



Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a pupil after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake medical procedures.

The issue of intimate care is sensitive and will require staff to be respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There shall be a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Wolverham Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times.

Our Approach to Best Practice

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection and Health and Safety training as needed for specific pupils with EHC plans/disabilities) and are fully aware of best practice. Apparatus (when necessary) will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/occupational therapist as required.

Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.

Wherever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of children/young people will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex education to the children/young people in their care as an additional safeguard to both staff and children/young people involved. Exceptions may be made for pupils with learning disabilities with parental consent/agreement.

The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for him/herself as he/she can e.g. giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child.

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child is toileted. Where possible, one child will be catered for by one adult. However, at all times there must be another adult within close proximity who can witness any intimate care to safeguard the member of staff and pupil (this includes the changing of nappies).

Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, whilst at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers. Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

The Protection of Children

Education Child Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures will be adhered to. All children 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 child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc s/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate manager/designated person for child protection.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary. If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed.

Changing Facilities

Children who have long-term incontinence will require specially adapted facilities. The dignity and privacy of the child will be of paramount concern. Consideration is given to the sighting of this area from a health and safety aspect. The area will not be situated in a thoroughfare, and a changing mat will be used on the floor when a child is being changed. This method of changing a child is recommended, as it avoids having to lift a child and cause possible back injury.

Nappy Changing

Parents have a role to play when their child is still wearing nappies. The parent should provide nappies, disposal bags, wipes; changing mat etc. and parents should be made aware of this responsibility. The school is responsible for providing gloves, plastic aprons, a bin, non-allergic wet wipes, and liners to dispose of any waste. When nappies are changed the member of staff will record this in the nappy changing record book.

Health and Safety

Staff should wear a plastic apron and gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled or when changing a soiled nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. This bin is located in Pre School and another in the disabled toilet between the foundation classes. The bin will be emptied on at least a weekly basis and will be disposed of as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classed as clinical waste. All staff are made aware of the Health and Safety Policy. In Pre-school the nappy bin is located in their changing area and emptied daily.

Special Needs

Children with special needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty must be considered with regard to individual teaching and IEPs for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, those with parental responsibility and the school should be easily understood and recorded. Parents of pupils with regular soiling/wetting will be encouraged to leave a change of clothes in school for the use of their child. Regardless of age and ability, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special needs should be actively sought (with advocacy arrangements made for those who can't) in regular reviews of these arrangements.

Physical Contact

All staff, engaged in the care and education of children, need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact. The expectation is that staff will work in "limited touch" cultures and that when physical contact is made with pupils this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background. Staff should be aware that even well intentional physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the child, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Physical contact which is repeated with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the child, the organisation and those with parental responsibility.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of “limited touch” will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each child. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child’s needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it should be documented and reported.

Extra caution may be required where a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child’s view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child without causing them a negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations, wherever possible.

Restraint

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain children physically to prevent them from inflicting damage on either themselves, others or property. A number of staff are trained in ‘Team Teach’ restraint and should be consulted immediately if required.

In such cases only the minimum force necessary should be used for the minimum length of time required for the child to regain self-control. In all cases of restraint the incident must be documented and reported.

Pupils in distress

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and not subject to misinterpretation. Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil’s distress, their age, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the child needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the child’s relative or another adult in school. Particular care must be taken in instances, which involve the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, they should seek further advice, from their line manager or other appropriate person.

Changing Clothes

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This means that adults avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour. Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible.

Out of School Visits, Clubs etc

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school. Staff involved in such activities should also be familiar with their school’s policy and all LA guidance regarding out of school activities.

To ensure pupils’ safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on field trips, visits etc. It is important to exercise caution so that a pupil is not compromised and the member of staff does not attract allegations of overly intrusive or abusive behaviour. On occasions

some pupils might be short of funds and would be embarrassed or singled out if this was known. It would be acceptable for a member of staff to raise this with the SLT who will make arrangements to subsidise the child.

Meetings with pupils away from the school premises where a chaperone will not be present, are not permitted unless specific approval is obtained from the head teacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority. Staff should not place themselves in a position where they are in a vehicle, house or other venue alone with a child. If staff come into contact with pupils whilst off duty, they must behave as though in their professional role and not give conflicting messages regarding their own conduct. See Contact outside of School Policy.

Parental Consent

When children join the Foundation Stage or Pre-school written consent from parents is requested to change nappies/clothing if the need arises. When a child joins later in the school and they are likely to require support with changing, written consent is requested.

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