



Intimate Care Policy

September 2023

Introduction

This policy outlines the approach to intimate care in Milltown Primary School. We aim to promote independence in children but there are occasions when assistance is required. The Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff and applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Definition

Intimate care may be defined as *any activity required to meet the personal care needs of an individual child during a one-off incident or on a more regular basis.*

From time to time incidents occur during the school day where children's clothing gets wet or dirty and may need to be changed. This may be caused by e.g. spills, sickness, toileting accidents or falls. If any such incident should occur, the school has a supply of spare pants and clothing that can be used for younger children.

Intimate care can also include assistance with:

- oral care
- washing
- supervision of a child involved in personal/intimate self-care
- changing clothes e.g. for sporting activities
- first aid and medical assistance
- toileting
- menstrual care

If children are capable of undertaking their own personal care (e.g. cleaning themselves and/or changing their own clothing), they will be expected to do so. Otherwise, a Classroom Assistant or class teacher will provide assistance, with consent of parents/carers.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental Principles of Intimate Care upon which the policy is based:

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

School Responsibilities

All staff undertaking the personal care of children will be familiar with this Intimate Care Policy. The delivery of intimate care by staff will be governed by the Staff, Volunteers Students, Substitute Members of Staff, Coaches and Tutors Code of Conduct. All members of staff working with children are vetted through Access NI.

Staff involved in intimate care need to be sensitive to children's individual needs and be aware that young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable.

- School will set in place effective communication with parents /carers;
- Confidentiality and privacy will be respected at all times.
- Personal care information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Guidelines for Good Practice

It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Those involved in intimate care should adhere to the following guidelines for good practice to safeguard both pupils and staff.

When assisting with intimate/personal care, staff will:

- ensure that intimate/personal care is given in a location that preserves a pupil's privacy and dignity;
- inform another member of staff before any intimate/personal assistance is given;
- when assisting with toileting accidents, keep the toilet door unlocked;
- provide appropriate levels of caring support whilst minimising, as far as possible, the level of physical contact with the child, particularly in intimate body regions;
- cease the care immediately and contact or notify parents/carers if at any stage a child appears distressed or uncomfortable, meaning that the personal care cannot be carried out;
- inform parents/carers about any personal/intimate care given.
- encourage a child's independence as far as possible.

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
- treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers

- have a responsibility to advise staff of any known intimate care needs of their child as and when required;
- are asked to sign a consent slip permitting the classroom assistant/class teacher to help in the personal care of their child (see Appendix 1)
- should wash, and return as soon as possible, any items of school clothing used by their child.

We believe that the positive working relationship between home and school is a major factor in providing care and security for the pupils. This working relationship thrives upon openness and trust which we seek to promote in all our dealings with the school community.

At all times the Principal/Designated Teacher and Deputy-Designated Teachers will monitor the personal care details and care undertaken. Any concerns regarding safeguarding/child protection issues should be reported and will be dealt with as detailed in the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

Related School Policies:

This policy is one of a range of Pastoral Care policies which include:

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Safe Handling Policy

Staff & Volunteers' Code of Conduct

Healthy School Policy

Supporting Pupils with Long-term Medication Needs Policy

Appendix 1

Consent Slip

Intimate Care

I permit the Classroom Assistant / Class Teacher to assist my child with intimate/personal care if necessary. I undertake to launder and return any items of clothing used.

Signed(Parent/Guardian) Date.....