

# Roan St Patrick's Primary School



## **Intimate Care Policy**

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#### **Introduction:**

Our Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It is one of a range of specific policies that contribute to our Pastoral Care Policy. The principles and procedures apply to all staff involved in the intimate care of children.

Children are generally more vulnerable than adults and staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Whilst it is our intention to develop independence in each child there will be occasions when help is required. Intimate care may be defined 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 can include:

- Toileting
- Feeding
- Washing
- Changing clothes
- First Aid and medical assistance and
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school on 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 the right to:

- Be safe
- Personal privacy
- Be valued as an individual
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Be involved and consulted in their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account
- Have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent

## **School Responsibilities:**

All staff in Roan are vetted by the E.A. This includes students on work placement and volunteers unless they have been deemed exempt as stipulated in DENI Circular 2012/19 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING ARRANGEMENTS: CHANGES TO PRE-EMPLOYMENT VETTING CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN SCHOOLS FROM 10 SEPTEMBER 2012.

Vetting includes criminal record checks and two references.

Only those members of staff who are familiar with the Intimate Care Policy and other Pastoral Care Policies of Roan are involved in the intimate care of the children. Volunteers or students will not be involved.

Anticipated intimate care arrangements which are required on a regular basis are agreed between the school and parents and when appropriate and possible, by the child.

In such cases, consent forms are signed and stored in school.

Intimate care arrangements for any child who requires this support on a regular basis should be reviewed at least every six months.

The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. Any amendments to the arrangements should be recorded and made available for all parties involved.

Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. This act of intimate care would be reported to a member of staff and parents at the earliest possible time following the event.

If a member of staff has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated or (Deputy) person for Child Protection.

### **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 the 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.

Members of 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 forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation.

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.

Care should not be carried out by a member of staff without the knowledge of another member of staff. As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

If you have any concerns you must report them to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection i.e. Mrs O'Lone and Mr Mone respectively. This includes any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling.

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. The school's Child Protection Policy will be followed.

#### August 2020 – Covid-19 Update

- Any member of staff engaging in intimate care with some pupils must wear PPE provided.
- If a member of staff has been identified as vulnerable and instructed to not provide personal/intimate care as a result of their risk assessment, they must not engage in an activity that would pose a threat. This includes nose-wiping, toileting, attending to nose bleeds etc.
- If a second member of staff is required, staff should contact the office. A second member of staff will then attend whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines. Soiled clothes should be double bagged and kept in a safe area at least 2m away from staff and pupils.



## **Wetting and Soiling**

Should a child wet or soil him/herself staff will decide the most appropriate response and act according to the Guidelines for Good Practice. 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. Depending on their age, maturity and levels of stress children may communicate using different methods – words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc., to ensure effective communication:

- 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

Staff should always encourage good hygiene standards by asking the children to flush the toilet after use, wash their hands with soap and water provided in the children's toilet area and disposing of paper towels in the waste paper bin, after drying hands.

It is our Policy to always have a spare change of clothing in the event of an "accident".

Each child is encouraged to attend to and clean him/herself, after going to the toilet. However, if a child has wet or soiled him/herself and he/she need help in changing, a member of staff with an open door policy will see to the child's needs.

Each parent has signed a Parental Consent form giving permission this.

If a child continues to wet or soil he/she may be asked to take a break from school until the issue is solved.

## **Our school is part of ‘The NI Period Dignity Pilot Scheme’.**

Period Dignity refers to the accessibility and availability of essential care needed to support a period, in conjunction with the breaking of stigma and taboo around periods.

Our school aims to ensure that free period products are available to learners where and when they need them, as well as provide educational support within the school setting.

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

In school we aim to:

- Talk about periods more openly, making it less embarrassing to talk to teachers, asking pupils directly what products they need. These products are replenished accordingly.
- Provide more information sessions to raise awareness by participating in the ‘Love for Life’ programme. This programme is aimed at all pupils within the Primary 7 classroom.
- Be more open to the needs of pupils on their period, for instance if they need time off or out of class due to their period.
- Inform staff about the project.
- Ensure that everyone knows what period products are available and where they can be accessed.

Mrs O’Lone is the key contact who oversees this scheme and ensures that products are available if a child requires these products or needs to talk.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to note that in addition to the information in the Intimate Care Policy, reference should also be made to the Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or when deemed necessary as a result of further guidance given by DENI or other statutory/advisory bodies. All stakeholders will be involved in the review through a consultation process.

Signed:

Chairman of the Board of Governors:

Date: