

Wash Down Guidelines

Advice On Wash Down Procedure For Sick Or Soiled Children

All centres are required to have a written procedure for the washing of sick or soiled children. There are all sorts of reasons why a child may need to have all or part of their body washed, for example:

- At nappy change time - if wipes are not enough to ensure the soiled child is cleaned up.
- A child has vomited over themselves.
- A child has had a toileting/diarrhoea accident.
- A child becomes very dirty during play.

Such incidents can be associated with high stress levels and can be emotionally traumatic for the child. Therefore, staff and helpers should always be familiar with the centre's procedure. We recommend that the wash down procedure is a regular agenda item at staff meetings or that staff regularly re-familiarise themselves with the procedure.

The procedure should strike a balance between ensuring that the personal dignity and privacy of the child is maintained while at the same time protecting the health and safety of the child, of other children and of staff.

The procedure should be specific to the centre in terms of:

- The centre's physical attributes and facilities, particularly the presence of plumbed facilities.
- The number and age range of the children.
- The ethnicity and/or cultural background of the children.
- The number of staff and helpers.

A centre's procedure should be attached to a wall in a visible location near the area designated for washing children and should cover a range of topics including:

- **Wash down facility** - there should be clear and simple instructions on how to use the plumbed in shower or shub. In the absence of a plumbed in facility there should be instructions on how to use portable tubs, hand held portable showers, separate buckets, washcloths and wipes.
- **Clean up of wash down area** – the area and equipment will need to be washed down with hot soapy water, then wiped down with a 1:10 bleach solution and left to dry in the air. If a portable tub is used the water in the tub should be discarded down the toilet.
- **Soiled clothing** - should be double bagged and stored in an area that is not accessible to children until collected by parents.
- **Staff health and safety** - staff involved in washing the children should wear protective clothing such as gloves, masks and disposable apron. On completion, provision should be made for the safe disposal of wipes, washcloths, protective clothing and equipment. All contaminated items should be double bagged and disposed of immediately.



- **Staff or helper availability** - if more than one staff member or helper is involved in washing the child there needs to be provision for adequate supervision of remaining children;
- **Record keeping** - a record of the event should be made in the incident register for the centre and in the child's personal file.

We recommend that a **spill kit** be placed in an accessible location.

Wash Down Facility

It is strongly recommended that each centre should have a plumbed in shower or tub. This should be close to the nappy change area and should allow for the privacy of the child, should be at a comfortable temperature and should be easy to clean.

Where a plumbed in facility is not present we recommend a centre should plan for the installation of a plumbed in facility at the next renovation of the centre. In the meantime a best practical system should be developed which delivers similar amenity to that of a plumbed in shower.

Washing a child in a portable tub where the contaminated water is not removed and is continuously reused to wash the child is not an acceptable option. This would not meet minimum health and safety requirements.

One solution could be to remove the soil with wipes then use a separate bucket of warm soapy water with washcloths.

Double Bagging

Any soiled or contaminated clothing or disposable equipment should be double bagged. Care should be taken to ensure that air that could carry viral particles is not released from the bag.

Spill Kit

The kit should hold all items required:

- For washing the child (wipes, washcloths, towels etc.).
- Protective clothing for staff (gloves, masks, disposable aprons etc.).
- Cleaning equipment (bleach, bags for disposal of protective clothing and for the storage of soiled clothing).

