



Intimate Care Policy

The pastoral care of our children is central to our aims and Catholic ethos. We are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children. Our Intimate Care Policy is part of our collective pastoral care policies. It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

‘Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, carer and the child.’

In school this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. We are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all our children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain and adults and staff must be sensitive to each child’s individual needs. Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

1. Assisting a child to change his/her clothes
2. Changing or washing a child who has soiled him / herself
3. Sanitary Products
4. Assisting with toileting issues
5. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care
6. Providing first aid assistance
7. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child
8. Feeding a child
9. 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 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.

Assisting a child to change his / her clothes

This is more common in our Foundation Stage. On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he / she has an accident in 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 always ensure that they 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 staff are concerned in any way parents will be sent for and asked to assist their child and informed if the child becomes distressed.

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. 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 (A supply of clean underwear is kept in the Medical Room).
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to contact the emergency contact to inform them of the situation.
- If the 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 emergency contact cannot attend, school will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child. If none of the contacts can be reached the headship team are to be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child.
- Ensure that the action you are taking is necessary.
- 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.

Sanitary products

The school will keep a supply of sanitary products for girls in the junior classes. These supplies will always be kept in the first aid room in the designated cupboard.

Junior girls will be informed that sanitary products are available to obtain in a discreet manner if need be at all times but that a member of staff must always be informed before products are taken.

Providing comfort or support to a child:

There are situations and circumstances where children seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Early Years). Where this happens staff need to be aware that any physical contact must be kept to a minimum. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, 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 professionally appropriate to the age and context. If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable. If a child touches a member of staff, as noted above, this should be discussed, in confidence with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Changing for PE

Girls and boys in KS2 from year 5 to year 6 will be given the option to change in two separate rooms so they are given more privacy.

First Aid:

First aid to be carried out by first aiders only. (see first aid policy)

Swimming:

All classes participate in a swimming programme at Thomas More swimming pool. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes however, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur. Boys and girls get changed in separate changing rooms.

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.

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.
3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent. 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 markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the Designated safeguarding officer. If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the designated teacher. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child to one of the headship team.

Links with other policies:

First Aid
Medication policy
Child protection
Safeguarding

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