



'OPENING DOORS OF
OPPORTUNITY TOGETHER'

INTIMATE CARE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

SEPTEMBER 2024



MISSION STATEMENT

Meadow Bridge Primary School aims to foster a safe, happy and caring environment where each child's personal development is nurtured.

Every child's educational journey is enhanced and their lives enriched through stimulating learning experiences.

Equal emphasis will be placed on pastoral care and on ensuring each individual reaches his or her academic potential, equipping them for the future.

INTIMATE CARE POLICY STATEMENT

The 'Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines' has been developed to safeguard children and staff. The Policy applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children. Disabled children can be especially vulnerable.

The Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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 have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents.

Intimate care can include:

- Feeding
- Oral Care
- Washing
- Dressing/Undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual Care
- Treatments such as Enemas, Suppositories, Enteral Feeds
- Catheter and Stoma Care
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

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 in and consulted on their own intimate care to the best of their ability.
- 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.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff in Meadow Bridge Primary School undertaking the intimate care of children will be familiar with and understand the Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines, together with associated Policies and Procedures, eg SBNI Guidance, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

- Relevant staff in Meadow Bridge 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.
- Intimate care arrangements will be agreed by the school, parents/carers, and child (if appropriate).
- Staff will not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed between Meadow Bridge, parents/carers, and child (if appropriate).

- In Meadow Bridge provision will be made for emergencies, ie if a staff member is absent due to illness. Additional trained staff will generally be available to undertake specific intimate care tasks although parents should not assume that there will always be another appropriately trained member of staff available to carry out the task. In exceptional circumstances when it has not been possible to provide an appropriately trained member of staff, a parent/carer will be asked to assist with care for their child at the appropriate time(s), on a short-term basis, to enable the child to continue their education.
- Intimate care arrangements will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if required due to a change in circumstances. The views of all relevant parties, including the child (if appropriate), should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.
- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, they will report this to either Mr A McCollum (DT/Vice-Principal), or Ms R Stirling (DDT/Head of Key Stage 1).

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.

Staff involved with intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs. Staff also need to be aware that some adults may use the delivery of intimate care, as 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.

In Meadow Bridge Primary School, staff will:

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 him/her about what is going to be done and give choice where possible.
- Check staff practice by asking the child/parent 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:

- A lot of care is carried out by one staff member while alone with one child. The practice of providing one-to-one intimate care while alone with a child is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the child, or the child prefers two persons.

Make sure intimate care practice is consistent:

- As a child can have multiple carers, a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parents/carers/agencies, ensures practice is consistent.

Be aware of own limitations:

- Staff will only carry out care activities they understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If in doubt, they will ask.
- Staff will be fully trained in any procedures which require formal training and assessment, eg enteral feeding.

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.
- It is recognised that the staff member's attitude to the child's intimate care is important. With the child's age in mind, routine care can be relaxed, enjoyable, and fun,

Ideally, every child should have the choice of carer for all their intimate care. The delivery of intimate care by professionally qualified staff will be governed by Meadow Bridge Primary School's professional Code of Conduct in conjunction with the school's Policy and Guidelines and in agreement with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Principal:

- The individual child's safety, dignity and privacy are of paramount importance.
- When intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy, ie they should be appropriately covered, the door closed, or screens/curtains put in place.
- If the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal care tasks are being carried out, the care will stop immediately. The staff member will attempt to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
- Concerns will be reported to the Designated Teacher and a written record made.
- Parents/Carers will be informed about concerns.

REGULAR AND OCCASIONAL INTIMATE CARE

REGULAR INTIMATE CARE

Intimate care arrangements required on a regular basis will be agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child. A meeting will be arranged between parents and members of staff to discuss the detail of intimate care required. Following this consent, forms will be signed and record sheets completed. These will be stored in the child's file.

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

The views of all relevant parties will be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. Any amendments to the arrangements will be recorded and made available to all parties involved, eg if a member of staff is on sick-leave, another trained member of staff will undertake specific intimate care tasks.

Sanitary items are available from Miss Campbell (Primary 5), should they be required by any of the senior girls. A disposal bin is situated in the Key Stage 2 girls' toilets.

