



## **METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST**

### **PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT**

### **POLICY FOR INTIMATE CARE**

#### **Introduction**

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a pupil after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care.

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the child's needs. There shall be a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

When an incident occurs, all staff, teaching and ancillary, must follow these steps in as professional a manner as possible, ensuring that they focus on preserving the child's welfare, privacy and dignity throughout while giving the child control over the procedure.

Intimate care in the school will address one of the following areas -

- Supporting a child with dressing/undressing
- Supporting a child with toileting
- Providing comfort or support for a distressed pupil
- Cleaning a child who has soiled him/herself, has vomited or feels unwell

#### **Supporting dressing/undressing**

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

### **Supporting a child with toileting**

Young children may require support when toileting. Staff will encourage children when cleaning themselves but will not enter the toilet stall. Staff members will make the teacher in charge aware that they are doing so. Parents will be informed at the open evening that staff will not clean their children on a daily basis; only in the event of a toilet accident.

### **Providing comfort or support**

Extremely distressed children may seek physical comfort from staff. Where children require physical support, staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum and be child initiated. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff's hands should always be seen and a child should not be positioned close to a member of staff's body which could be regarded as intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate staff must provide care which is suitable to the age, gender and situation of the child.

### **Soiling**

#### **Permission**

- The parents or carers will be asked to come and clean/change the child
- If parents/carers cannot come then their permission must be sought and given on every occasion for a staff member to clean the child.
- If the parents/carers cannot be contacted then the Head of Department will be consulted as to the next step to be taken
- If the child is at risk, then the staff will act appropriately. If they need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child they will record everything in detail

#### **Procedure**

- The child is comforted in a separate area to ensure privacy but the member of staff assigned should not be alone or should be visible to other staff at all times.
- The child should be kept fully clothed as much as possible, throughout the cleaning process
- When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.
- The procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process
- The child should be asked and give permission for any part of the cleaning process, encouraging him/her to clean him/herself as far as possible
- Physical contact must be kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning
- Privacy is arranged, appropriate to the child's age and the situation
- The incident and the action taken should be recorded in the log book and also in the child's homework book

## **Hygiene**

- Staff must follow basic hygiene procedures to avoid infection
- Protective disposable gloves and an apron should be worn
- All vomit, blood or excrement must be wiped up and flushed down the toilet where possible
- Soiled clothing should be put in a plastic bag, unwashed and sent home with the child
- A change of clothes should be provided for the child to wear

## **Protection for staff**

Members of staff need to have regard to the danger of allegations being made against them and take precautions to avoid this risk. These should include:

- Gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- Allowing the child, wherever possible, to express a preference to choose his/her carer and encouraging them to say if they find a carer to be unacceptable
- Allow the child a choice in the sequence of care
- Be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions
- If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable, this must be gently but firmly discouraged.

## **Students/Volunteers**

- Should not carry out intimate care procedures but if required, should do so only under the supervision of a trained member of staff following consultation with the student's college supervisors. (Please see Adult Code of Conduct for further information.)

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