Intimate Care Policy & Guidelines

Gaelscoil na Móna
Ní neart go cur le chéile

"Striving Together for Achievement"

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines have been developed to safeguard children and staff in Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna. They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.
Disabled children can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care will be sensitive to their individual needs.
The Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Policy and Procedures April 2005.

2.0 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 take seriously their 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

3.0 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.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff working with children will be vetted by Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna. This includes students on work placement and volunteers. Vetting includes:

- Access NI checks
- Pre-employment checks
- Two independent references

Only named staff identified by Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna will undertake the intimate care of children. Those on Teaching Experience, work placements and volunteers will not undertake intimate care. Named staff responsible for intimate care will be recorded on Intimate Care Plans.

All staff undertaking the intimate care of children are familiar with, and understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines together with associated Policy and Procedures e.g. ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures 2005, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 .

All staff undertaking the intimate care of children which is outside the standard toileting and changing procedures (see Appendix 2) will 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 in Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna. It is incumbent on parents/carers to discuss the intimate care needs of their child before intimate care needs arise in school.

Intimate care arrangements must be agreed by Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna, parents/carers and child (if appropriate).

Intimate care arrangements (Intimate Care Plans) must be recorded in the child's personal file and consent forms signed by the parents/carers and child (if appropriate).

Staff will not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed between the school, parents/carers and child (if appropriate).

If a named staff member for intimate care is on sick leave, another trained staff member may undertake intimate care, in agreement with the school, parent/carer and child (if appropriate).

Intimate care plans will be reviewed at least six monthly, or as the need arises, whichever is sooner. The views of all relevant parties, including the child (if appropriate), will 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 Gaelscoil na Móna's Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or the Principal.

4.1 Confidentiality

Information regarding agreed procedures must be treated confidentially and recorded/held only in the child's school file. Information should not be disclosed or discussed with any adults other than those with responsibility for the child's personal care, and should not be referred to in the presence of other children.

Care should be provided at agreed times, at the child's request or in response to an agreed signal. Staff should make themselves familiar with the child's manner of communication, whether verbal, sign or eye contact.
Appropriate terminology for parts of the body and bodily functions should be clarified between the child, parents, and his/her assistant/s.

4.2 Vulnerability to abuse
Children should be encouraged to recognise and challenge inappropriate assistance, and behaviour that erodes their dignity and self-worth.
However, the following factors may increase a child's vulnerability:

- Experience of multiple carers;
- The inability to distinguish between assistance and abuse; and
- The inability to communicate.

While adults are protected by their adherence to procedure, the following factors may increase their vulnerability:

- The possibility of accidents;
- The possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretation; and
- The possibility of the child becoming aroused.

Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna will ensure that the programme of assistance is monitored and both child and adult given the opportunity to report any concerns that they may have. The Principal and Designated Teacher for Child Protection will undertake this responsibility

5.0 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.

5.1 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.

5.2 Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation. A lot of care is carried out by one staff member/carer alone with one child. The practice of providing one-one intimate care of a child alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the child or the child prefers two persons.

5.3 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/the school ensures practice is consistent.

5.4 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.

5.5 Promote positive self-esteem and body image.
Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies 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, enjoyable and fun.

5.6 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 the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal.
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 the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal.

Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made and kept in the child's medical notes/personal file.
Staff must adhere to Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna's Child Protection reporting and recording procedures.
Parents/carers must be informed about concerns, in line with the Child Protection Policy.
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

6.0 WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

6.1 Principles:
There is a positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children.
Ideally, every child should have the choice of carer for all their intimate care.
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.

6.2 General Care
Male and female staff can be involved with children of either sex in:
(a) Keyworking 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) Escorting the children between sites, on outings and to clinics, unless intimate care is needed.

6.3 Intimate Care
Wherever possible, boys and 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 their reactions to the intimate care they receive. Do not assume that a child cannot make a choice.
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 Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Mona's policies and procedures.
(b) Staff who are not governed by a professional code of conduct must follow these policy and guidelines and the Child Protection arrangements of Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna and agreement must be provided by the
Designated Teacher/Principal.
(c) 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 or screens / curtains put in place.
(d) 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.
(e) Report concerns to your Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal and make a written record.
(f) Parents / carers must be informed about concerns, in line with the Child Protection Policy.

7.0 COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication.
Children communicate using different methods e.g. words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing.
To ensure effective communication:

- Ascertain how the child communicates e.g. consult with child, parent / carer and, if appropriate, communication needs must be recorded (please refer to Appendix 1, Communication Proforma for Intimate Care: How I Communicate). If further information is required, please consult with the child's Speech and Language Therapist.
- Make eye contact at the child's level.
- Use simple language and repeat if necessary.
- Wait for response.
- Continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response.
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

APPENDIX 1

Communication Proforma for Intimate Care

How I Communicate

Name: _____
Date: _____

I communicate using words / signs / communication book / communication aid / body movements.
I indicate my likes / preferences by _____
I indicate my dislikes by _____
I show I am happy by _____ and unhappy by _____

If appropriate please complete the following:

- When I need to go to the toilet I _____
- When I need changed I _____

Additional information
_____
_____

Speech and Language Therapist:

Occupational Therapist:

Key worker/s _____

Contact-Number/s _____

Parent/carer signature _____

APPENDIX 2

Toileting and Changing Procedures

In line with our admissions policy, children should be toilet-trained and able to carry out age-appropriate intimate care independently. All children are encouraged to use Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna's toileting facilities independently. These are within secure buildings with no unauthorised access by the public.

