



Intimate Care Policy

Reviewed September 2017

It is a well-researched fact that children with complex needs are especially vulnerable so it is vital that staff involved with their intimate care are always very sensitive to their individual needs. The school recognises that it is an absolute right that all children are treated with the greatest respect when intimate care is provided. No child should ever be looked after in a way that causes pain, distress or embarrassment. Every child's right to privacy will be respected.

DEFINITION

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual pupil. Parents have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their child, and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents. Intimate Care involves helping pupils with aspects of personal care which they are not able to complete themselves because of their age, developmental delay or disability.

Aspects of care include:

- Washing/showering/bathing
- Dressing/undressing
- Toileting and managing menstruation
- Dental care
- Application of topical medicines/creams e.g. sun cream
- Massage

In some unforeseen circumstances, for example, during emergency temporary staff cover, there are times when staff working in school are awaiting their Criminal Background Check. Intimate Care tasks **SHOULD NEVER** be carried out by staff who do not yet have a Criminal Background Check. These staff, however, may **assist** with intimate care duties **alongside** fully vetted staff.

Staff behaviour must always be open to scrutiny at all times. If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice they must report this to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care as an opportunity to abuse children. It is important to bear in mind that some care tasks/treatments can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach and attitude which staff take towards intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth. The staff attitude to a child's intimate care is therefore of crucial importance.

At all times staff involved in any intimate care tasks should ensure that these are undertaken within view of another member of staff.

Staff will :

- Allow the child or young person to care for him/herself as far as possible, encourage independence and support pupils to carry out aspects of Intimate Care related to individual educational targets.
- Use the opportunity during Intimate Care tasks, to teach pupils and young people about the value of their own bodies and to develop personal safety skills.
- Safeguard the rights and well-being of children with regard to their dignity, privacy, choice and safety.
- Ensure that the child is appropriately covered, the door closed or protective screens / curtains put in place while individual care tasks are taking place.

Staff should :

- Use appropriate language, signs, symbols, photographs relevant to the pupil's level of understanding.
- Work in a reassuring, supportive manner whilst assisting with Intimate Care tasks.
- Immediately report to the Designated Teacher any observations of any unusual markings, discolorations or swelling on the child's body.
- If during intimate care a pupil is accidentally hurt or the child appears to become sexually aroused by the adult's actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something, this should be reported as above.
- Report any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child.

Parents Should :

- Be informed and requested to give their written consent to named staff carrying out intimate care tasks as needed by the individual child. *
- Provide nappies/pull-ups, wipes, sanitary towels and spare clothing to facilitate the management of the personal care needs of their son / daughter.

*If named carers are not available to provide intimate care duties, parents should be advised in the Home/School Diary with the names of those who have provided it. All staff who provide Intimate Care need to be conversant with the school Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

Cedar Lodge School is committed to ensuring that staff with responsibility for the intimate care of pupils will fulfil their duties in a professional manner at all times.