

Intimate Care Policy St Laurence's NS

May 2020

What is Intimate Care?

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. In school this may occur on a regular basis or as a one-off incident.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

- Assisting a child to change his/her clothes
- Changing or washing a child who has soiled him/herself
- Assisting with toileting issues
- Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care
- Providing first aid assistance
- Feeding a child
- Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Principles of Intimate Care:

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- Every child has a 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;
- All children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- All children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views taken into account;
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent;
- All members of staff have the right to be protected and have their needs also met in the provision of intimate care to pupils for whom they care.

Assisting a child to change his/her clothes:

On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he /she has an accident at the toilet, gets wet outside, has vomit on his/her clothes, goes swimming or on school outings etc.

- Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required, this will be given.

- Staff will endeavour to have a colleague aware of when they are supporting dressing/undressing and will always give the child the opportunity to change in private, unless the child is in such distress that it is not possible to do so.
- If a staff member is concerned in any way parents will be notified and asked to come to the school and assist their child.
- Furthermore, a parent will be informed if the child becomes distressed.

Changing a child who has soiled him/herself:

If a child soils him/herself in school, a professional judgement has to be made whether it is appropriate to change the child in school, or request the parent/carer to collect the child for changing. In either circumstance the child's needs are paramount and he/she should be comforted and reassured throughout.

The following guidelines outline our procedures but we will also seek to make age-appropriate responses.

- The child will be given the opportunity to change his/her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.
- School will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare clothes for this purpose. These supplies will be kept in the storeroom near the shop. (Parents will be asked to send in a change of clothing for pupils who have ongoing intimate care needs).
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to help the child make him/herself comfortable. This helps avoid any further distress and preserves dignity. Parents will then be informed of the incident in person, by phone or by note. Any parent who disagrees with this practice must put their concern in writing to the school.
- The member of staff who has assisted a pupil with intimate care will adhere to Child Protection Guidelines.
- Be sure that the action you are taking is necessary.
- Get verbal agreement to proceed, where possible.

Pastoral Care Procedures

- Be sure the child is happy with who is changing him/her.
- Be responsive to any distress shown.

Basic Hygiene Routines

- Use protective disposable gloves.
- Seal any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for return to parents

School Responsibilities:

- All members of staff working with children are vetted.

- Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child.
- Consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in the child's file.
- The school will supply gloves, wipes etc.

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. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff:

- Involve the child in the 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.
- Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation. An individual member of staff will where possible inform another member of staff that they are going alone to assist a pupil with intimate care.
- 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.
- Be aware of your own limitations. Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask someone familiar with the needs of the child
- 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.
- If you have any concerns you must report them. If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

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, *where possible*;
- 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.

Communication, Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review. The policy will be on the school website and available from school reception.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, of St Laurence's National School at its meeting on 24th June 2020.

Signed: Breda Fay
Chairperson

Date: 24/06/2020

Intimate Care Plan Sample

Name of Pupil	
Date of Birth	
Class Level	
Parents Names	

Task	Requires intimate care assistance from staff	Student can perform with supervision/minimal assistance from staff
Toileting		
Menstruation		
Handwashing		
Dressing and undressing for PE and all school activities		
Supported Eating (including tube feeding)		
Administration of Medication		

Facilities/Equipment required	Yes/No	Comment
Changing table/bed		
Grab rail		
Step		
Locker for supplies		
Lever tap		
Mirror at suitable height		
Disposal unit/bin		
Moving/handling equipment		
Emergency alarm		
Evacuation chair		
Hoist		

Supplies	Family Supplies	School Supplies
Pads/nappies		
Wipes		
Spare clothes		
Antiseptic Cleanser		
Cloth/Paper Towels		
Soap		
Disposable gloves		
Disposal sacks (waste and nappy)		
Toilet Paper		
Personal Medical Supplies		

Is training needed for your child's intimate care needs?
Please specify:

Comments:

Permission for staff in St Laurence's National School to provide intimate care:

I/We give permission for staff of St Laurence's National School to provide intimate care to my/our child.

I/We will advise the school of anything that may affect issues of personal care (e.g. if medication is changed or my child has an infection)

I/We understand the procedures that will be carried out and will contact the school immediately if there are any concerns.

Signed: Relationship to the child: Date:

Signed: Relationship to the child: Date:

Signed: Staff member(s): Date:

Signed: Principal: Date: