

Kilkeel Primary School



Intimate Care Policy

2024 (Draft)

Introduction

This document outlines the approach to Intimate Care in Kilkeel Primary School. 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
- First aid and medical assistance
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self care

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care 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 on 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 named identified staff should undertake the intimate care of children.
- The Principal/Designated Teacher for Child Protection 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 and fully understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines within the context of their work.
- Ongoing intimate care arrangements must be agreed by the school, parents/carers and child (if appropriate).
- Ongoing intimate care arrangements must be recorded in the child's personal file and consent forms signed by 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 needs to make provisions for emergencies i.e. a child wets or soils themselves.

- Intimate care arrangements that have been specially agreed with a parent 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 for Child Protection.

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 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

Care should not be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child.

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.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally every child should have the choice for intimate care but the 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, ie 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.

Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

Parents/carers have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their child and will be asked to complete an online permission form giving consent for a member of staff to help in the intimate care of their child. The school will record all intimate care arrangements, and these will be signed and dated, and a copy will be kept school. Confidentiality and privacy will be adhered to at all times. When a child requires intimate care, the task will be carried out by an assistant or, when required, two assistants. The school will set in place effective communication between parents/carers to ensure practice is consistent. At all times the intimate care details and care undertaken will be monitored by the Designated Teacher and Principal.

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Emergency Intimate Care – Good Practice Checklist for Staff

Such care might be necessary with:

1 – A child has wet or soiled themselves

2 – A child 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 make a record of care given.
- 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 Teacher for Child Protection.

Reference Materials

Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures, (April 2005) and Amendments (2008) Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines.

Related School Policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Pastoral Care Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy

Use of Safe Handling Policy

Signed: _____ Principal

Signed _____ Chair of Board of Governors

Date: _____