



Intimate Care Policy

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Governor Approval	<i>R&E Committee</i>

Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

Delph Primary School aims to provide the necessary care, guidance and support for every child to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution. We are a healthy school, with healthy attitudes embedded in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Children are encouraged to be active and maintain healthy relationships with their peers and adults as well as making choices about healthy lifestyles.

- This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for intimate care
- This policy will be reviewed annually

Rationale

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our 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.

Children are generally more vulnerable than adults and staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Intimate care may be defined as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Such activities can include:

- feeding
- oral care
- washing
- changing clothes
- toileting
- first aid and medical assistance
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care

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

Principles Of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- every child has the right to be safe
- every child has the right to personal privacy
- every child has the right to be valued as an individual
- every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- all children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- all children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account; and
- every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent

School Responsibilities

All staff working with children are vetted using DBS Checks and references. This includes students on work placement and volunteers.

Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school are involved in the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, if appropriate, 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 by parents and school. Parents would then be contacted.

Intimate care arrangements for individual known children, should be reviewed at least annually. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. The school's Intimate Care Policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner, if legislations/circumstances change.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, he or she must report this to the designated teacher for child protection.

Guidelines For Good Practice

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. This policy is designed to safeguard children and staff. It applies 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.

It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretations. 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

In order to ensure dignity and privacy for children requiring intimate care, the 'First Aid Room' door will be closed, but only where parents have given signed consent. Should an emergency happen, the emergency cord will be activated and the door can be opened from the outside. In some instances, and with older children, the child may be able to manage their own intimate care with minimal adult supervision i.e. getting themselves changed in the toilet cubicle. Parental signatures will be obtained for all intimate care needs and appropriate records kept in the pupil file.

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. Assistance will be given as soon as possible avoiding unnecessary delays. The following recommended good practice should also be followed:

- Areas used/changing facilities must be wiped down to prevent cross contamination
- Two staff members should ideally be present

- Protective clothing should be worn e.g. aprons, gloves
- A record of the change kept

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. Where necessary, advice should be sought from the school health service.

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 person 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.

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 (including a CPOMS log).

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, i.e. 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 (including a CPOMS log)
- parents must be informed about any concerns

Communication With Children

It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Depending on their maturity and levels of stress children may communicate using different methods - words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc. To ensure effective communication:

- make eye contact at the child's level
- use simple language and repeat if necessary
- wait for response
- continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response
- treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect