

The Ivory Federation

Propps Hall Junior, Infant and Nursery School Springhead Infant and Nursery School Rushcroft Primary School

INTIMATE CARE

RATIONALE

The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims and ethos of our school. We are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children. We intend to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. In our school, this may occur regularly for children with medical or special educational needs or during a one-off incident. 'Intimate care' may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, school and health care professionals.

PURPOSE

Having protocols in place for anyone with intimate care needs, specifically those with medical or special educational needs will ensure that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will professionally undertake their duties at all times.

Whilst the overall aim of this policy is to have a 'best fit' process in place that supports the child and provides guidance for staff, we accept that 'best fit' will not meet the needs of all children. Where we feel this is the case, personalised procedures will be implemented following a meeting with a lead school practitioner and parents.

We recognise that there is a need to treat all our children with respect when intimate care is given. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. When intimate care activities take place, there shall be a high awareness of child protection procedures.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

- *Assisting a child to change his/her clothes*
- *Changing or washing a child*
- *Assisting with toileting issues*
- *Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care*
- *Providing first aid assistance*
- *Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child*
- *Feeding a child*
- *Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.*

A care plan is required for all children who require regular intimate care. A care plan will be formulated with parents, education and health care professionals. Any staff involved in regular intimate care activities must be suitably trained, competent and able to carry out the duties in the plan sensitively and effectively.

BROAD GUIDELINES

1. Assisting a child to change his/her clothes

This is more common in children in Early Years. On occasion, an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he/she has an accident at the toilet, gets wet outside, spills paint etc

- *Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required this will be given.*
- *Staff will always ensure that they have a colleague in attendance when supporting dressing/undressing and will always allow the child to change in private unless the child is in such distress that it is not possible to do so.*

- *If staff are concerned in any way parents will be sent for and asked to assist their child and informed if the child becomes distressed.*

2. Assisting with toileting

If a child soils him/herself in school a professional judgment has to be made whether it is appropriate to change the child in school, or request the parent/carer to collect the child for changing. In either circumstance the child's needs are paramount and he/she should be comforted and reassured throughout. The following guidelines outline our procedures but we will also seek to make age-appropriate responses.

- *The child will be allowed to change his / her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.*
- *The school will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and a spare uniform for this purpose.*
- *If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to contact the emergency contact to inform them of the situation.*
- *If the emergency contact can come to school within an appropriate time frame, the child will be accompanied and supported by a staff member until they arrive. This avoids any further distress and preserves dignity.*
- *If the emergency contact cannot attend, the school will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child. If none of the contacts can be reached the Headteacher is to be consulted and the decision taken based on loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child.*
- *In the case of Foundation Stage children, to avoid any unnecessary distress, a member of staff may assist the child, with a colleague in attendance, unless a parent has requested otherwise or if the child is reluctant. Parents will be contacted as soon as it is practical to do so.*
- *In the case of children with SEND and toileting difficulties, the arrangements for assisting and changing a child will follow the principles in this policy. The child's toileting needs specific to them will be documented separately as part of their SEND provision.*

It is accepted that some children may have a toileting accident on occasion, these occasions are usually rare. Should any child soil themselves regularly, it is expected that parents will seek medical advice.

A small number of children will have significant medical needs and in addition to the arrangements included in our Administration of Medications Policy will have an Individual 'Care Plan'. This Care Plan will be formulated by the relevant medical body. If required, school staff will receive appropriate training.

3. Swimming (Propps Hall Y3, Y4 and Y5, Rushcroft Y3)

Our children participate in a swimming programme as part of their educational curriculum entitlement. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes however, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people about health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

This supports effective and discrete supervision and privacy for our children when changing. Where a child needs additional support for changing parental permission will be sought and a personal care plan will be drawn up to maintain dignity but increase independence.

4. Residential Trips

Residential educational visits are an important part of our Key Stage 2 school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting.

As with extra-curricular activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our child protection procedures, pastoral care and positive behaviour Policies. Some specific intimate care issues may arise in a residential context.

Showering on residential visits

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people about health and safety considerations, and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur. This means that staff should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, 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 and therefore staff need to be vigilant about their conduct, e.g. adults must not change in the same place as children or shower with children. It is best practice in our school that when an incident has taken place that has necessitated a member of staff to be present when children are changing that an incident report is made.

Night Time Routines

It is established practice that the children's bedrooms are private spaces and anyone else wanting to enter the room should knock and announce their intention to enter. At bedtime, children are given a set amount of time to change and prepare for bed and will be told when the supervising teachers will visit the rooms to check all is okay and switch off the lights. A reciprocal arrangement is in place in the mornings.

School Responsibilities

All members of staff working with children must undertake a full DBS disclosure procedure. This includes students on work placement and volunteers who may be left alone with children. Vetting includes criminal record checks and two references. Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy are involved in the intimate care of children. **Under no circumstances are students and volunteers permitted to undertake any intimate care duties.**

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed upon between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child. Consent forms are signed by the parent and stored in the child's file. Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed upon by parents and school. Parents would then be contacted immediately.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Leader.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of this policy will ensure that the staff are provided with clear guidelines and a framework for good practice when carrying out intimate care activities.

Policy revised Sept 2024

Linked Policies

Safeguarding

Accessibility and Disability

First Aid

Medicines

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities