



Intimate Care Policy

Policy agreed :	Autumn 2023
Policy reviewed:	Autumn 2024
Next review :	Autumn 2025

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to:

- safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of our children
- ensure children are treated with sensitivity and respect and in such a way that any experience of intimate care is a positive one
- safeguard adults required to operate in sensitive situations
- raise awareness and provide a clear procedure for intimate care
- inform parents/carers on how intimate care is administered
- ensure parents/carers are consulted in the intimate care of their children.

Principles

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position. Given the right approach, intimate care can provide opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self-esteem. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care are dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young person's right to privacy and dignity is paramount at all times.

Definition

Intimate care is one of the following:

- supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing
- providing comfort or support for a distressed pupil
- assisting a pupil requiring medical care (who is not able to carry this out unaided)

- cleaning a pupil who has had a toileting accident, nose bleed or who has vomited
- assisting girls who have needs due to menstruation

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed, particularly in Early Years. Staff members encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

Providing Comfort or Support

Children, particularly children in EYFS, may seek physical comfort from staff. Where children require physical support, staff need to be aware that physical contact must be kept to a minimum and be child-initiated. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, the member of staff's hands should always be seen and a child should not be positioned close to a member of staff's body which could be regarded as intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is suitable to the age, gender and situation of the child.

If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable, this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable.

Medical procedures

If it is necessary for a child to receive medicine during the school day, parents must give written permission (by filling out the Administration of Medication Form) and discuss their child's needs with the Headteacher/Admin staff. Staff administration of medicines is voluntary and is only carried out when children require medicine for prolonged / on-going medical needs. **We can only give medicines that are prescribed by a doctor and which have the pharmacy instruction label attached.** All medication must be administered by qualified first aiders and witnessed by another staff member.

Any member of staff giving medicine to a pupil checks:

- the pupil's name
- written instructions provided by parents or doctor
- prescribed dose
- expiry date.

Particular attention is paid to the safe storage, handling and disposal of medicines. The Headteacher has prime responsibility for the safe management of medicines kept at school. This duty derives from the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). Medicines are kept in a secure place, not accessible to pupils.

Toileting Accidents

Intimate care for a toileting accident is only given to a child after the school has gained verbal consent from parents/carers for staff to clean and change the child (on the first occasion). If the parents cannot be contacted to give permission, the Headteacher will be consulted. If put in a situation where the wellbeing of a child is at risk, staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child.

When touching a child, staff are always aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and respect the child's wishes and feelings. If a child needs to be cleaned, staff will make sure that:

- protective gloves are worn

- the procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process
- the child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible
- physical contact is kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning.
- privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation
- all spills of vomit, blood or excrement are cleaned up and disposed of
- any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet
- soiled clothing is generally put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child

In the case of a protracted issue with soiling, the school will seek professional advice and may expect parents/carers to be available to provide intimate care.

Hygiene

All staff members are familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, follow basic hygiene procedures and have access to protective, disposable gloves and aprons if necessary.

Protection for staff

Members of staff need to have regard to the danger of allegations being made against them and take precautions to avoid this risk. These should include:

- having up-to-date training in child protection and safeguarding procedures
- gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- allowing the child, wherever possible, to express a preference to choose his/her carer and encourage them to say if they find a carer to be unacceptable
- allowing the child a choice in the sequence of care
- being aware of and responsive to the child's reactions
- staff will not wear smart watches when providing intimate care

Safeguards for children

There is an obligation on local authorities to ensure that staff who have substantial, unsupervised access to children undergo police checks. All staff at St Andrew's Primary School are DBS checked on application and are not employed until all checks are completed satisfactorily. Personal and professional references are also required and unsuitable candidates are not permitted to work within the school. It is not appropriate for any volunteers or students to carry out intimate care procedures.