



# Intimate Care Policy

<b>Date of next policy review</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Name of person responsible for this policy</b>	<b>Christopher Fulton</b>
<b>Issued to</b>	<b>Staff, governors, parents</b>
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This policy represents the agreed principles for 'intimate care' throughout the school. This policy has been agreed by all staff and governors within the school.

### **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is:

- to safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of the children;
- to ensure children are treated with sensitivity and respect and in such a way
- that their experience of intimate care is a positive one;
- to safeguard adults required to operate in sensitive situations;
- to raise awareness and provide a clear procedure for intimate care;
- to inform parents in how intimate care is administered;
- to ensure parents are consulted in the intimate care of their children.

Please note that in this policy the term 'parent' refers to the person with parental responsibility for the child.

### **1.2 Principles**

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body.

It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position. Given the right approach, intimate care can provide opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self esteem.

Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young person's right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

### **1.3 Definition**

Intimate care is one of the following:

- supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing;
- providing comfort or support for a distressed pupil;
- assisting a pupil requiring medical care, who is not able to carry this out unaided;
- cleaning a pupil who has soiled him/herself, has vomited or feels unwell.

### **2.1 Supporting dressing/undressing**

The school considers that helping a child with an outer layer of clothing (eg. a sweatshirt or coat) is not an intimate act and therefore acceptable. Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child dressing or undressing (particularly in Foundation Stage) due to a medical condition, an accident or soiling themselves. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. Parents/carers are asked to sign the consent form giving permission for staff to assist in intimate care. Any specific care arrangements must be agreed with the school.

## **2.2 Providing comfort or support**

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Foundation Stage). Where children require physical support staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum. At all times this will be child initiated and with the focus to encourage and help the child to calm or settle. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff must ensure that at no time can the act be considered 'intimate.' If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is suitable to the age, gender and situation of the child. If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged for example through the use of high 5ing a particularly clingy child.

## **2.3 Medical Care**

Pupils requiring short term and long term medical care involving intimate care will receive this care in line with the child's 'Care Plan'. The content of any 'Care Plan' will be discussed and agreed with the relevant medical body.

Parents as a first option will be asked to provide medical procedures that involve intimate care. If this is not possible, the school will seek the necessary advice from the Education Authority and/or the school nurse.

If it is possible for the staff of the school to provide the level of medical care required, the staff member/s will receive the appropriate training. Written permission must be received from the person with parental responsibility before a medical procedure can be carried out. **Refer to 'Administration of Medication Policy.'**

## **2.4 Soiling**

Staff will use common sense when tending to a child who has soiled themselves during the school day. Parents of Primary 1 pupils are asked to send into school a labelled bag containing clean underwear for their child.

If a child's underwear is changed due to a soiling incident the child will be asked and encouraged to change their underwear in private and carry out the act themselves. Help will be provided with any zips and buttons. A record of the incident will be kept in school and the parent will be informed verbally or via a note in the child's school bag. (Appendix 1)

If a child has a medical condition which is likely to lead to soiling and subsequent staff intervention, the parents will be asked to sign a permission form so that staff can clean and change their child if necessary.

If a parent *does not* give consent, the school will contact the parents or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child.

If the parents or emergency contact is able to come within a few minutes, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives.

Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent to arrive, an adult will stay with them giving comfort and reassurance. The child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed.

When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.

If a child needs to be cleaned, staff will make sure that:

- protective gloves are worn;
- the procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process;
- the child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible;
- physical contact is kept to a minimum in order to carry out the necessary cleaning;
- privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation;
- any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet;
- soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child.

### **3.1 Hygiene**

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and have access to protective, disposable gloves. These are stored with the first aid box.

### **4.1 Protection for staff**

Staff should at all times be mindful of their code of conduct, remembering that their actions should be beyond reproach and always child centred. They should:

- gain a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary;
- allow the child, wherever possible, to express a preference to choose his/her carer and encourage them to say if they find a carer to be unacceptable;
- allow the child a choice in the sequence of care;
- be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions.

### **4.2 Safeguards for children**

All staff and volunteers in Victoria Primary School must gain Access NI clearance before working in the school. Children's rights to privacy will always be respected when dealing with intimate care issues. Volunteers will not be asked to carry out intimate care.



## Intimate Care Permission

Pupils Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for school staff to assist my child with intimate care provision as required by my child.

I understand that any specific requests need to be forwarded to the school in writing.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Addendum To Intimate Care Policy In Light Of Covid-19**

The full policy reflects our school's commitment to intimate care, however, in light of Covid-19, the following changes are required and are outlined in this addendum:

- When providing intimate care, members of staff must wear an appropriate face covering, gloves and a disposable apron. This is as a result of staff members being unable to keep a suitable social distance away from a pupil.