

Intimate Care Policy

1) Principles

This school takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care. Meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding.

This intimate care policy should be read in conjunction with the schools' policies as below:

- safeguarding policy and child protection procedures
- staff code of conduct and guidance on safer working practice
- 'whistle-blowing' and allegations management policies
- health and safety policy and procedures
- Special Educational Needs policy
- Moving and Handling policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

The Governing Body 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. It is acknowledged that these adults are in a position of great trust.

We recognise that there is a need to treat all pupils, whatever their age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. The child's welfare is of paramount importance and his/her experience of intimate and personal care should be a positive one. It is essential that every pupil is treated as an individual and that care is given gently and sensitively: no pupil should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

Staff will work in close partnership with parent/carers and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care.

Where pupils with complex and/or long term health conditions have a health care plan in place, the plan should, where relevant, take into account the principles and best practice guidance in this intimate care policy.

Members of staff are made aware at interview that giving intimate care to pupils is an essential part of the work in this school.

All staff undertaking intimate care must be given appropriate training.

This Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy is 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.
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account. These views may be expressed non verbally, or through behaviour and should be considered.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

Definition

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some pupils are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing.

It also includes supervision of pupils involved in intimate self-care.

Best Practice

Most pupils at this school have intimate care needs at some level. Parents are aware that these procedures are carried out on a daily basis.

Any historical concerns (such as past abuse) are taken into account when undertaking intimate care.

The plan should be reviewed as necessary, but at least annually, and at any time of change of circumstances, e.g. for residential trips or staff changes (where the staff member concerned is providing intimate care). They should also take into account procedures for educational visits/day trips.

School nurses will undertake all medical procedures but will train staff to undertake some functions in case of emergencies.

All pupils will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each individual pupil to do as much for his/herself as possible.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained in personal care (eg health and safety training in moving and handling) according to the needs of the pupil.

Staff will be fully aware of best practice regarding infection control, including the requirement to wear disposable gloves and cleaning of changing beds etc.

Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual pupils taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.

There must be careful communication with each pupil who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc) to discuss their needs and preferences. Where the pupil is of an appropriate age and level of understanding permission should be sought before starting an intimate procedure.

Staff who provide intimate care should speak to the pupil personally by name, explain what they are doing and communicate with all children in a way that reflects their ages.

Every child's right to privacy and modesty will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each pupil's situation to determine who and how many carers might need to be present when s/he needs help with intimate care. Wherever possible, the pupil's wishes and feelings should be sought and taken into account.

An individual member of staff should inform another appropriate adult when they are going alone to assist a pupil with intimate care.

The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of children and their families should be taken into account, particularly as they might affect certain practices or determine the gender of the carer.

Where possible pupils will have their routines carried out by a person of the same gender. However with a preponderance of female staff this is not possible and female staff will carry out procedures with male pupils. Male staff will not carry out intimate care with female students because this is in line with society's norms and gives protection for male staff from accusations.

Adults who assist pupils with intimate care should be employees of the school, not students or volunteers, and therefore have the usual range of safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS checks.

All staff should be aware of the school's confidentiality policy. Sensitive information will be shared only with those who need to know.

Health & Safety guidelines should be adhered to regarding waste products and the bins provided for sanitary waste must be used.

No member of staff will carry a mobile phone, camera or similar device whilst providing intimate care.

Child Protection

The Governors and staff at this school recognise that pupils with special needs and who are disabled are particularly vulnerable to all types of abuse.

The school's child protection procedures will be adhered to.

From a child protection perspective it is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching private parts of a pupil's body. In this school best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those who are involved in intimate care and others in the vicinity) will be encouraged to be vigilant at all times, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.

Where appropriate, 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. unexplained marks, bruises, etc s/he will immediately report concerns to one of the Designated Senior Persons.

If a pupil becomes unusually distressed or very unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, this should be reported to the class teacher or Headteacher. The matter will be investigated at an appropriate level and outcomes recorded. Appropriate action will be taken.

If a pupil, or any other person, makes an allegation against an adult working at the school this should be reported to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of Governors if the concern is about the Headteacher) who will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer in accordance with the school's policy: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff and Volunteers. It should not be discussed with any other members of staff or the member of staff the allegation relates to.

Similarly, any adult who has concerns about the conduct of a colleague at the school or about any improper practice will report this to the Headteacher or to the Chair of Governors, in accordance with the child protection procedures and 'whistle-blowing' policy.

Physiotherapy

Pupils who require physiotherapy whilst at school should have this carried out by a trained physiotherapist. School staff who undertake part of the physiotherapy regime (such as assisting children with exercises), will be trained to do this by the physiotherapist who will monitor the procedures. The physiotherapist should observe the member of staff applying the technique.

Under no circumstances should school staff devise and carry out their own exercises or physiotherapy programmes.

Any concerns about the regime or any failure in equipment should be reported to the physiotherapist.

Medical Procedures

Many Lakeside pupils require assistance with invasive or non-invasive medical procedures such as the administration of rectal medication, managing catheters or colostomy bags. These procedures will be discussed with parents/carers, documented in the health care plan and will only be carried out by the school nurses or staff who have been trained to do so.

The school has a nurse on site at all times - other than during unexpected absences.

First aiders at work and paediatric first aiders are trained to carry out basic medical procedures in their absence. Two people will always carry out these procedures as a check. These procedures will involve giving regular medication.

It is particularly important that these staff should follow appropriate infection control guidelines and ensure that any medical items are disposed of correctly.

Any members of staff who administer first aid should be appropriately trained in accordance with LA guidance.

If an examination of a child is required in an emergency aid situation it is advisable to have another adult present, with due regard to the child's privacy and dignity.

Massage

Massage is used in order to develop sensory awareness, tolerance to touch and as a means of relaxation.

Massage undertaken by school staff is confined to parts of the body such as the hands, feet and face in order to safeguard the interest of both adults and pupils.

Any adult undertaking massage for pupils must demonstrate an appropriate level of competence.