OCCASIONAL INTIMATE CARE (eg changing after a toilet accident)

From time to time in school young children may need assistance with intimate care, ie help with changing of clothes and cleaning after a wetting, soiling, or vomiting incident. In these instances, the parents will be informed immediately.

It may be that pupils need general help or that they have had an accident that requires an adult to help with intimate care. When helping children with intimate care, school will provide them with the appropriate level of caring support whilst minimising, as far as possible, the level of physical contact with the child in intimate body regions. The child will be removed to a less public place to maintain dignity and avoid a feeling of humiliation. If an accident occurs during lunchtime, the child's class teacher will be contacted and will deal with the situation (not the Lunchtime Supervisors).

In these situations, any decision to provide intimate care will be made by Miss McCrossan (Head of Foundation Stage), Ms Stirling (Head of Key Stage 1), Mr McCollum (Head of Key Stage 2), or Mr Ball (Principal).

If parents cannot be contacted, school staff will decide on the most appropriate care in order to minimise any stress, discomfort, or anxiety which the child may be experiencing. If members of staff are providing intimate care, two members of staff will be present at all times and an Intimate Care Pro-Forma will be completed if intimate care has been required (Appendix 1).

It should be noted that by the time a child starts school they will normally be expected to be independent in terms of their use of toilet facilities. If this is not the case, parents may be asked to take appropriate measures during the school day and, if necessary, come into school to assist.

Children may be upset and need to be comforted. They may have had a toileting accident and need to have their clothes changed. To fail to do these things for a young child would be negligent. The wellbeing and dignity of the child will remain paramount at all times during any incident requiring intimate care.

INTIMATE CARE CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to safeguard the child, the following Code of Conduct will be adhered to at all times in Meadow Bridge Primary School:

- Children will be encouraged to adjust clothing etc by themselves when using the toilet.
- Children who wet their clothes after a toileting accident will be given clean replacements and, depending on the child's level of independence, will be encouraged to change themselves in the privacy of a cubicle in the toilet area.
- If a child requires assistance to change, the member of staff will if possible be accompanied by a second member of staff. If not possible, the adult supporting the child will inform another member of staff as to their whereabouts and the need to assist a pupil.
- If children vomit or soil themselves, their previously given contacts will be telephoned in the order given, to request that they are changed by a parent or another adult who has the parents' consent to clean and change the child.
- In all toileting accidents, the child's parent/s will be informed by the class teacher, the classroom assistant or school secretary. School will keep a written record of the incident(s) on the official form (see Appendix 1). School will use children's initials to provide anonymity and will also use the code letters W, S, or V (Wetting, Soiling or Vomiting).

- The Building Supervisor and Cleaners will only enter the toilet areas after first ensuring that there are not any pupils present.

COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

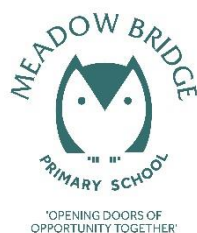
- It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication, eg words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing.
- To ensure effective communication, staff will make eye contact at the child's level, use simple language and repeat if necessary, wait for response, continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response, and treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

If staff have any concerns they must be reported:

- If staff observe any unusual markings, discolourations or swelling including in the genital area, this must be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher.
- If the staff member accidentally hurts a child whilst assisting with intimate care, or if the child appears to be sexually aroused by the staff member's actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something, the staff member will reassure the child, ensure their safety, and report the incident immediately to the Designated Teacher.
- Any emotional or behavioural response by the child will be reported and recorded on the Child Protection Note of Concern Form.
- A written record of concerns will be made and kept in the child's Child Protection personal file.
- Reporting and recording procedures will be followed at all times.
- Where relevant, Parents/Carers will be informed about concerns.
- Staff assisting with intimate care will refer to: SBNI Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

NOTES:

- If any adult is concerned about a child – they must speak to the Designated Teacher, ie regarding concerning comments from, or physical marks on, a child.
- The Intimate Care Forms will be regularly reviewed to identify if there are frequent situations in relation to a child or if there are frequent situations happening in a certain part of the room, etc.



INTIMATE CARE FORM

To be completed each time a child requires changing of clothing due to an incident such as wetting and/or soiling themselves or being physically sick.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Child's Initials</i>	<i>Incident – what, where, etc.</i>	<i>Action Taken</i>	<i>Signature of Person who Dealt with the Incident</i>