encourage good hygiene standards by asking the children to flush the toilet after use, wash their hands with soap and water provided in the children's toilet area and disposing of paper towels in the waste paper bin, after drying hands.
10. Report any concerns that may arise. The Designated Teacher or Deputy Teacher for Child Protection must be informed if a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice. They should also be informed if staff observe any unusual markings, discolouration's or swellings on a child.

Staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed between the BOG, School, Parents/Carers and child.

It is our Policy to always have a spare change of clothing in the event of an "accident". Class teachers will ensure this box is fully supplied with a change of clothes, including underwear wipes and roll. We encourage parents to wash these clothes and return to the school as soon as possible.

Each child is encouraged to attend to and clean him/herself, after going to the toilet.

Menstrual Care

We encourage parents to inform us if their child has reached this stage of development. Our aim is to protect pupil's privacy while helping them to know that they can talk to an adult if they wish.

Sanitary towels are available in the ladies' staff toilet and are available if the girls require them on an emergency basis. Disposal facilities are also available in this toilet.

We encourage parents to have a conversation with their daughter regarding this issue at a time when they feel is appropriate for their own child.

In the event of a child's menstrual cycle starting un-expectantly in school for the first time and the child confiding in a member of staff, the class teacher (providing that is a female) will chat to and reassure the child and provide practical assistance. The adult dealing with the situation will then contact the child's parent to inform them of what has happened and how it has been handled.

Conclusion

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.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or when deemed necessary as a result of further guidance given by DENI or other statutory / advisory bodies.

All stakeholders will be involved in the review through a consultation process.

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR INTIMATE CARE

I have read and agree to the Intimate Care Policy of Saint Mary's Primary School.

I give Saint Mary's Primary School Staff consent to carry out the personal care of my child _____(child's name)

(signature of Parent/Guardian)

Date_____

Record of Intimate Care given

Name of child:

Date and Time:

Members of staff present:

Care given:

Contact with parent/guardian: (who made the contact, when, how and to whom)

Policy Review

This policy was reviewed in November 2023 and has been ratified by the Board of Governors at a meeting held on the 7th December 2023.

Miss R Robinson (Principal)

Mr j Mc Kee (Chair of the Board of Governors)