

# 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 make sure 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.

These situations can be emotionally traumatic for a child, so it is important the staff and helpers should always be familiar with the centre's wash down procedure.

The procedure should focus on the privacy and personal dignity of the child as well as protecting the health and safety of the child, other children and staff.

The procedure must be specific to:

- The centre's wash down facilities.
- The number and age range of the children.
- The ethnicity and/or cultural background of the children.
- The number of staff and helpers.

The procedure should cover:

- **Wash down facility** – Instructions on how to use the plumbed in shower or shub.  
*Include:* In the absence of a plumbed in facility include instructions on how to use portable tubs, hand held portable showers, separate buckets, washcloths and wipes.
- **Clean up of wash down area** – How to effectively clean up the wash down area.  
*Include:* Wash the area and equipment with hot soapy water, then wipe 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** – Instructions on cleaning and storing.  
*Include:* Do not rinse. Remove any solid poos/vomit then double bag and stored in an area (laundry) that is not accessible to children until collected by parents.
- **Staff health and safety** – It is important that staff involved in washing the children wear protective clothing; gloves, masks and disposable apron. Once the child is washed down wipes, washcloths, protective clothing and equipment must be disposed of carefully. All soiled or contaminated clothing or disposable equipment should be double bagged care should be taken when opening the bag to not breathe in viral particles released from the bag.
- **Record keeping** – Record the event in your incident register and in the child's personal file.

Attach the procedure to a wall in a visible location by the wash down area. 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 shub. 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 facility 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.

## Spill kit

### ■ Nappy bucket 20 litres

The nappy bucket is a good place to store all your 'spill kit' contents.

- Use your bucket for the hot soapy water used to clean the area that has had vomit or poos on it.
- Discard the water used for cleaning down the toilet.
- Clean the bucket before putting the 'spill kit' contents back in.



### ■ Bleach 1 litre

After the area has been cleaned with hot soapy water and wipe down with a bleach solution. Make a new bleach solution daily using either of the following formulas:

- Make a **bleach solution at 1:10 ratio** (1 part bleach and 9 parts water) or,
- To make **1 litre** = 50ml of bleach and add water to make 1 litre or, ¼ cup of bleach and add 4 cups of water
- To make **10 litres** = 500ml (2 cups) of bleach and add water to make 10 litres.



### ■ Protective gear (sometimes known as PPE, e.g. disposable aprons, masks, gloves)

All staff involved with the clean-up of vomit or poos and/or washing down the sick child, need to wear a disposable apron, a mask and gloves (protective gear).

After the area has been cleaned, and the sick child changed and cared for, the protective clothing and cleaning items need to be placed inside a plastic rubbish bag, tied up then placed inside another bag and disposed of immediately.

Your 'spill kit' includes the following:

- **Plastic aprons x 4.** Wear the apron to protect your clothing when you are cleaning the area or the child that has been sick.
- **Masks x 4.** Wear the masks so you don't breathe in the germs (viruses) that cause the illness.
- **Gloves x 2 pairs.** Wear gloves when cleaning the area or the child that has been sick. Wearing gloves does not replace the need to wash your hands and you should make sure you wash and dry your hands thoroughly before and after using gloves.



### Towel

- Use the towel to dry the sick child, wash separately in hot water.



### Polar fleece blanket

- The blanket is to keep the child warm after they have been put in clean clothing and while waiting for their parent or guardian to pick them up.
- Wash separately in hot water.



### Plastic rubbish bags x5

- Clothing with vomit or poo on them need to be placed inside a plastic rubbish bag, tied up then placed inside another rubbish bag. Store the bag in an area that is not accessible to children until collected by parents.
- Plastic shopping bags can be used as an alternative to these bags.



### Microshield hand sanitiser x 1

Soap and water is the best option when your hands are visibly dirty. After washing your hands use the hand sanitiser, follow the instructions on the bottle.

