



**Lissan Primary School**

# **Intimate Care Policy**

*"Together we learn, grow and play in God's love and care."*

## Rationale

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. 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 everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Children are generally more vulnerable than adults and staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

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:

- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- toileting;
- first aid and medical assistance; and
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.
- Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

Medical advice will be taken into consideration where appropriate (refer to Health and Safety Policy)

## Principles of Intimate Care

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

Every child has the right to:

- ✓ be safe;
- ✓ personal privacy;
- ✓ be valued as an individual;

- ✓ be treated with dignity and respect;
- ✓ be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- ✓ express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account;
- ✓ have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

## School Responsibilities

- ✓ All members of staff working with children are vetted. This includes students and volunteers.
- ✓ Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school are involved in the intimate care of children.
- ✓ Anticipated intimate care arrangements which are required on a regular basis are agreed between the school and parents, and when appropriate and possible, by the child. In such cases consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in the child's file.
- ✓ Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed at least every six months. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. Any amendments to arrangements should be recorded for all parties involved.
- ✓ Parents of children starting Primary One will be asked to give permission for staff to attend to intimate care of their child (with particular reference to toilet accidents or illness) should the need arise. (Appendix A)
- ✓ Only in emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents. The act of intimate care would be reported to a senior member of staff and parents at the earliest possible time following the event.
- ✓ If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she 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. All incidents of Intimate Care should be documented using the Record of Intimate Care form. (Appendix B)

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.

Staff will endeavour to:

**Involve the child in the intimate care**

Staff should try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Children will be encouraged to adjust clothing themselves after using the toilet and see to their own personal needs.

When and where a situation arises that renders a child fully dependent, staff should talk about what is going to be done and give choices where possible.

**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.

In the event of a toileting accident:

Young children will be given clean replacements and encouraged to change themselves as much as possible, by the adults talking them through each step of the procedure. Older children will be given clean replacements and will change themselves without any adult present. Parents will be informed at home time in person or by telephone.

The school secretary will inform all parents by telephone immediately if their child has had a soiling accident. Parents, grandparents and childminders will be requested to collect their children from school if they have soiled themselves so that they can be properly cleaned at home.

If Parents/ grandparents/ childminder are unable to attend, parents may consent for the teacher/classroom assistant to see to their child's needs. This will take place in the appropriate toilet area, two adults will be present, and no other children will be allowed access to this area during this time. Older children will be given clean replacements and will clean and change themselves without any adult present

**Swimming**

Our Primary 4, 5,6,7 classes participate in a swimming programme at Cookstown Leisure Centre. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regards to health and safety. Where a child needs additional support for changing parental permission will be sought, and a personal care plan will be drawn up so as to maintain dignity but increase independence.

**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**

Staff should only carry out activities they understand and feel competent with. If taking a child to the toilet, the adult will inform another member of staff. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained.

**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 staff take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Staff's attitude to children's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.

**Any concerns must be reported.**

If staff observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling, they must report it immediately to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection.

If a child is accidentally hurt during the intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something staff should reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher. Staff should 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.

## Hygiene

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection and should ensure the use of appropriate protective equipment when necessary, for example, protective, disposable latex/vinyl gloves.

## Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care but the current 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, i.e. 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. Staff should try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance;
- Staff should report any concerns to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection and make a written record; and
- Parents should be informed about any 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. Depending on their maturity and level of stress children may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements etc.

To ensure effective communication staff should:

- 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; and
- treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

Links to Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies

## Appendix A

### Lissan Primary School Parental Permission for Intimate Care

Should it be necessary, I give permission for ..... 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 discreetly should the occasion arise.

I understand that this permission will be applicable through my child's school career in Lissan Primary School, unless I notify the school, in writing, of any change.

Signed.....

Parent/guardian .....

Date .....

Parent/guardian .....

Date .....

APPENDIX B – RECORD

| Name of child | Date | Time | Comments | Staff Involved | Signature |
|---------------|------|------|----------|----------------|-----------|
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