



St Therese of Lisieux Primary School

Intimate Care Policy

Reviewed Oct 2022

RATIONALE

The Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children have been developed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to everyone in St Therese of Lisieux involved in the intimate care of children.

The Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Policy and Procedures April 2005.

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.

Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral care
- Washing
- Dressing/undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual Care
- Photographs
- Treatments such as enemas, suppositories, enteral feeds
- Catheter and stoma care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

PRINCIPLES OF INTIMATE CARE

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are 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 and consulted in 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 such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- In St Therese of Lisieux, all staff providing intimate care for children must be vetted by Access NI. This includes students on work placement and volunteers. Vetting includes:
- Access NI checks/Pre-employment checks/Two independent references
- Only named staff identified by the school should undertake the intimate care of children.
- The school must ensure that all staff undertaking the intimate care of children are familiar with, understand and agree to the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines together with associated Policy and Procedures.
- All staff must be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines within the context of their work.
- Intimate care arrangements must be agreed by staff/parents/carers and child (if appropriate).
- Intimate care arrangements must be recorded in the child's personal file and consent forms signed by the parents / carers and child (if appropriate).
- Staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed between the school, parents / carers and child (if appropriate).
- The school needs to make provisions for emergencies i.e. a staff member on sick leave. Additional trained staff should be available

to undertake specific intimate care tasks. Do not assume someone else can do the task.

- Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed at least six monthly. The views of all relevant parties, including the child (if appropriate), should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.
- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice they must report this to their designated teacher immediately.

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.

Occasionally care may need to be carried out by one staff member alone with one child. The practice of providing one-one intimate care of a child alone is supported. However, we endeavour to have an additional staff member close by to support staff and child. On occasions the activity

may require 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 / school 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.

- 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 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 teacher.

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

A written record of concerns must be made and kept on file or if it is a child protection matter the record must be kept in their Child Protection File.

It is important to follow St Therese of Lisieux reporting and recording procedures.

Parents / carers must be informed about concerns in line with the school Child Protection Policy.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

Principles:

- There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children.
- The individual child's safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance.

The practical guidelines set out below, are written in the knowledge that the current ratio of female to male staff means we are far less likely to be able to offer the choice of same sex carer to male children.

Intimate Care

The intimate care of boys / girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- (a) The delivery of intimate care by professionally qualified staff will be governed by their professional code of conduct in conjunction with school policy and procedures.
- (b) 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 over.
- (c) If the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
- (d) Report concerns to your Designated Teacher and make a written record.
- (e) Parents / carers must be informed about concerns, if appropriate in line with the school Child Protection Policy.

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. Education is a key factor in breaking the stigma surrounding periods and promoting respect, understanding and open discussions about what people may experience when menstruating.

Through our PDMU and RSE curricula we aim to help our pupils understand:

- Changes in their body during puberty
- Menstruation, the facts
- Menstrual wellness – physical and emotional wellbeing, leading up to and during periods
- Menstrual hygiene – essential facts and how to deal with related situations
- Challenges – pain, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, myths.

A supply of sanitary towels is kept in KS2 classrooms/toilets to ensure products are available when needed. It is not the policy intention to make blanket provision of period products for all pupils. However, affordability is more of a factor for some learners than others, and they may wish to avail of the free products to meet their needs throughout the academic year, in school and by taking products home. Other learners may need to access the scheme because they have started their period in school unexpectedly or have forgotten to bring period products with them.

Parents are given information about the sanitary items available for pupils in school. Children are informed of the period dignity scheme and the items available to them in school in September. They are advised of the teachers and assistants they can approach if they have any issues. Staff will be vigilant for any children who are distressed or experiencing discomfort due to menstruation. Children will be treated with care and sensitivity. Staff will work alongside parents, to ensure that absences

are not caused by children unable to manage periods or lacking confidence. Parents will be informed of any issues that arise.

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 encourage my child to be independent.

I understand that I will be informed discreetly about the incident.

Signed: _____

Adult with parental responsibility for: _____

Appendix 2

Record of Intimate Care



Child's Name	Date	Time	Comment	Staff Involved	Signature