



## **GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN INTIMATE CARE**

All pupils have the right to be safe and treated with dignity and respect, as set out in the Charter of Children's Rights. Their welfare and dignity are of paramount importance.

Intimate Care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of genitals. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing.

These guidelines are designed to safeguard both pupils and staff, and apply to every member of staff involved with intimate care of pupils.

The guidelines aim to support good practice in intimate care and state that;

- 1 **Every pupil is treated with dignity and respect and privacy is ensured.**  
**Every pupil is encouraged to have a positive self-image**

For some pupils intimate care can be carried out by one staff member alone with one pupil; for others, especially those who are not mobile, it may require two staff members working closely together. Having people working alone does increase the opportunity for possible abuse, but this is balanced by the loss of privacy and lack of trust implied if two people have to be present if it is not necessary for the student.

There will also always be other staff members around in the changing/toilet area which can act as a deterrent to possible abusers. Staff should be sensitive to the pupil's need for privacy, dignity and gentle handling.

It is important that staff never talk across a pupil and never talk about them, especially in a derogatory fashion.

Privacy is an important issue. No staff member should walk through an occupied toilet or changing area without making absolutely certain that an interruption is acceptable.

2 **The pupil is involved as far as possible in their intimate care.**

Close contact and handling should be kept to the minimum necessary to complete the task. Staff should avoid doing things for a pupil that he or she can do alone, and if a pupil is able to help, staff must ensure that they are given the chance to do so. It is necessary for staff to support the pupil in doing all they can for themselves and always to explain to the child what the adult is doing.

3 **Ensure reactions of the pupil are responded to.**

Staff must ensure that they are responding appropriately to the pupil by asking them, particularly a pupil the staff member has not previously cared for, if they may help the child or telling them what that staff member will be doing, e.g 'are you ready?', 'I am going to wash you now etc.'. It is necessary to forewarn and prepare the pupil and behave consistently – this is not necessarily a time for choices but the pupil's choice of carer for carrying out intimate tasks should always be respected where practicable.

4 **Intimate care must be as consistent as possible.**

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that their staff have a consistent approach. This does not mean that everyone has to do things in an identical fashion, but it is important that approaches are not markedly different between different staff eg is caring for menstruation consistent across different staff?

Wherever possible a child will not be cared for solely by the same adult on a regular basis but by a whole class group. This will ensure that, as far as possible, 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.

5 **Clarification must be sought for any uncertainties.**

If a staff member needs to be shown more than once it is imperative that they ask again. Certain intimate care or treatment procedures must only be given by the school nurse or staff who have been formally trained and assessed as competent. These are included in the Administration Of Medicines Policy.

Pupils must be supervised at all times in the toilet or changing areas and pupils should never be alone whilst on a plynth. If a pupil is on a programme eg toilet training or working towards independence, the supervision should be appropriate to the programme and, under these circumstances, it may be valid to leave a pupil for the amount of time requested in the programme.

6 **Any child protection concerns are reported.**

If, during the intimate care of the pupil a member of staff accidentally injures, scratches, causes distress, the pupil seems unusually sore in the genital area, appears to be sexually aroused by the staff's actions, or has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause, any such incident must be reported as soon as possible in line with Child Protection Procedures. The way in which pupils are physically cared for will give them an understanding of appropriate physical contact which may

alert them to inappropriate contacts and help them to respond appropriately as far as they are able.

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**Volunteers/students/supply staff**

See Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and Student/Volunteer Guidelines. Staff in these categories should be allowed to familiarise themselves with the pupils before taking part in any personal care – even changing shoes and socks for PE. No students should be allowed to complete intimate care programmes but can take part in personal care such as dressing/undressing for swimming/PE under the supervision of the class staff.



## **GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH PUPILS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX**

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- a. That there is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with pupils.
- b. That, ideally, every pupil would be offered a same sex carer for all of their intimate care. This, sadly, is often not possible and by necessity female staff must carry out much of the care. However, if it is obvious that a young man is embarrassed being changed by a female member of staff, the school will try its utmost to provide a male member of staff if at all possible.
- c. That the individual pupil's safety, dignity, privacy and their right to exercise choice of carer are of paramount importance but need to fit within the Guidelines for Intimate Care. (see section 4)
- d. That intimate and personal care of boys and girls up to the age of 7 years 11months can be undertaken by all special nursery nurses.
- e. That intimate and personal care for boys is undertaken by male staff where at all possible at Key Stage 2
- f. For any supply staff see Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and Volunteer Guidelines
- g. That parent/carer preferences are taken into account in the intimate care of their children eg the request for a same sex care. These issues will be discussed carefully with the parents and carers when this arises.

These guidelines must be implemented sensitively and with respect for the feelings of all involved.