However, we recognise that some children may have medical or educational needs which mean that they require assistance with toileting and/or changing from wet/soiled clothing. Any child, through illness, or accident, may require assistance with toileting, changing or cleaning.

On educational trips, risk assessments prior to the trips will ascertain the most appropriate toileting facilities/arrangements to afford children safety and privacy in using the toilet.

When Assistance is Needed

In case of toilet accidents/sickness/wet through water play where the child needs to be cleaned/clothes need to be changed, the procedures are:

- If a child is independent, staff will provide child with necessary equipment e.g. wipes, change of underwear/clothes. Child will be encouraged to carry out cleaning and changing process independently.
- Where a child has special educational or medical needs which include any aspect of intimate care, Gaelscoil na Móna's Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines will be followed and an Intimate Care Plan drawn up in agreement with the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher or Principal, parents/carers and child (if appropriate).
- We recognise that circumstances may arise when a child is unable to clean/change himself/herself.
- In these circumstances, to preserve the comfort and dignity of the child, Gaelscoil staff will intervene and assist the child with cleaning and changing, including directly cleaning their bottom if necessary.
- Staff will endeavour to always ensure the child's privacy and dignity.
- Baby wipes will be used to clean children unless they have a known allergy.
- Any staff member involved will wear disposable gloves to ensure the health and safety of the children and themselves.
- All used wipes and gloves will be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag.
- After these procedures staff and child should use a recommended sanitising hand wash for health and safety reasons.
- Parents/carers will be informed of incident and asked to sign an Intimate Care Record.
- Soiled clothing will be put in a plastic bag, sealed and discreetly given to parent/carer upon collection of the child.

Supervisory Arrangements

Prior to educational visits, supervisory arrangements in case of a child needing intimate care assistance will be made whilst undertaking risk assessments.

In Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna buildings, if ad hoc intimate care assistance is required:

- Relevant staff will be informed.
- One member of staff will accompany child to the toilet and carry out any necessary cleaning and changing tasks (including cleaning child's bottom if necessary).
- These procedures will be carried out in the open area of the toilets and not behind a closed cubicle door i.e. in a cubicle with the door open if possible whilst assuring the dignity, privacy and comfort of the child.
- If deemed necessary for the child's dignity, privacy and/or comfort, a disabled toilet may be used.
- A second member of staff will stand between the toilet and classroom where both areas will be visible to them. This staff member will be accessible in case assistance is needed by the caregiver and/or in the classroom.
- Wherever possible, a third staff member should supervise the classroom. This may require co-opting a teacher or classroom assistant from other duties.

At all times, actions will be in line with our Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines and with the Child Protection Policy. The welfare of the child is always paramount, and we will do our utmost to preserve the child's dignity and their right to privacy.

APPENDIX 3

PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

Please read Gaelscoil and Naíscoil na Móna's Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines carefully before signing or ticking yes/no.

If you have any questions, please ask staff.

I have read, understand and agree with Intimate Care Policy of Gaelscoil & Naíscoil na Móna:

Yes ☐ No ☐

I give permission for my child's bottom to be cleaned by staff when necessary:

Yes ☐ No ☐

I give permission for my child's clothes to be changed by staff when necessary:

Yes ☐ No ☐

I give permission for my child's underwear to be changed by staff when necessary:

Yes ☐ No ☐

I would prefer to be contacted immediately, and agree to come to school immediately, instead of staff carrying out intimate care:

Yes ☐ No ☐

My child has intimate care needs, and I will meet with staff to agree an Intimate Care Plan. I will contact the school immediately to arrange this:

Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature of parent/carer…….. Date…….

Signature of Teacher…….. Date…….

APPENDIX 4

Intimate Care Plan

PARENTS	
Legal name of child	
Preferred name of child	
Date of birth	
Type of intimate care needed	
How often care will be given	
What training staff will be given	
Where care will take place	
What resources and equipment will be used, and who will provide them	
Any religious views, beliefs and cultural values to be considered	
Any safeguarding concerns to be accounted for	
Preferred means of communication of the pupil – Appendix 1 of the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines completed and attached? ☐	

Agreed appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions to be noted in the plan.	
How procedures will differ if taking place on a trip or outing	
Name of nominated member of staff responsible for undertaking intimate care (caregiver)	
Name of second member of staff responsible for undertaking intimate care (second caregiver) if nominated member of staff is unavailable.	
CHILD	
How many members of staff would you like to help you?	
One ☐ Two ☐	
Name of parent or carer	
Relationship to child	
Signature of parent or carer	
Date	
Signature of child (if appropriate)	
Date	
Signature of nominated caregiver	
Date	
Signature of second caregiver	
Date	

This plan will be reviewed twice a year.

Next review date:

To be reviewed by:

APPENDIX 5

Record Of Intimate Care Interventions

Child's Name …… Date of birth ……

Date	Time	Procedure	Comments	Staff name(s)	Staff signature(s)