

## **ST. BRIGID'S GNS, PALMERSTOWN – INTIMATE CARE POLICY**

### **Introduction**

St. Brigid's GNS Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines Regarding Children have been developed to safeguard children and staff in our school. They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children. This policy is complemented and supported by a range of other school policies including: *Child Safeguarding Statement* and the *Health and Safety Policy*.

### **Definition**

Intimate care may be defined as any activity which is required to meet the personal care needs of an 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, parents and other relevant professionals.

Intimate care can include:

- Oral care;
- Washing;
- Dressing/undressing;
- Toileting; and
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

### **Principles of intimate care**

The following are the fundamental principles upon which our 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 and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account; and
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

### **School responsibilities**

The Principal together with the Board of Management will ensure that all staff undertaking the intimate care of children are familiar with, and understand St. Brigid's GNS *Intimate Care Policy* together with associated Policies and Procedures.

When a child has a specific intimate care need, the care arrangements will be agreed by the school, parents/carers, professionals and child (if appropriate). Staff should not undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed.

### **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. 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.
- It is the policy of St. Brigid's GNS to involve the child in their intimate care and to try to encourage the child's independence as far as possible in her intimate care.

- Where a child has “wet” herself, the child will be afforded the opportunity to change herself into the underwear provided (which is available from the class teacher/ Secretary’s office). Parents/ Carers will be informed.
- Where the child requires more intimate care (e.g soils herself), the parent/carer will be contacted immediately and asked to come to school to assist the child or to take her home. The parent will be reassured that the child will be well cared for while awaiting the arrival of the parent/carer.
- We will treat every child with dignity and respect and at all times will ensure privacy appropriate to the child’s age and situation. We will try to involve the child in her own intimate care, where appropriate. We will endeavour to ensure that our practice in intimate care is consistent. A record of the intimate care given will be recorded and parents/ carers will be notified.
- We require parental permission for the above procedures. Where this is not given, the parent/carer will be required to come into school to undertake the intimate care of the child or to take the child home.
- The Parental/ Carer Permission Form is included in Appendix A.

### **Promote positive self-esteem and body image**

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to abuse. The approach we take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Our attitude to a child’s intimate care is important and must respect each child’s dignity.

### **Reporting Procedures**

If any member of staff has any concerns regarding the welfare of any child, they will report their concerns immediately to the Designated Liaison Person/Principal in the school. A written record of all concerns will be made, in accordance with the schools’ *Child Safeguarding Statement*.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Reviewing**

The school will monitor, evaluate and review this policy every year along with the *Child Safeguarding Statement*.

**The St. Brigid’s GNS Intimate Care Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Brigid’s GNS on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018.**

## Appendix A

**Please complete and return this sheet to your child's teacher.**

- It is the policy of St. Brigid's GNS to involve the child in their intimate care and to try to encourage the child's independence as far as possible in her intimate care.
- Where a child has "wet" herself, she will be accompanied to the toilet by a staff member. The child will be afforded the opportunity to change herself into the underwear provided (which is available from the class teacher/ Secretary's office). Parents/ Carers will be informed.
- Where the child requires more intimate care (e.g soils herself), the parent/carer will be contacted immediately and asked to come to school to assist the child or to take her home. The child will be reassured while awaiting the arrival of her parent/carer.
- We will treat every child with dignity and respect and at all times will ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation. We will try to involve the child in her own intimate care, where appropriate. We will endeavour to ensure that our practice in intimate care is consistent. A record of the intimate care given will be recorded and parent/ guardian will be notified.

I have read the above Intimate Care Policy and Procedures and agree to their implementation, if required.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_