

# INTIMATE CARE POLICY

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# Intimate Care Policy

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

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

## 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 soiled him/herself, has vomited or feels unwell

**Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.**

## Rationale

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. This intimate care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of 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 will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young persons' right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

## Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed particularly in Early Years and Key Stage 1. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

## Providing comfort or support

The staff at Great Marsden St John Church of England Primary School believe that physical touch is an essential part of human relationships. In our school adults may well use touch to prompt, to give reassurance or to provide support in PE. To use touch/physical support successfully, staff will adhere to the following principles. It must:

- be non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain or injury
- be in the best interests of the child and others

- have a clear educational purpose (e.g. to access the curriculum or to improve social relationships)
- take account of gender issues

Staff need to be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with students. More guidance and advice on physical contact other than the exercise of the power to use force is provided by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

## **Medical procedures (See Policy on Medicines)**

### **Soiling**

Intimate care for soiling should only be given to a child after the parents have given permission for staff to clean and change the child. Parents will be given a permission form when the child starts in Reception so that early year's staff can clean and change the child in the event of the child wetting or soiling themselves. All children who are new to the school receive a letter in the admissions booklet appertaining to soiling which they must sign and return. (Appendix 1)

If a parent does not give consent, the school will contact the parents or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. If the parents/carers or emergency contact is able to come within a few minutes, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives. Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent to arrive, an adult will stay with them, giving comfort and reassurance. The child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed.

If a parent/carer or emergency contact cannot attend, the school seeks to gain verbal consent from parents/carers for staff to clean and change the child. This permission will be sought on each occasion that the child soils him or herself.

If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be contacted the Head Teacher will be consulted. If put in a situation where the child is unable to continue with their learning due to the severity of the soiling, staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child.

Staff understand that soiling can have different levels of severity. If a minor amount of soiling has occurred, the child will be encouraged to wipe themselves under adult guidance.

If however the soiling is severe, either in quantity or consistency, parents will automatically be contacted to come and clean the child or remove the child to a place where they can be cleaned effectively. This will happen even if a parent has signed the permission slip consenting to staff to cleaning their child. If, as outlined above, school are unable to contact parents, then staff will clean the child to the best of their ability ensuring that the following guidelines are adhered to.

When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings. 2 members of staff will be with the child at all times.

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
- Their conversation is appropriate so as not to cause further distress to the child.
- 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 wiped up and flushed down the toilet
- Any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet
- Soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child

## **Hygiene**

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and have access to protective, disposable gloves.

## **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:

- Gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- Allow 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
- Allow the child a choice in the sequence of care
- Be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions

Every member of staff will receive a 'guidelines for good practice' document which details the schools expectations in these matters. (Appendix 2).

## **Working With Children Of The Opposite Sex**

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care but the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman.

The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- when intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy, ie they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screens/curtains put in place;
- if the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance;
- report any concerns to the designated teacher for child protection and make a written record; and
- parents must be informed about any concerns.

## **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 Great Marsden St John's C of E Primary School are DBS checked on application and cannot undertake tasks within school until all checks are completed satisfactorily. The aim of the DBS is to help organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children or other vulnerable members of society. Personal and professional references are also required and unsuitable candidates are not permitted to work within the school.

It is not appropriate for volunteers or students to carry out intimate care procedures.

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if necessary.



## Permission form for the Provision of Care

If a child wets or soils themselves or requires assistance after vomiting while they are in school it is important that measures are taken to have them changed (and if necessary cleaned) as quickly as possible. Our staff are experienced and trained at carrying out this task if you wish them to do so or, if preferred, the school can contact you or your emergency contact who will be asked to attend without delay. If however you or your emergency contact is unable to attend, and it is deemed necessary for the comfort of the child to do so, the decision will be made to clean the child within school to the best of our ability.

Great Marsden St John's Primary, A C of E Academy has an Intimate Care Policy which is available to view on our website (<http://www.st-johns-nelson.lancs.sch.uk/>), or ask for a copy from the office.

Please fill out the permission slip below stating your preference.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M. M. Underwood  
Head Teacher

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Name of Child.....Class.....

**Please delete as appropriate**

\*I give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned by school staff if they wet/soil themselves or have vomited whilst in the care of Great Marsden St John's Primary, A Church of England Academy.

\*I do not give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned if they wet/soil themselves. The school will contact me or my emergency contact and I will organise for my child to be cleaned and changed. I understand that in the event that I (or the emergency contact) cannot be contacted the staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child.

I understand that if I do not to send this reply slip back, I am automatically consenting to my child being cleaned by members of staff.

**Please ensure that you advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to your child.**

Signature of Parent/Carer..... Date.....



## Intimate Care Policy Guidelines For Good Practice

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs.

Staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care, as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

### **1. Involve the child in the intimate care**

Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and give choices where possible. Check your practice by asking the child or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.

### **2. Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.**

Care **should not** be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child.

### **3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.**

As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.

### **4. Be aware of your own limitations**

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ASK. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

### **5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.**

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. Your attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.

### **6. If you have any concerns you must report them.**

If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the designated teacher for child protection.

If a child is accidentally hurt during the intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the designated teacher (MU/EW). Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child's personal file.