

KILLYLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

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INTIMATE CARE POLICY

December 2024

Introduction

The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching programmes in Killylea Primary School, and we are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children. Our Intimate Care Policy is part of our collective suite of pastoral care policies.

This policy is in line with multi-agency guidance as found in the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005). It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however, there may be occasions when help is required.

The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Definition of Intimate Care

'Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, carer and the child.'

(9.26, ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures).

"Intimate care is any assistance that involves touching a child while carrying out a procedure that most children are able to do for themselves, but some are unable to manage without help. This may involve help with eating, drinking, dressing, and matters of personal hygiene such as washing and toileting. In some instances, more specialised intimate assistance may be needed for children with physical or medical difficulties."

[EA Guideline on the Provision of Intimate Care to Children and Young People at School]

The aims of this policy are:

- To safeguard the dignity, rights and well-being of our pupils;
- To provide guidance and support to staff; and
- To reassure parents that their children are cared for and protected.

Permission is sought from all parents on an annual basis to assist their child with intimate care if needed. In school this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Killylea Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all our children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain and adults and staff must be sensitive to each child's individual needs.

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

1. Assisting a child to change his/her clothes
2. Changing or washing a child who has soiled him / herself
3. Assisting with toileting issues
4. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care
5. Providing first aid assistance
6. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child

7. Feeding a child
 8. Providing oral care to a child
 9. Menstrual care [see Period Dignity Policy]
 10. Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. *
- * In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure, (e.g. the administration of rectal diazepam.)*

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

In this case, an Intimate Care Plan will be drawn up for each child requiring assistance and is carefully planned and agreed by the school, parents and child, if appropriate.

Principles of Intimate Care

(Ref :- Southern Area Child Protection Committee, Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children)
The following are the fundamental principles upon which our Policy is 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 in and consulted about 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 these views considered
- ❖ Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible

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.

Disabled children can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

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 care tasks / treatments can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

Involve the child in their intimate care

Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his / her intimate care. Where the child is fully dependent talk with them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible. Check your practice by asking the child / parent any likes / dislikes while carrying out intimate care and obtain consent.

Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.

A lot of care is carried out by one staff member / carer alone with one child. The practice of providing one-one intimate care of a child alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort / safety of the child, or the child prefers two persons.

Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent

As a child can have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parents / carers / agencies ensures practice is consistent.

Be aware of own limitations

Only carry out care activities you understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If in doubt ASK. Some procedures must only be carried out by staff who have been formally trained and assessed e.g. enteral feeding, rectal diazepam.

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 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 relaxed, enjoyable and fun.

If you have any concerns you must report them.

If you observe any unusual markings, discolourations or swelling including the genital area, report immediately to your designated manager / teacher.

If during the intimate care of a child you accidentally hurt them, or the child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to your designated manager / teacher.

Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child.

A written record of concerns must be made and kept in the child's nursing / medical notes / personal file. Staff should follow the school's procedures for reporting and recording concerns. Parents/carers must be informed of any concerns.

Intimate Care Procedures

It may be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children in their care. Children may be upset and need to be comforted with a hug. They may have a toileting accident and need to have their clothes changed. To fail to do these things for a young child would be negligent.

Casual substitute staff or students are not permitted to provide intimate care. The school will endeavour to provide a member of staff of the same sex as the child, if this is preferable to the child or parents.

Assisting a child to change his / her clothes

This is more common in our Foundation Stage. 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, or has vomit on his / her clothes etc.

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

Staff will always ensure that they have informed another member of staff when 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 staff are concerned in any way parents will be sent for and asked to assist their child and 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 must 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. To safeguard the child and protect, the following procedures will be followed:

- The child will be given the opportunity to change his / her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves within the pupils' toilets.
- School will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare uniform for this purpose. (A supply of clean underwear and spare uniforms are kept in the First Aid Room and Foundation Stage classrooms).
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to contact the emergency contact to inform them of the situation.
- If the emergency contact can come to school within an appropriate time frame, the child will be accompanied and supported by a staff member until they arrive. This avoids any further distress and preserves dignity.
- If the emergency contact cannot attend, the school will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child. If none of the contacts can be reached the Principal is to be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child.
- The member of Staff who has assisted a pupil with intimate care will complete the Intimate Care Record [kept in the locked cabinet in the office]

Parents are expected to ensure that they keep the school informed of the contact numbers at which they, or a nominated adult can be contacted as and when required. They should make themselves available, if necessary to change their child at school, or in the event of an accident, to take their child to the hospital or administer medication.

Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Our Administration of Medications Policy outlines arrangements for the management of most medications in school. In these instances a personal care plan will be drawn up with the parents [and child if appropriate] to consider training of adult care providers, accommodation, equipment and care procedures.

Swimming

Our Primary 4,5, 6 and Primary 7 classes participate in a swimming programme at The Orchard Leisure Centre, Armagh. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes however, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people regarding health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

Pupils in P4 and 5 change in communal changing rooms [boys and girls separately] and pupils in P6 and P7 may use individual cubicles depending on availability.

Where a child needs additional support for changing parental permission will be sought and a personal care plan will be drawn up to maintain dignity but increase independence.

Residential Trips

Residential educational visits may form part of our Primary 6 and Primary 7 school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting. As with Extra-Curricular Activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Child Protection procedures, Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Policies. Some specific Intimate Care issues may arise in a Residential context.

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.

Period Dignity

Period dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a period, in conjunction with the removal/breaking of stigma and taboo around periods. Free period products, wipes and a change of underwear are available within the staff toilets for pupils to access. [See Period Dignity Policy]

Links to other policies

Our Intimate Care Policy links with the following policies:

- Child Protection
- Pastoral Care
- First Aid
- Anti-Bullying
- Administration of Medications Policy
- Period Dignity

Monitoring and Review

This Policy has been reviewed by key stakeholders with comments taken into consideration and amendments to the policy made where suitable. The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure the policy and procedures is adhered to and effectively meet the needs of our pupils.

KILLYLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL INTIMATE CARE POLICY	
POLICY DATE:	December 2024
PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE:	P Lowry
CHAIRPERSON, Board of Governors, SIGNATURE:	B Atkins
REVIEW DATE [Annually]:	December 2025



APPENDIX 1: INTIMATE CARE
RECORD

KILLYLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL
INTIMATE CARE RECORD



Date	Name of Child	Name of Adult[s] Assisting	Brief details of care given	Parent informed?	How? Telephone/verbally