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**ST. ANTHONY'S NURSERY SCHOOL**

**INTIMATE CARE POLICY**

**We encourage all parents/ guardians to work on supporting their child's full independence in toileting- this includes taking down their clothes, cleaning themselves, re dressing, flushing and washing hands for 20 seconds- (singing Happy Birthday twice)**

**Principle**

* Our aim is to ensure that any child who requires intimate care for whatever reason in our Nursery School has-
* The right to be safe
* The right to personal privacy
* The right to be valued as an individual

**Definition**

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child. Parents/ guardians 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/guardians

* CHILDREN HAVE-
* The right to be treated with dignity and respect
* The right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities
* The right to express their views on their intimate care and to have such views taken into account
* The right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

**Responsibilities**

All staff working with children must be vetted. This includes students on work placement.

Volunteers in school do not have to be vetted but must be provided with copies of school policies at induction which will include advice that they **will not** be involved in a child's intimate care and should not be on their own with a child at any time without a member of staff being present. All staff are made aware that a volunteer in our Nursery should not be on their own with a child/children without staff supervision.

Only teachers/ Nursery assistants/ SEN assistants allocated to a particular child, should undertake the intimate care of children. This may include substitute teachers who are employed on a temporary basis through NISTR and who have already been vetted

All staff will receive and must make themselves familiar with the school Intimate Care Policy and Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy.

Staff shall be trained in any specific types of intimate care that they carry out. In the case of SEN Assistants allocated to a specific child, this training may be provided by outside agencies.

Intimate care arrangements must be agreed by the Nursery, parents/ guardians and child (if appropriate)

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice they must report this to the Principal/ Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Our Principal is Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Mrs Gamble is Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

**Procedures**

**Parents/ Guardians are asked to complete a Changing and Intimate Care Form at the start of their child's year in Nursery**

* Only children whose parents/guardians have given **written** permission for them to be changed may be changed. The parent/guardian for whom parental consent has not been obtained should be telephoned instead and must attend to carry out the change themselves
* It is crucial that a parent/ guardian is available to answer their phone in this circumstance

Should a child be upset or not accepting of being assisted/

changed by staff the parent/ guardian should be telephoned- it will be necessary for them to attend to carry out the change themselves.

**- It is crucial that a parent/ guardian is available to answer their phone at all times in case of this circumstance**

* Due to problems of supervision for the rest of class, two members of staff will NOT be able to be present when a child is changed. However, staff will notify another member when they have to attend to a child.
* The bathroom door will remain open at all times and the other staff member can periodically view the bathroom through the open door
* While every attempt should be made to give the child privacy it is impractical to bar other children from using other cubicles at that time.
* For their protection, staff must wear ppe including disposable gloves and plastic apron when changing a child. Staff should clean down the toilet area used after and dispose of ppe in a knotted bag which should be placed in the outside bin immediately.
* The child should be encouraged to remove their own clothes where possible.
* Where necessary, the child can be given a baby wipe to freshen themselves
* The child should be encouraged to dress themselves, with help being given when necessary
* A note of the change must be recorded on the Intimate Care pro forma indicating who was changed, by whom, the reason why and when. Wet/soiled clothing should be placed in a knotted bag and placed on the child’s peg. The child’s parent/guardian will be notified at the end of the session.
* A child asking for help in the toilet should be encouraged and directed how to clean themselves where possible. Where intervention is necessary, another member of staff should be alerted and the action recorded in the Intimate Care Pro Forma.
* **In the situation where a child finds it distressing to be changed by staff, or has found the incident to be traumatic or it has been too difficult for staff to thoroughly clean the child, staff will contact the parent/guardian even if permission has been given to follow these intimate care procedures.**

**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.

Children with a physical or mental disability can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

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 care tasks/treatments can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

**Involve the Child in their Intimate Care**

Staff will encourage a child's independence as far as possible in her/his intimate care. Where the child is fully dependent, the staff member will talk with them about what is going to be done and give the choice where possible.

**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 alone with one child. The practice of providing one-one intimate care of a child alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the child or the child prefers two persons. Staffing levels may mean that only one staff member is able to do the change as there is responsibility for the safety of the rest of the class. A parent/ guardian may be called into school if a two person change can not be facilitated.

**Make Sure Practice in Intimate Care is Consistent**

As a child can have multiple classroom staff, a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between parents/guardians ensures practice is consistent.

**Be Aware of Own Limitations**

Staff should only carry out care activities they understand and feel competent and confident to carry out. If in doubt, ASK. Some procedures must only be carried out by staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

**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 staff take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child. The child must be reassured and put at their ease and lead the changing process where possible

**If you as a staff member have any concerns-**

***You Must Report Them***

If you observe any unusual markings, discolorations or swelling, including the genital area, report immediately to the Designated Teacher, Mrs Anakaa or in her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher, Ms McLaughlin

If during the intimate care of a child you accidentally hurt them, or the child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstandings or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the class teacher and Principal, Designated Teacher or in her absence the Deputy Designated Teacher

Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child.

A written record of concerns must be made and kept by the Designated Teacher in the child's personal file.

It is important to follow the Nursery's reporting and recording procedures.

Parents/guardians must be informed about concerns.

Please refer to:-

* Regional Area Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures - April 2005
* DENI Child Protection and Pastoral Care Guidance 1999
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

**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.

Children communicate using different methods eg. words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing etc.

To ensure effective communication:-

* Ascertain how the child communicates, eg. consult with child, parent/guardian and, if appropriate, communication needs must be recorded. If further information is required, please consult with the child's Speech and Language Therapist.
* 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.

**For the protection of our staff and to avoid unnecessary cross contamination, parents/ guardians are encouraged to ensure that their child is as independent as possible in the bathroom for Number 1's and Number 2's- this includes removing clothing, cleaning themselves, flushing and washing hands.**

**Please ensure you let your child practice independent toileting at home so that they will know how to manage themselves in school.**

In the Nursery, the children's toilet area is accessed straight from the classrooms. The door is always open so children have quick and easy access for toileting and hand washing.

**Children should not ordinarily be attending Nursery in pull-ups.**

**Your child's Health Visitor may be able to offer advice.**

**The normal staff to child ratio in a Nursery School means that staff who are taken away to do a change are not available in the classroom for the length of time a change make take. This puts added pressure on the remaining staff and reduces the adult child interaction for the other children.**

**Parents/guardians should speak to the Principal or class teacher if their child has toileting difficulties or you have any concerns in this area.**