
Strathearn Preparatory Department

INTIMATE CARE POLICY



Intimate Care Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children in our school community. All adults who come in contact with pupils in Strathearn Preparatory Department have a duty to promote their welfare and are in a position of trust with them and their parents.

PRINCIPLES OF INTIMATE CARE

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy is based:

We in Strathearn Preparatory Department have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals. We work to establish an inclusive community where all pupils are treated with dignity and respect. We believe that every child has the right to personal privacy and 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 and they have the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

WHAT IS INTIMATE CARE?

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/carers.

Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral care
- Washing
- Dressing/undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care
- Cleaning up a child after wetting/soiling incident
- Photographs
- First aid (Designated first aiders are G Boyd and B Brittain)
- Medical procedures (assisting a child who requires specific medical procedures 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).

NB Parents are responsible for providing the school with comprehensive information regarding the pupil's condition and medication (as noted in the Policy for the Administration of Medication in School).

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of our school have also adopted a Code of Conduct for our behaviour towards pupils. This Code is set out in a separate document: *Strathearn School – Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers* and clearly states that all adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of the children and should, therefore adopt standards of personal conduct that will not compromise their position.

- The Head of Department must ensure that all staff undertaking the intimate care of children are familiar with, and understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines together with associated Policies and Procedures e.g. ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures 2005, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.
- 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.
- Only staff named by the school will undertake the intimate care of children.
- Ongoing intimate care arrangements must be agreed by the school, parents/carers and child (if possible).
- Ongoing intimate care arrangements must be recorded in the child's confidential record file and consent forms signed by parents/carers.
- 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 has made provisions for emergencies i.e. if a child wets or soils themselves. At the start of each school year parents/carers in the Foundation Stage are informed of our provision and procedures in this area and consent is requested and recorded. In the event of consent not being given parents will be contacted to administer the intimate care. Children in P3 – P7 would be encouraged to independently change their clothing and parents/carers would be informed of the incident.
- Specific intimate care arrangements that have been specially agreed with a parent are reviewed annually. The views of all relevant parties, including the child (if appropriate), are 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 the Designated or Deputy Designated teacher for Pastoral Care, who will follow school procedures to ensure the safeguarding of the child concerned.

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff of Strathearn Preparatory Department. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children. If a child is distressed or protests, the intimate care should stop and parents/carers contacted. Disabled children can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs and follow agreed care plans. Staff members 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

Staff should try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in her intimate care. Where the child is fully dependent, staff should talk with them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible. Staff should check their practice by asking the child/parent about 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

If intimate care is required by a child, due regard should be given to the child's privacy and dignity and it is advisable to have two adults present.

Be aware of limitations

Staff should only carry out care activities they understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If they are uncertain they should ask for advice or assistance from another trained member of staff or Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for Pastoral Care. Some procedures must only be carried out by staff who have been formally trained.

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 taken to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. A member of staff's attitude to a child's intimate care is very important.

Concerns must be reported

The school's child protection procedures will be fully adhered to.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil's presentation, e.g. unexplained marks, bruises, etc. she will immediately report her concerns to the designated Teacher for Child Protection (G Boyd). A clear written record of the concern will be completed and normal child protection referral procedures will be initiated.

Any unusual emotional or behavioural response by a child will be reported to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher. A written record of any concerns will be made, given to the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher and kept in the child's confidential record. Parents/carers will be informed about any concerns about a child.

Please refer to:

- Regional Area Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures – April 2005
- DENI Child Protection & Pastoral Care Guidance 1999
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

General Care

Staff can be involved with children in:

- a) Key-working and liaising with families
- b) Co-ordinating of and contribution to a child's review
- c) Meeting the developmental, emotional and recreational needs of the children
- d) Ideally, every child should have the choice of carer for all their intimate care

Listening to the child's wishes

Wherever possible, the girls should be offered the choice of carer and second carer. Where there is any doubt that a child is able to make an informed choice on these issues, the child's parents are usually in the best position to act as advocates. It may be possible to determine a child's wishes by observation of the reactions to the intimate care they receive. It should not be assumed that a child cannot make a choice.

Carrying out intimate care

The intimate care of the children can be carried out by a member of staff with the following provisions:

- a) The member of staff is authorised by the Principal to have lawful control or charge of pupils (see Safe Handling and Reasonable Force Policy)
- b) The delivery of intimate care by professionally qualified staff will be governed by our Staff Code of Conduct in conjunction with school policy and procedures.
- c) If the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. It should be ascertained why the

- child is distressed and reassurance provided. Concerns should be reported to the Designated/Deputy Teacher and a written record made.
- d) Parents/carers must be informed about concerns.

Emergency Intimate Care - Good Practice Checklist for staff

Such care might be necessary with a child who has wet or soiled themselves, a child who has been hurt and treatment requires removal of clothing, or a medical emergency.

- If possible, request another member of staff/pupil to be present with pupil who requires care.
- Ensure the child's dignity at all times; they should be appropriately covered, door closed or curtains put in place.
- Reassure the child and tell them what you plan to do
- Listen to the child's wishes
- If they are distressed or protest, stop the care immediately and contact parents/carers
- Class Teacher will report the duty of intimate care to Designated Teacher following the event and record
- Inform the parent about the care that was administered. Staff member will phone/talk to the parent about the incident and the care that was administered.
- If you have any concerns regarding the child report them immediately to the Designated/Deputy Teacher for Pastoral Care.

How a parent can make a complaint about Intimate Care

Parents also need to know how they can make a complaint regarding the intimate care of their child. Often this will be by speaking directly to the Head of Department, or informing the Designated Teacher. The School will send information regarding expressing a concern to all new pupils and to existing pupils every two years, (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2017). Posters are also displayed in the School.

STRATHEARN PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

Appendix 1

**PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR
INTIMATE CARE**

Child:	
DOB:	
Address:	
Parent / Guardian	

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 discreetly should the occasion arise.

Signed: _____

STRATHEARN PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

Appendix 2

RECORD OF INTIMATE CARE

Name of pupil	
---------------	--

Date	Time	Comments	Staff Involved	Signature/s

--	--	--	--	--