



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Intimate Care Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: July 2021
Last reviewed on:	January 2025	
Next review due by:	January 2028	

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, respect, and in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one, which enables them to maintain their dignity;
- 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 of 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 will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young persons' right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

Definition

Intimate care may be any 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;
- To raise awareness and provide a clear procedure for intimate care;
- Cleaning a pupil who has soiled him/herself, has vomited or feels unwell.

Supporting dressing/undressing

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

Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Nursery and Reception). 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.

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 who have children in the Nursery may sign a permission form so that the Early Years staff can clean and change their child in the event of the child soiling themselves (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. If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be contacted the Headteacher will be consulted. If put in an impossible situation where the 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.

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 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;
- A second member of staff is present;
- 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.

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. Joseph's

Primary School are DBS checked on application and cannot undertake tasks within school until all checks are completed satisfactorily. The DBS's aim 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 to carry out intimate care procedures.

Intimate Care Protocols for Sports, Swimming, Residential Journeys and Performances.

Intimate care protocols – sports and school journeys Changing for P.E. in school (or changing for productions etc) Protocols

If a child in Reception to Year Four needs to change, it is appropriate for them to change in the classroom. Staff with classes facing on to the playground, need to balance the risk of closing blinds to preserve children's dignity with the need to maintain their own safeguarding safety, for instance at the end of the school day when parents and others are on the playground it is probably wise to close blinds, through the school day less so.

For individual children, particularly in Year Four, who are self-conscious about changing, permission should be given for them to use the toilet areas or the girls' changing room provided they have shown themselves sensible enough to cope with the responsibility of "remote supervision"*.

Children in Year Five and Six should change separately. This can be achieved by either more than one class changing at the same time so girls may use one classroom and boys another or by using the girls' changing room. Staff should rotate so that one member of staff is not always supervising the same gender.

*Remote supervision is where children are not under the direct supervision of a member of staff but are undertaking a defined task in a defined location specified by a member of staff.

Sports events

The school promotes multiple opportunities for sports both competitive and for participation.

Protocols

Children should change into sportswear, including school tracksuit at school unless directed otherwise.

Children should travel back to school in their sportswear.

Swimming

The following procedure should be used for the safety of both the children and staff members.

The greatest risk to children falls whilst they are sharing the communal shower area with members of the public. Once children have entered the group changing rooms

staff **should prioritise their own safeguarding** over ensuring children are dry, wearing their own uniform, avoiding lost property etc.

Protocols

It is important that supervising staff be rotated, i.e. the responsibility for swimming should not remain predominantly with one member of staff. Ideally there should be a mix of genders accompanying the swimming class.

Leisure Centre procedures (School swimming lessons - instructions for schools) require that “changing rooms be adequately supervised by the School Teacher or other designated member of school staff” (Section 3.1.3) and “Responsibility for the supervision of the school pupils whilst getting changed before / after lessons remains with the school teachers to ensure that dignity, decency and privacy is maintained at all times.” (3.1.3).

To achieve this on arrival, boys and girls should be shown to the group changing room for their gender and whilst still in their uniform be instructed on what to do. Staff should then withdraw to one end of the group changing room to allow children to change into their swim kit.

Before going poolside, children must have a quick shower wearing their swimming costume as required by the swimming centre’s policy. Staff must supervise as members of the public also use this communal shower area and are sometimes in a state of undress.

At the end of swimming children should be supervised in the shower area wearing their swimming costumes and then be directed to the group changing room and given time to get dressed. Staff should encourage children to dress quickly and safely from a static position at one end of the changing room, prioritising children’s dignity over other concerns. If no male member of staff is present boys should be instructed to go straight into the group changing room without showering.

School Journey

Our Year Six school journey is to Boreatton Park residential centre, operated by PGL. This time gives children an opportunity to develop independence and organisational skills.

Protocols

After wet activities children should use the communal shower rooms with individual cubicles. No staff should enter the changing rooms. In exceptional circumstances if required, the staff member should be accompanied by a member of PGL staff.

For some children with specific pre-existing medical conditions and SEND needs, use of the cabin shower instead of the communal shower is appropriate, e.g. visual impairment, profound ASD. This should be risk assessed before the journey and specific consent gained from the child’s parent. Supervision as per swimming protocol.

All staff should knock and wait for an appropriate amount of time before entering children’s cabin rooms.

APPENDIX 1

Permission form for the Provision of Care

If a child wets or soils themselves while they are at nursery or reception it is important that measures are taken to have them changed (and if necessary cleaned) as quickly as possible.

Our Early Years 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.

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary has an Intimate Care Policy which is available to view on our website (www.stjosephshanwell.org.uk) or ask for a copy from the office.

Please fill out the permission slip below stating your preference.

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

Please delete as appropriate

*I give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned by staff if they wet/soil themselves while in the care of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

*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.

Signature of Parent/Carer Date.....