



PERSONAL CARE POLICY



Policy Review

Date Agreed:

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Next Review Date:

Rationale

We the staff of St. Patrick's PS Aughadarragh have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

In St. Patrick's Primary School it is our intention to develop independence in each child, however we recognise that there will be times when help is required. Our Personal Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It forms part of the school's Pastoral Care Policy. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the personal care of children. Children are generally more vulnerable than adults therefore, staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs. Personal care may be regarded 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 may include:

- toileting;
- feeding;
- oral care;
- 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 of any known personal care needs relating to their child. Medical advice will be taken into consideration where appropriate.

Principles of Personal Care

The following are the fundamental principles of personal care upon which our policy guidelines are based. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991).

Every child has the right to:

- be safe;
- personal privacy;
- be valued as an individual;
- be involved and consulted in their own personal care to the best of their abilities;
- express their views on their own personal care and to have such views taken into account;
- have levels of personal care that are appropriate and consistent;
- be treated with dignity and respect.

School Responsibilities

- In St.Patrick's we aim to foster a high level of independence in our pupils with regard to personal hygiene practices. Children are encouraged to go to the toilet before morning break and before lunch/dinner time. At other times during the school day they have independent use of toilet facilities and are encouraged to indicate if they wish to use the toilet. They will be encouraged to undertake basic hygiene practices such as cleaning themselves and washing their hands after using the toilet. They will

be encouraged to wash their hands if they are dirty and before eating food. Children will also be encouraged to change/dress independently for PE or Swimming (P3 - P 7).

- On entry to Primary 1 most children are toilet trained and can carry out tasks relating to their own personal care independently, even in the event of toiletry accidents or wetness due to water play or sickness.
- We do recognise however, that there may be exceptions to this, where specific medical, developmental or special educational needs are identified. In such cases personal care procedures will be discussed and agreed with parents prior to the child starting school and an Individual Care Plan drawn up.
- In the event of an incident requiring personal care taking place, the child will be provided with wipes and alternative clothing and encouraged to carry out the cleaning and /or changing process independently. If the child is unable to carry out his/her own personal care independently, he/she will be assisted in the cleaning/changing process. This will ensure the comfort and best interests of the child. Children will be treated in a caring and sensitive manner at all times.
- Spare changes of underwear and clothes are kept in the foundation stage classroom. If however, a child appears to be having continual 'accidents', a strategy may need to be agreed between the parent and the school and a change of clothes left in school.
- The staff at St. Patrick's understand that children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. All staff involved in personal care are sensitive to the needs of the child and are aware that some care tasks can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.
- All staff working in our school have received child protection training and are vetted in accordance with Child Protection Guidelines. They fully understand the Personal Care Policy and Procedures.
- In the case of a very specific type of personal care being required, staff will receive specific training to enable them to do so.
- Parents will be informed if an incident requiring personal care takes place.
- Staff will always involve the child in their personal care and will try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his/her own personal care.
- Staff should not assist with any personal care task which a child or young person can undertake by themselves.
- Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of personal care that has not been agreed by the parents.
- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's personal care practice they must report this to the designated teacher for child protection.
- At the beginning of the academic year, parents of all children are asked to give permission for staff to attend to the personal care of their child (with particular reference to toilet accidents or illness) should the need arise (see Appendix A).

Procedures to be Followed by Staff Undertaking the Personal Care of a Child

In the case of toiletry accidents/sickness/wetness through water play, where a child needs to be cleaned/clothes need to be changed, the following procedures will be put into place:

- If a child is fairly independent the child will be involved in their own personal care. Staff will provide the child with the necessary equipment e.g. wipes, change of underwear /clothes. The child will be encouraged to carry out the cleaning and changing process independently in the toilet with the door closed. The adult will wait outside and periodically reassure the child.
- We recognise that circumstances may arise when a child who is usually independent is unable to clean /change him/herself. In these circumstances, in order to preserve the comfort and dignity of the child, a member of staff will assist the child, including directly cleaning if necessary. Following good practice guidelines another staff member will be in the vicinity.
- When a child requires assistance with personal care, the cleaning and changing of children will be carried out discreetly in the toilets and not behind a closed cubicle door. The staff member will endeavour to ensure that the child's privacy and dignity are respected at all times and will comfort and reassure them throughout.
- Where a child has special/additional needs and is unable to carry out personal tasks independently, intimate care procedures will be discussed and agreed with parents and an Individual Care Plan drawn up.
- If the child appears to be distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
- Report any concerns to the DT or DDT and make a written record.
- The parent/designated adult will be discreetly informed of any such incident.
- Soiled clothing will be put in a plastic bag and discreetly given to parent/designated adult at end of the day.

All incidents of Intimate Care should be documented using the Record of Intimate Care form (Appendix B)

Hygiene.

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection and should ensure the use of appropriate protective equipment when necessary, for example, protective, disposable latex/vinyl gloves.

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

During the day at school children may sometimes have accidents which require a change of clothes. In general your child will be encouraged to change him/herself and staff will assist if needed. It is necessary however, to have your permission for staff to help with changing.

Parental permission for Personal Care

Should it be necessary, I give permission for(child's name) to receive Personal 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 discretely should the occasion arise.

Signed (Parent/Guardian)

