



Intimate Care Policy

Date	Policy Reviewed	Policy Amended and added to website
Oct 2018	Sept 2021	
	Sept 23	Sept 23
Feb 2024	Feb 2024	Feb 2024
Sept 2024	Sept 2024	Sept 2024

Victoria Park Primary School Intimate Care Policy

Rationale

In Victoria Park Primary School, the safeguarding and welfare of the children in our care is paramount.

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however we recognise that there will be times when help is required.

Our Intimate Care Policy has been established to safeguard children and staff. It forms part of the school's Pastoral Care Policy. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

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

Intimate care may be regarded 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 may include:

- toileting;
- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- photographs;
- first aid and medical assistance, including medical treatment eg enemas, suppositories, enteral feeds, catheter and stoma care, diabetic injections;
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care, including menstrual care.

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.

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

- Only members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school will be involved in the intimate care of children.
- All members of staff will be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the policy within the context of their work.
- 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. Staff will not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed.
- Relevant consent forms are signed and stored in the child's record file.
- The school will make provisions for emergencies, eg a member of staff on sick leave, and ensure that another trained member of staff will be available to undertake specific intimate care tasks, where possible. When this is not possible, parents/carers will be informed.
- Intimate care arrangements for any child who requires this support on a regular basis should be reviewed at least every six months. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform any future arrangements. Any amendments to arrangements should be recorded for all parties involved.
- Parents of children starting Primary One are asked to give permission for staff to attend to the intimate care of their child (with particular reference to toilet accidents or illness) should need arise (see Appendix 1).

Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. The act of intimate care would be reported to a 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 it to the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding & Child Protection, Daniel Ryden or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Safeguarding & Child Protection, Gillian McDougall.

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 some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation.

Staff will endeavour to:

1. Involve the child in the intimate care

We will encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his/her intimate care. Where the child is fully dependent we will talk to them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible. We will check out our practice by asking the parents/carers any likes and/or dislikes while carrying out intimate care and obtain consent.

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

We will treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation. Careful consideration will be given to individual situations to determine how many members of staff should be present during intimate care procedures. Generally, one pupil will be cared for by two members of staff.

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 the 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. Individual care plans

Individual care plans will be drawn up for any child requiring regular intimate care.

Where a care plan is not in place and a child has needed help with intimate care (in the case of a toilet 'accident') parents/carers will be informed the same day. The information will be treated as confidential and communicated in person, via telephone or by sealed letter. A consent form asking for permission to assist in changing a child in such instances is sent home at the start of the school year (See Appendix 1).

6. 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 with 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.

7. 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 or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Safeguarding & 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 to the DT or DDT. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns on the Victoria Park Safeguarding Record 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 screen/curtains put in place;
- If the child appears to be 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 DT or DDT and make a written record;
- parents must 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 levels of stress children may communicate using different methods – words, signs, symbols, body movements 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.

It is important to note that in addition to the information in the Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to the Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies.

Gillian McDougall DDT
Victoria Park Primary School
September 2023

APPENDIX 1



Principal: A. GOURLEY Bmus (Hons) PGCE DASE PQH (NI)
182A Connsbrook Avenue, Belfast BT4 1JY Telephone: 02890 471274

Date

Toileting Policy and Procedures

Occasionally, pupils accidentally wet and/or soil themselves at school and require assistance changing. This is dealt with discreetly and in accordance with the school's broader Intimate Care Policy. Spare clothing is kept in school for use in such instances and to ensure the child's dignity is maintained. If a child has to be changed, the school will immediately contact the parent/carer. If the parent/carer cannot be contacted, he/she will be informed upon collecting the child from the school. Please can you return the tear-off slip below if you give permission for school staff to assist your child in the event of a toileting accident. Feel free to contact me at school if you have any questions about our policy and procedures.

Yours faithfully,

Mr D. Ryden

Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Pastoral Care

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I give permission for the school to assist my child _____ changing if he/she accidentally wets and/or soils themselves.

Signed (Parent/Carer)

