

# Intimate Care Policy



## Adswood Primary School

<b>Governing Body Ratified:</b>	July 2025
<i>M. Smart</i> Head Teacher	<i>J Dancy</i> Chair of Governors
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The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching programmes in Adswood Primary School and we are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children. It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

'Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, carer and the child. In school this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident.

Adswood Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all our children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain and adults and staff must be sensitive to each child's individual needs. Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

1. Assisting a child to change his/her clothes
2. Changing or washing a child who has soiled him / herself
3. Assisting with toileting issues
4. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care
5. Providing first aid assistance
6. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child
7. Feeding a child
8. Providing oral care to a child
9. Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. \*

\*As per the managing medical needs policy in the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure. Parents have the responsibility to advise the school 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 as applicable:

- Every child has a 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 their views taken into account; and
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

### **Assisting a child to change his / her clothes**

This is more common in our EYFS or lower KS1. On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, he / she has a toileting accident, gets wet outside, has vomit on his / her clothes or for PE etc.

Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required this will be given.

Staff will always ensure that they have a colleague in attendance when supporting dressing/undressing and where appropriate, will give the child the opportunity to change in private, unless the child is in such distress that it is not possible to do so. If staff are concerned in any way, parents will be sent for and asked to assist their child and informed if the child becomes distressed.

### **Changing a child who has soiled him/herself**

If a child soils him/herself in school, staff will respond appropriately and sensitively. In EYFS consent for children to receive support with intimate care will be gained at the start of Nursery or Reception as we know that accidents within this age group happen often. Through discussions about children, staff will know any children who require support with their toileting prior to starting with us. If a child starts school wearing nappies, staff will work with the parents to toilet train the child unless there is a medical reason. Staff will routinely change nappies once during the morning and once during the afternoon (part-time sessions) and upon finding that a child has soiled themselves. Parents are asked to provide enough nappies for their child's session but school will have a supply of wipes unless parents prefer their own to be used. All staff within EYFS share the responsibility of changing children unless they are unable to for a medical reason or injury. In KS1 and KS2 a professional judgement has to be made whether it is appropriate to change the child in school, or request the parent/carer to attend the child for changing. In either circumstance the child's needs are paramount and he/she should be comforted and reassured throughout. The following guidelines outline our procedures but we will also seek to make age-appropriate responses.

- The child where appropriate will be given the opportunity to change his / her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.

- School will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare uniform for this purpose where possible.

- In KS1 and KS2 depending on age and circumstances, if a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to contact the parent / emergency contact to inform them of the situation.

- If the parent / emergency contact is able to come to school within an appropriate time frame, the child will be accompanied and supported by a staff member until they arrive. This avoids any further distress and preserves dignity.

- If the parent / emergency contact cannot attend, school will seek verbal permission for staff to change the child. If none of the contacts can be reached the Headteacher will be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child.

When attending to the intimate care needs of a child:

### **Child Protection/Safeguarding Guidelines**

- Ensure that the action you are taking is necessary.
- Get verbal agreement to proceed
- Ensure the child is happy with who is changing him / her.
- Be responsive to any distress shown.
- In EYFS a log of assistance with intimate care is kept by staff and after assisting a child the following details need to be logged;
  - Date and time
  - Child's name and Staff member's name
  - Details e.g. wet, soiled
- In KS1 and KS2 details of assistance with intimate care are logged and kept in the classroom with the same details as above.

### **Basic hygiene routines**

- Always wear protective disposable gloves/apron/face mask
- Place any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for return to parents.
- Nappies and wipes are to be double-bagged before putting in to the bin.

In the case of EYFS children in order to avoid any unnecessary distress, a member of staff may assist the child, with a colleague in attendance, unless a parent has requested otherwise or if the child is reluctant and parents will be informed all collection.

### **Providing comfort or support to a child:**

There are situations and circumstances where children seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Early Years). Where this happens, staff need to be aware that any physical contact must be kept to a minimum. When comforting a child or giving reassurance, staff must ensure that at no time can the act be considered intimate. If physical contact is deemed to be appropriate, staff must provide care which is professionally appropriate to the age and context.

If a child touches a member of staff in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable this can be gently but firmly discouraged in a way which communicates that the touch, rather than the child, is unacceptable. If a child touches a member of staff, as noted above, this should be discussed, in confidence with the Designated Safeguard Lead.

### **Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.**

Our Managing Medical Conditions policy outlines arrangements for the management and administration of medications in school.

### **Parental permission must be given before any medication is dispensed in school- this form is available from the school office.**

A small number of children will have specific medical needs and in addition to the arrangements included in our Managing Medical Conditions Policy will have an 'Individual Health Plan'. This Health Plan will be formulated by the school nurse in conjunction with the parents and the school. If required, school staff will receive appropriate training.

### **Swimming**

Our KS2 classes participate in a swimming programme at Life Leisure - Avondale. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes however, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur. Where a child needs additional support for changing, parental permission will be sought and a personal care plan will be drawn up so as to maintain dignity but increase independence.

### **Residential Trips**

Residential educational visits are an important part of our upper KS2 school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting. As with Extra-Curricular Activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Safeguarding procedures and Behaviour and Discipline Policies. Some specific Intimate Care issues may arise in a Residential context.

### **Showering/Washing**

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations, and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur.

This means that staff should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising children in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore Staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct, e.g. adults must not change in the same place as children or shower/ wash with children.

It is best practice in our school that when an incident has taken place that has necessitated a member of staff to be present when children are changing that an incident report is made to the Designated Safeguard lead.

### **Night Time Routines**

It is established practice that the children's sleeping areas are private spaces and anyone else wanting to enter the room should knock and announce their intention to enter.

At bedtime, children are given a set amount of time to change and prepare for bed and will be told when the supervising teachers will visit the rooms to check all is okay and switch off the lights. A reciprocal arrangement is in place in the mornings.

There are occasions when incidents take place during the night and the need arises to:

1. Assist a child to change his / her clothes
2. Change a child who has soiled him / herself
3. Provide comfort to an upset or distressed child
4. Assist a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.

Guidance as above will be followed with the support of an additional member of staff in attendance.

## **School Responsibilities**

All members of staff working with children are vetted as part of the DBS Procedure This includes students on work placement and volunteers who may be left alone with children. Vetting for school staff includes criminal record checks and two references.

Only those members of staff who are familiar with the Intimate Care Policy and other pastoral care policies of the school should be involved in the intimate care of children.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, 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 immediately.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated Safeguard Lead.

## **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.

Members of 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 forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff.

**1. Involve the child in 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, where possible, give choices. 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.** Care should not be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child.

**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.

**4. Be aware of your own limitations.** Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask. Some procedures e.g. medical must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed. However all staff have a duty of care to attend to a child's intimate care needs.

**5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.** Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong 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 Safeguard Lead.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguard Lead. 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.

### **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 who assists with intimate care but the current ratio of female to male staff in school means that assistance will more often be given by a female. 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 intimate care 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 Safeguard Lead and make a written record;
- 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; and
- Treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

## Appendix 1

### Parental permission for Intimate Care



Should it be necessary, I give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to receive intimate care (e.g. help with changing or following toileting).

- I understand that staff will endeavour to encourage my child to be independent.
- I understand that I will be informed discretely should the occasion arise.
- I will come to school to attend to my child intimate care needs if requested by staff.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult with parental responsibility for: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 2



## Record of Intimate Care

[illegible]