

**ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL
MEADOWBROOK
DUBLIN 16**



GUIDELINES ON INTIMATE CARE



**SCOIL SHINSIREACH NAOMH ATHRACHT
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Scoil Shinsireach Naomh Athracht, Cluain Ghlaise, Áth Cliath 16

Guidelines on Intimate Care

St. Attracta's Senior National School, Meadowbrook, Dublin 16.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Attracta's Senior National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school which provides a happy caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential.

St. Attracta's Senior National School promotes excellence in teaching and learning. The school community that we create is welcoming, collegial, safe, respectful and inclusive of all its members. All aspects of the child, academic, spiritual, moral and cultural are cherished.

INTRODUCTION

In keeping with our mission statement, St. Attracta's Senior National School is committed to providing a happy, caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential. We value the dignity and privacy of all our children and acknowledge their right to be respected and cherished while in our care.

St. Attracta's Senior National School also takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our care and to follow the principles of best practice in relation to child protection. Meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is one aspect of child protection and welfare.

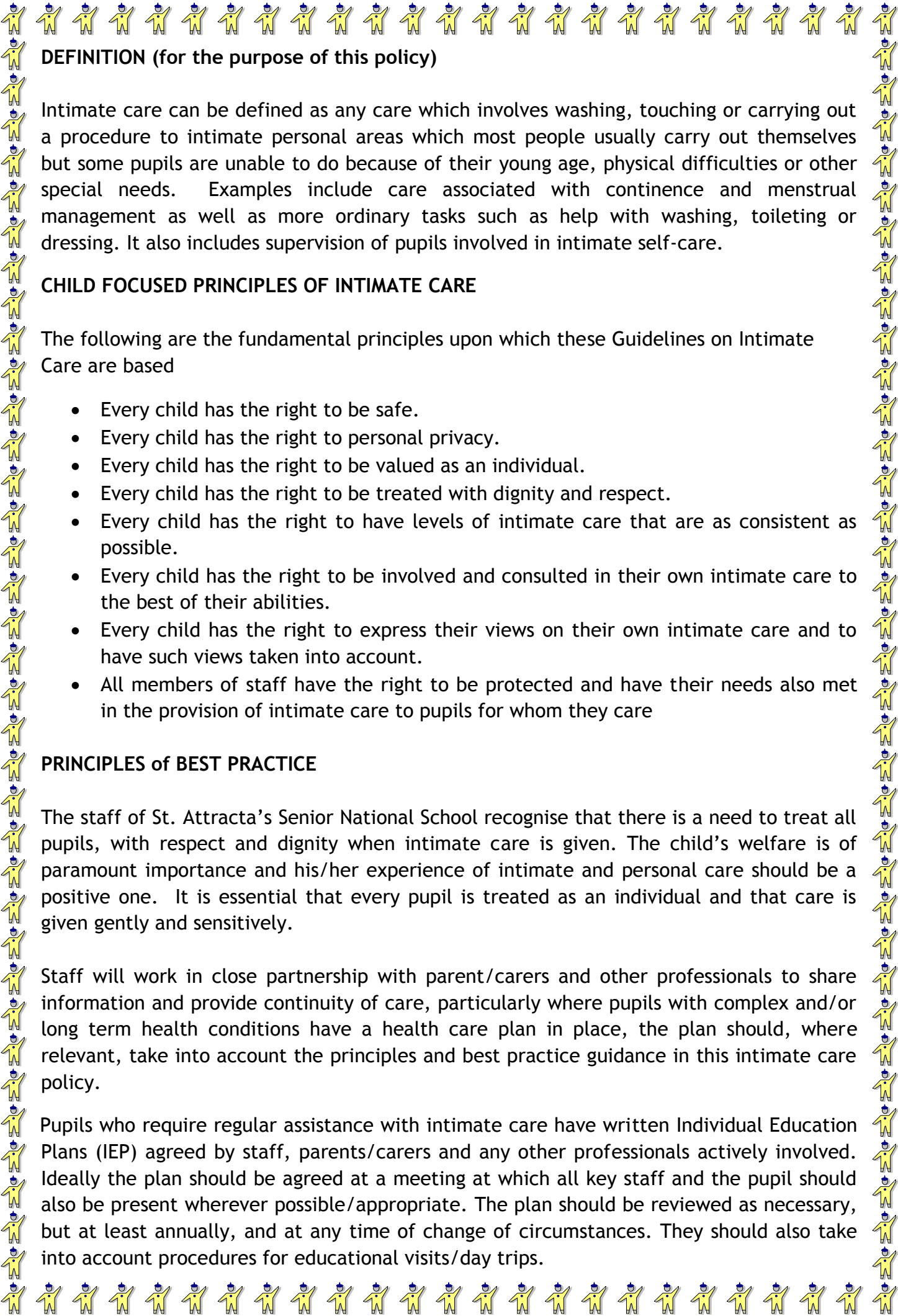
RATIONALE

The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. It is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust.

This Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

These guidelines on intimate care should be read in conjunction with the following school policies, procedures and guidelines:

- Policy on Child Protection and Welfare
- Health and Safety policy and procedures
- Learning Support policy
- Policy for the Administration of Medicines
- Guidelines for Swimming Lessons
- Guidelines for Special Needs Assistants



DEFINITION (for the purpose of this policy)

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some pupils are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing. It also includes supervision of pupils involved in intimate self-care.

CHILD FOCUSED PRINCIPLES OF INTIMATE CARE

The following are the fundamental principles upon which these Guidelines on Intimate Care are based

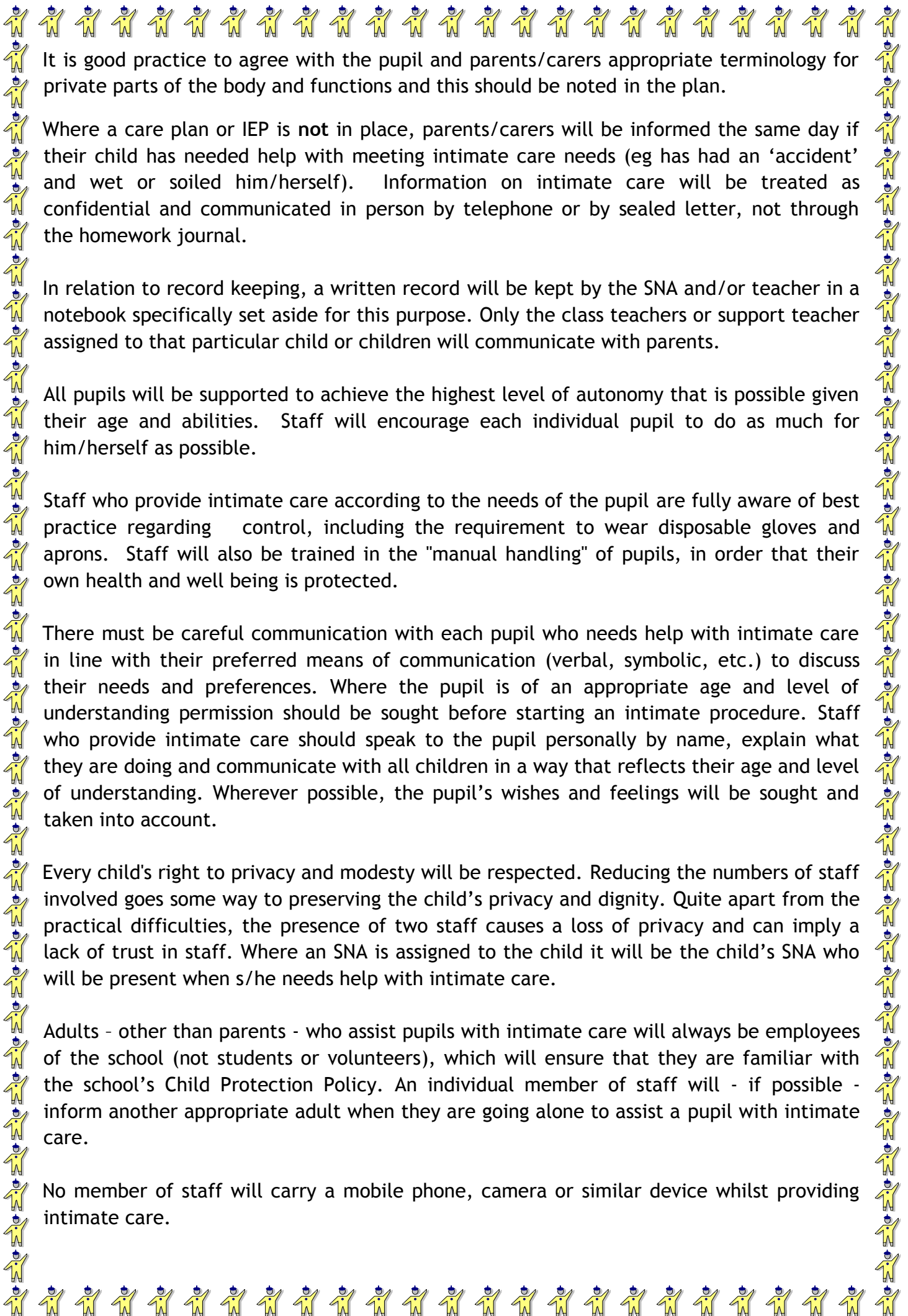
- Every child has the right to be safe.
- Every child has the right to personal privacy.
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual.
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.
- 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.
- All members of staff have the right to be protected and have their needs also met in the provision of intimate care to pupils for whom they care

