

*S.N. Mhíchíl Naofa,
11, Sr.Ó'Bearáin
Luimneach.
V94 A0K7
Uimh. Rolla 12834 S*



*Saint Michael's N.S
11, Barrington Street
Limerick.
V94 A0K7
Tel/Fax 061-315927*

Email: info@smnslimerick.ie

Website: www.smnslimerick.ie

Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines

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

Intimate care is any care which involves one or more 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. *

*In the case of a specific medical procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure. Parents have the responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

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.

In all cases, unless agreed with the Principal or a Parent/Guardian, two staff members will assist children who have intimate care needs. A written record would be kept of the occasions when only one staff member is present.

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, 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 endeavour to have a colleague in attendance 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 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 of the incident.

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. Staff will endeavour to have a colleague in attendance. 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. (Parents will be asked to send in a change of clothing/wipes/towel for pupils who have ongoing intimate care needs.)
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to contact the parent/ emergency contact to inform them of the situation.
- If the parent/ emergency contact is able to 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 parent/ emergency contact cannot attend, school will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child. If none of the contacts can be reached the decision will be 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 the pupil with intimate care will adhere to **Child Safeguarding Statement**.
- Ensure that the action you are taking is necessary. Get verbal agreement to proceed
- Ensure the child is happy with who is changing him/her.
- Be responsive to any distress shown.

Basic hygiene routines

- Always wear protective disposable gloves.
- Seal any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for return to parents.
- Wet wipes will be provided where necessary

School Responsibilities

All members of staff working with children are vetted by the Teaching Council & Church House.

Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy are involved in the intimate care of children.

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 parents and stored in the child's file. **(See appendix 1)**

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.

1. 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.
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. Two adults should be present.
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.
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 marking, discolouration or swelling, report it immediately to the Designated Liaison Officer or Deputy Liaison Officer.

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;
- 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.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **30th May, 2018**

Signed: *Niall Sloane*

Chairperson BOM

Appendix 1

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 discretely should the occasion arise.

Signed: _____

Adult with parent responsibility for: _____

Date: _____