

Sacred Heart P.S.



Intimate Care Policy

January 2023

Rationale for Intimate Care Policy

This policy is in line with Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 3: 'The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children'.

In Sacred Heart P.S. we promote independence in each child regarding their self-care. We do, however, recognise that there will be times when help is required in this area. Our Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It forms part of the school's overall Pastoral Care Policies. The principles and procedures outlined here apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children and focus on being sensitive to children's 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 assistance with:

toileting; feeding; washing; changing clothes; first aid; supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

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 involved in and consulted with regarding their own intimate care to the best of their ability
- 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
- be treated with dignity and respect

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child at the earliest possible opportunity. Medical advice in relation to such needs should also be shared with the class teacher.

School Responsibilities

Whilst all members of staff working with our children are vetted appropriately including students and volunteers, only **employed** members of staff will be involved in the intimate care of children. In addition to the information contained in this Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to our Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies.

At the start of each academic year parents of pupils in Foundation Stage classes are asked for permission for staff to carry out intimate care for their child (with particular reference to toileting accidents). Known intimate care arrangements which will be required on a regular basis will be agreed between the school and parents, and when appropriate with the child. All needs and arrangements will be shared with the relevant classroom assistants.

Intimate care arrangements for any child who requires this support on a regular basis will be reviewed mid-year and when moving to the next year group.

Good Practice Guidelines

We will implement the following Good Practice Guidelines, striving to:

1. Involve the child in his/her intimate care.
2. Treat the child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.

Care should never be carried out behind a closed door by a member of staff alone with a child. The door should be kept ajar and another adult should be told that intimate care is being provided to ensure that additional help will be available if needed. If a child has an appropriate degree of independence, the adult will assume a role of supervision and will straddle the doorway providing verbal assistance whilst affording as much privacy as possible. The child will be told that 'hands on' help will be available if needed.

3. Communicate well with the child throughout the process
4. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent
5. Be aware of our own limitations
6. Promote positive self-esteem and body image among pupils
7. Promote good quality hygiene practice

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection e.g. where the child has suffered cut/broken skin – and must ensure the use of appropriate protective equipment when necessary, for example, protective, disposable latex/vinyl gloves. Pupils will be shown how to wash their hands thoroughly following participation in their own intimate care.

N.B. If the child has had a toileting accident that has involved bowel movements and the soiling has been significant, parents will be informed.

8. Work with children of the opposite sex in a manner that leaves pupils and adults comfortable and safe. (The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex unless the staff member, child or parent has requested otherwise).

9. Report any concerns that may arise

The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection must be informed if a staff member has concerns about a colleagues' intimate care practice. They should also be informed if staff observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swellings on a child.

Arrangements for menstrual care with older female pupils:

We are aware that this is a very sensitive area for primary school children and this care will be provided in a sensitive manner. An increasing number of pupils begin their menstruation in Primary Six and Primary Seven and we encourage parents to inform us if their daughter has reached this stage of development. Our aim is to protect our pupils' privacy while helping them to know that they can talk to an adult if they wish. Sanitary towels are available in school.

We encourage parents to have a conversation with their daughter regarding this issue at a time when they feel it is appropriate for their own child.

In the event of a girl's menstrual cycle starting unexpectedly in school for the first time and her confiding in a member of staff, the class teacher, if female, or a trusted female assistant will chat to her, reassuring her and providing practical assistance. The adult dealing with the situation will then contact the child's parent to inform them of what has happened and how it has been handled.

Arrangements for monitoring and review of this policy:

This Policy will be monitored on an on-going basis and reviewed annually.

See Appendix A: Parental Permission for Intimate Care

APPENDIX A



Dear Parent/Guardian,

It may be necessary during your child's time in school from Primary 1 to Primary 3 for an appropriate member of staff to assist with changing (e.g in the event of sickness/toileting needs). If this situation does occur, we will endeavour to contact you. In line with our Code of Practice and the statutory requirements of the Child Protection Act it is necessary for the school to have the permission of parents/guardians on this matter.

Please complete the slip below and return it to your child's teacher.

Yours sincerely,
Mr Fitzsimons
Principal

I give permission for the staff of Sacred Heart P.S. to assist my child/children with changing when necessary.

Childs Name - _____

Parent Signature - _____

Date - _____