PRINCIPLES of BEST PRACTICE

The staff of St. Attracta's Senior National School recognise that there is a need to treat all pupils, with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. The child's welfare is of paramount importance and his/her experience of intimate and personal care should be a positive one. It is essential that every pupil is treated as an individual and that care is given gently and sensitively.

Staff will work in close partnership with parent/carers and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care, particularly where pupils with complex and/or long term health conditions have a health care plan in place, the plan should, where relevant, take into account the principles and best practice guidance in this intimate care policy.

Pupils who require regular assistance with intimate care have written Individual Education Plans (IEP) agreed by staff, parents/carers and any other professionals actively involved. Ideally the plan should be agreed at a meeting at which all key staff and the pupil should also be present wherever possible/appropriate. The plan should be reviewed as necessary, but at least annually, and at any time of change of circumstances. They should also take into account procedures for educational visits/day trips.



It is good practice to agree with the pupil and parents/carers appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions and this should be noted in the plan.

Where a care plan or IEP is not in place, parents/carers will be informed the same day if their child has needed help with meeting intimate care needs (eg has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled him/herself). Information on intimate care will be treated as confidential and communicated in person by telephone or by sealed letter, not through the homework journal.

In relation to record keeping, a written record will be kept by the SNA and/or teacher in a notebook specifically set aside for this purpose. Only the class teachers or support teacher assigned to that particular child or children will communicate with parents.

All pupils will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each individual pupil to do as much for him/herself as possible.

Staff who provide intimate care according to the needs of the pupil are fully aware of best practice regarding control, including the requirement to wear disposable gloves and aprons. Staff will also be trained in the "manual handling" of pupils, in order that their own health and well being is protected.

There must be careful communication with each pupil who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc.) to discuss their needs and preferences. Where the pupil is of an appropriate age and level of understanding permission should be sought before starting an intimate procedure. Staff who provide intimate care should speak to the pupil personally by name, explain what they are doing and communicate with all children in a way that reflects their age and level of understanding. Wherever possible, the pupil's wishes and feelings will be sought and taken into account.

Every child's right to privacy and modesty will be respected. Reducing the numbers of staff involved goes some way to preserving the child's privacy and dignity. Quite apart from the practical difficulties, the presence of two staff causes a loss of privacy and can imply a lack of trust in staff. Where an SNA is assigned to the child it will be the child's SNA who will be present when s/he needs help with intimate care.

Adults - other than parents - who assist pupils with intimate care will always be employees of the school (not students or volunteers), which will ensure that they are familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy. An individual member of staff will - if possible - inform another appropriate adult when they are going alone to assist a pupil with intimate care.

No member of staff will carry a mobile phone, camera or similar device whilst providing intimate care.



PRACTICAL ISSUES

On a practical day to day basis, the following procedure will apply in cases of wetting, soiling and vomiting on clothes. At all times we will maintain the privacy and dignity of the child.

The teacher/SNA will provide the child with a change of clothes, which the child uses to change him/herself. The teacher/SNA will assist the child with dressing only if absolutely necessary. If the child has soiled him/herself the parents will be contacted in order to take their child home. In the event that a parent cannot be contacted the teacher/SNA will do all that is necessary to make the child comfortable.

Wet/soiled clothes will be put in a plastic bag and parents will be informed of what has happened when they collect their child. Parents are asked to return the clothes given to their child, washed and folded. Changes of clothes and underwear are kept in the strong room, while plastic bags and aprons are easily accessible near the staff and special needs toilets.

Health & Safety guidelines should be adhered to regarding waste products and all waste will be disposed of in an appropriate manner.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school's child protection procedures will be adhered to at all times.

From a child protection perspective it is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching private parts of a pupil's body. In this school best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those who are involved in intimate care and others in the vicinity) will be encouraged to be vigilant at all times, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.

Where appropriate, pupils will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil's presentation, e.g. unexplained marks, bruises, etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) in accordance with the school's child protection procedures.

Any adult who has concerns about the conduct of a colleague at the school or about any improper practice will report this to the DLP or DDL.



EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy on Intimate Care is available to school personnel and will be published on the school website. The views and opinions of the partners in education are welcome at all times.

