



MALLUSK INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Rationale

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our intimate care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It complements our Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Safe Handling Policies and our Code of Conduct. The principles and procedures apply to everyone 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.

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
- oral care
- washing
- changing clothes
- first aid and medical assistance
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

Parents have a 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 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
- 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 such views taken into account
- every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

School Responsibilities

All members of staff working with children are vetted by the Education Authority. This includes students on work placement and volunteers. Vetting for appropriate staff 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 the school are involved in the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child. Consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in the child's file. **Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents and school.** Parents would then be contacted immediately.

Intimate care arrangements should be reviewed annually. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated Teacher 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 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.

No staff member will carry a mobile phone or similar device whilst providing intimate care.

It is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve touching private parts of a child's body. For the protection of both children and staff, at Mallusk Integrated Primary School the following guidelines of good practice will be adhered to.

1. Involve the child in the intimate care

Encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Give the child responsibility for washing themselves and removing their own soiled clothing. In a situation where a child is unable to do this, or the soiling requires a child being cleaned, staff will wear disposable gloves and will talk to the child 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. 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.

3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.

As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. 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. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.

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 Teacher for Child Protection, the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal and make a written record

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. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child protection cabinet.

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. Depending on their 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

Outline Procedures for Intimate Care and Changing

In the event of any child requiring a change of clothes due to sickness, toileting accidents or a child arriving at school rain wet, it is the agreed policy of the school to act immediately to address the child's discomfort and distress.

Reassuring words, understanding and sympathy will be administered immediately and another member of staff will be called up to assist.

The following course of action will take place if previous consent has not been given or circumstances have been extreme:

- Parents will be contacted and given the option to come to school and change their child or give consent for staff to proceed
- If contact could not be made it will be ascertained that the parents of the child in question have agreed to allow an intimate change to take place via the Intimate Care Consent Forms

Once permission has been confirmed:

- Items of required clothing will be collected from the school's supply in the agreed storage point
- The child will be accompanied by two members of staff to the relevant pupil toilets. The disability toilet may be used as space for the child to change/be changed.
- Once all other pupils have vacated the toilets, one staff member will accompany the child into the toilets, remaining outside the cubicle, with the other staff member remaining at the door to the toilets. The utmost discretion will be exercised and each member of staff will at all times be aware of the other's actions
- According to the age and capability of the child, he/she may be able to change independently with the support staff outside the door
- Where a child is unable to change independently, two members of staff will be present. If a child requires help removing clothing or needs help with cleaning, staff will wear disposable gloves and will talk to the child about what is going to be done and, where possible, give choices.
- Parents/carers will be informed of any action concerning the child that is taken by means of the *Record of Intimate Care form*
- A soiled child will be removed from the class or if this is not possible the rest of the class will be removed from the classroom to maintain the child's dignity
- Under no circumstance will a child be allowed to go home in a soiled condition if the teacher is aware of the situation
- If there is a consistent problem of a child soiling themselves then parents/carers will be involved in drawing up an action plan to address the issue. This action plan may include a reward system to encourage the child at home/school and may also include contacting the G.P.

Should any child's parents/carers have made it clear that they don't wish to have their child's clothes changed in such instances, the school will make contact to inform the parents of the details and follow any given instructions. Should a parent be non-contactable the principal will act in loco parentis.



Intimate Care Consent Form

I have read the school's policy on intimate care and give permission for a member of staff or vetted volunteer to deal with my child/ren whenever necessary.

I understand that intimate care can include:

- toileting
- feeding
- oral care
- washing
- changing clothes
- first aid and medical assistance
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

Name of child for whom my permission is given:

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____



Record of Intimate Care for: _____

Your child required intimate care today. This was carried out in accordance with our school policy, i.e. in the presence of a witness and with respect for the privacy, needs and wishes of the child. When given appropriate attention the child then continued happily with the school day.

Please talk to your child about the incident and contact school if you have any concerns.

Carer: _____ Witness: _____

Date: _____

(This copy goes to the Parent/Guardian)

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Record of Intimate Care for: _____

Your child required intimate care today. This was carried out in accordance with our school policy, i.e. in the presence of a witness and with respect for the privacy, needs and wishes of the child. When given appropriate attention the child then continued happily with the school day.

Please talk to your child about the incident and contact school if you have any concerns.

Carer: _____ Witness: _____

Date: _____

(This copy remains in school)