

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Intimate Care Policy



Date adopted: Autumn 2024

Review date: September 2026

Staff responsible: Isobel Vassallo and Sarah Durand

Governor responsible: Robin Hoyles

Introduction

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning 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 will undertake the procedure. The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the pupil's needs. The pupil's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There should always be a high awareness of possible safeguarding and child protection issues. As such, staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents, carers and health professionals, where appropriate, to provide continuity of care to pupils/young people wherever possible. The following document is a model based on best practice in special schools.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all pupils with respect especially when intimate care is given. No pupil should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

The management of all pupils with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The pupil's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care will be trained to do so (including Safeguarding, Child Protection and Health and Safety training) and be fully aware of best practice. Where an assessment made by a physiotherapist/occupational therapist determines special apparatus should be used to assist such care this will be accommodated.

Each pupil will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each pupil to do as much for him/herself as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the pupil responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for each individual pupil where appropriate to suit the circumstances of the individual pupil.

Each pupil's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each pupil's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a pupil is toileted. Wherever possible, one pupil will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound rationale for having more adults present. If this is the case, the reasons will be clearly documented.

Wherever possible a pupil will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the pupil 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.

Wherever possible staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, in certain circumstances this principle may need to be waived where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence e.g. female staff supporting boys when no suitably qualified male staff are available. Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the pupil's care plan. The needs and wishes of pupils and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

The Protection of Pupils

St Mary's Catholic Primary School's safeguarding procedures will be adhered to at all times. All pupils 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 pupil's

presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate designated person for pupil protection. If a pupil becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be investigated and outcomes recorded. If a pupil makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed. Parents/carers will be contacted and informed as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Where deemed appropriate, staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved. During this time the pupil's needs remain of paramount importance. School will seek further specialist advice from outside agencies where necessary to maximize best outcomes for the pupil.

Additional Guidance:

Health and Safety:

When attending to the intimate care of pupils, staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy. Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a pupil who is soiled. Any soiled waste (urinary or faecal) should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which will be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied regularly and it will be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service. Note: this waste is not classed as clinical waste. Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is our policy that another member of staff is present in order to safeguard both the child and the adult providing the intimate care.

In order to minimise the risk of immediate or cumulative physical injury over time to adults; for example where lifting a child repeatedly over time to provide ongoing, daily intimate care, St. Mary's will ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the physical wellbeing of staff by the provision of appropriate apparatus required to support the needs of the pupil safely and with dignity. Additionally, should training be required for specific cases the support of the School Nursing Team will be sought.

Special/complex health needs

Pupils with special/complex health 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 care plans for each pupil. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the pupil, those with parental responsibility and the school should be easily understood and clearly recorded.

Regardless of age and ability, the views and emotional responses of pupils with special needs should be actively sought (with advocacy arrangements in place for those who require assistance) in regular reviews of these intimate care arrangements.

Physical Contact

All staff engaged in the care and education of pupils 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 intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the pupil, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always make considered judgements when executing their duties, be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact will be open to scrutiny.

Pupils with complex health and/or 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 pupil. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the pupil's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Consultation with colleagues and, where possible, parents/carers will take place where any deviation from the agreed arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it will be fully documented and reported.

Extra caution is required by staff where a pupil is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. In this case the pupil may view physical contact to be associated with such previous experiences and may result in staff being more vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, many such pupils may present as extremely needy and actively seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the pupil minimising any negative experience. In such cases ensuring supervision will help to protect staff from possible allegations.

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 subject to misinterpretation.

First Aid and intimate care

Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other pupils are present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and must be made aware of the task being undertaken. Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for.

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 should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless the pupil's needs require it, avoid any physical contact when pupils 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 pupils 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 own conduct, e.g. adults must not change in the same place as pupils with pupils.

Out of school trips, clubs etc.

Employees 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 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, holidays 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.

Meetings with pupils away from the school premises where a chaperone will not be present are not permitted unless in exceptional circumstances where specific approval has been 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 pupil. 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.

Appendix 1:



Intimate Care and Toileting Parental Consent Form

Name of Child:	
Date of Birth:	
Class / Teacher Name:	
Care required and how often during the day	
Member(s) of staff who will carry out the tasks – all staff need to be fully aware of toileting/intimate care plan and school priorities	
Name:	
Signature:	
Where will the tasks be carried out and what equipment/resources will be required to safely carry out the procedures:	
Infection Control and Disposal Procedures in place:	
Actions that will be taken if any concerns arise:	

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Parent's responsibility to provide:

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Any School/Home agreement of care/management plan or communication via schoolhome diary (if required):

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Other Professionals in involved in care/advisory role: (School Nurse, Health Visitor, etc)

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Additional Information:

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I/We have read the Intimate Care/Toileting Policy provided by St. Mary's Catholic Primary School. I/We give permission for the named member(s) of staff to attend to the care needs of my/our child and are in agreement with the procedures proposed

Name of Parent/Carer:	
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Signature:	
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