

Intimate Care Policy

Our Mission Statement

We come together as Saint Mary’s family,

To learn, share our faith, and do our best to follow in the footsteps of Jesus

At St. Mary’s Primary School 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 policy takes into account the recommendations from the *‘Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People’*

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 of care of their children

**Definition**

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
* 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

**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;
* personal privacy;
* be valued as an individual;
* be treated with dignity and respect;
* be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
* express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account;
* have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

**Parental Responsibilities**

It is generally expected that most children will be toilet trained and out of nappies before they begin school (please see appendix for pre-school children) Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child and their permission is sought to allow the provision of intimate care.

Where a child has a medical condition which requires regular intimate care parents may be requested to provide school with wipes and appropriate spare clothing.

Only in an emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. The act of intimate care would not be undertaken until parents have been contacted. For children who will need regular intimate care then the parent must sign the agreement.

**School Responsibilities**

All staff working with children have obtained an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS). Students and volunteers are not required to undertake any intimate care duties.

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

Anticipated intimate care arrangements which are required on a regular basis are agreed between the school and parents, and when appropriate and possible, by the child. In such cases consent forms are signed and stored centrally.

Parents will be provided with a copy of our intimate care policy on request.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague’s intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated Person for Child Protection, Mrs. Morris.

**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 will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children, taking into account their developmental changes, level of understanding and ability to communicate.

It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff.

As a basic principle children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Where a child is fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and, where possible give choices.

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many adults might need to be present when a child needs help with regular intimate care. Usual practice will follow: one child cared for by one adult and another adult remain close by.

For pupils with a personal care plan their intimate care should follow the procedures outlined. Intimate care in these instances is carried out by one member of staff. Should a member of staff feel vulnerable they may request assistance from a second member of staff who the pupil is familiar with.

For children with any additional needs a full risk assessment, with consultation from outside agencies, will be undertaken to address issues such as moving and handling and personal safety of the child and the adult. Training and apparatus necessary will be provided to assist with children who require any special arrangements.

As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication and regular SEN reviews ensure that practice amongst all parties is consistent.

Staff must only carry out activities that they understand and feel confident and comfortable with. If in doubt, they must seek further assistance. Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach taken with intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth.

If any unusual markings, discolouration or swellings are observed this must be reported immediately to the Designated Person for Child Protection, Mrs. Morris.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or

misinterprets something, staff must reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident to the Designated Person for Child Protection, Mrs. Morris. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child.

**Hygiene.**

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection and should ensure the use of appropriate protective equipment when necessary, for example, protective, disposable latex/vinyl gloves and apron. Our school also has shower and washing machine facilities.

**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 be given by a female at the current time due to there not being any male members of staff.

**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 One. 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 Pre-school, Reception and Key Stage One). 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.

**Appendix for pre-school provision**

Procedures for changing a child wearing a nappy:
 \*One member of staff (Key Worker when possible) will change the child.
 \*The child will be changed in a separate toilet area.
 \*Staff will use the aprons, gloves, blue roll paper, nappy sacks and baby wipes. \*The nappy change will be recorded on a daily basis

Procedures for prevention of infection:
 \*Staff will wear disposable gloves and aprons whilst changing.
 \*Blue roll paper will be placed on top of the changing mat.
 \*The changing mat and area will be cleaned after use with antibacterial wipes.

\*Hot water and hand wash is available to wash hands immediately after a child has been changed.

\*Paper towels are available for drying hands.

\*Antibacterial hand gel is available in the changing area.

Reviewed Annually