

St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit



Intimate Care Policy

2020

St Mary's 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. St Mary's Primary School recognises that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at St Mary's Primary School work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children wherever possible.

This policy represents the agreed principles for intimate care throughout the school.

Introduction

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 care of their children

Definition

Intimate care is one of the following:

- Supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing
- 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

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed particularly in Foundation Stage, Nursery and Playgroup. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

Our approach to best practice

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. All children who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection and Health and Safety training in moving and handling) and are fully aware of best practice. Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/ occupational therapist as required.

There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc.) to discuss the child's needs and preferences. The child is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.

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. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child. These plans include a full risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the child and the carer and health.

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child needs help with intimate care. Where possible one child will be cared for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having two adults present. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented.

Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, while at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

Parents/carers will be involved with their child's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis; a clear account of the agreed arrangements will be recorded on the child's care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints; e.g. staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

The Protection of Children

All members of staff, including volunteers and trainees are subject to vetting procedures in keeping with current arrangements for the care and protection of children, before commencing work at St Mary's. All staff at St Mary's Primary School are fully trained in Child Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Child Protection. All procedures will be accessible to staff and adhered to.

It is not appropriate for volunteers to carry out intimate care procedures. Trainees/students should only do so under the supervision of a trained member of staff, following consultation with the student's college supervisors. Where appropriate, all children 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 child's presentation e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to Mrs Lisa Flanagan, designated person for child protection.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures as per the Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Arrangements for changing children

Intimate care for changing a child, including changing nappies, should only take place after the parents have given permission for staff to clean and change the child. Parents with children in the Foundation Stage, Nursery and Playgroup or of a child with a specific medical condition may sign a permission form so that the staff can clean and change their child in the event of the child wetting or soiling themselves (Appendix 1).

If a parent does not give consent, the school will contact the parents or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. If the parents/carers or emergency contact is able to come within a few minutes, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives. Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent to arrive, an adult will stay with them, giving comfort and reassurance. The child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed.

If a parent/carer or emergency contact cannot attend, the school will seek to gain verbal consent from parents/carers for staff to clean and change the child. This permission will be sought on each occasion that the child soils him or herself.

If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be contacted the Principal will be consulted. If put in an impossible situation where the child is in discomfort, staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child.

When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.

If a child needs to be cleaned and changed, staff will make sure that:

- Protective gloves are worn
- The procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process
- The child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible
- For self-protection the child is changed in an area visible to other staff members or with another adult nearby
- Physical contact is kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning or changing
- Privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation
- All spills of vomit, blood or excrement are wiped up and flushed down the toilet
- Any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet
- Soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child
- A record of who changes a child, how often this task is carried out and the time they left/returned to the classroom following this task will be kept
- Parents/carer will be informed that their child was changed/cleaned upon collecting their child

Protection for staff

Members of staff need to have regard to the danger of allegations being made against them and take precautions to avoid this risk. These should include:

- Gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary
- Allow the child, wherever possible, to express a preference to choose his/her carer and encourage them to say if they find a carer to be unacceptable
- Allow the child a choice in the sequence of care
- Be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions

Changing facilities

The dignity and privacy of the child should be of paramount concern.

An area, which can be made private by the use of a screen, is acceptable. Consideration should be given to the sighting of this area from a health and safety aspect. The area should not be situated in a thoroughfare, as a changing mat will have to be used on the floor when a

child is to be changed. This is the recommended method of changing a child, as it avoids an adult having to lift a child and cause possible back injury.

Equipment Provision

Parents have a role to play when their child is still wearing nappies. The parent should provide nappies, disposal bags, wipes, changing mat etc. and parents should be made aware of this responsibility. St Mary's will be responsible for providing gloves, plastic aprons, a bin and liners to dispose of any waste.

Hygiene & Health and Safety

Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled or when changing a soiled nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner). The bin should be emptied on a regular basis and it can be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classed as clinical waste. Staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy

Medical procedures (Refer Health & Safety Policy)

If it is necessary for a child to receive medicine during the school day parents must fill out a Care Plan from the school office and discuss their child's needs with a member of staff before the school agrees to administer medicines or medical care.

Special needs

Children with special needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty must be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child those with parental responsibility and the organisation should be easily understood and recorded.

Physical Contact

All staff engaged in the care and education of children and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact.

The expectation is that staff will work in 'limited touch' cultures and that when physical contact is made with pupils this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the child, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must

therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.

Physical contact which is repeated with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the child, the organisation and those with parental responsibility.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each child. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it should be documented and reported.

Extra caution may be required where a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child without causing them a negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in Nursery and Playgroup). 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. 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.

Restraint

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to prevent children from inflicting damage on either themselves, others or property.

In such cases only the minimum force necessary should be used for the minimum length of time required for the child to regain self- control.

In all cases of safe handling, the incident must be documented and reported. Staff must be fully aware of the DENI Safe Handling Guidance.

Pupils in distress

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and not subject to misinterpretation.

Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil's distress, their age, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the child needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the child's relative or school's counsellor.

Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice, from their line manager or other appropriate person.

First Aid and intimate care - Refer Health and Safety Policy

Members of staff who administer first aid should ensure, wherever possible, that another adult or other children are present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. Agreements between the school, those with parental responsibility and the child concerned should be documented and easily understood. The necessity for such requirements should be reviewed regularly. The child's views must also be actively sought and, in particular, any discomfort with the arrangements addressed,

Physical Education and other skills coaching

Some members of staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties when participating in games, demonstrating an exercise or the use of equipment. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of misinterpretation.

Where it is anticipated that a pupil might be prone to misinterpret any such contact, alternatives should be considered, perhaps involving another member of staff or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.

Covid-19

When changing, dealing with any wound or an ill child a mask, visor, gloves and apron must be worn.

Out of school trips, clubs etc.

Employees should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school. Staff involved in such activities should also be familiar with the school's Health and Safety Policy and EA/CCMS guidance regarding out of school activities.

To ensure pupils' safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on field trips, holidays etc. It is important to exercise caution so that a pupil is not compromised and the member of staff does not attract allegations of overly intrusive or abusive behaviour.

On occasions (field trips/days out, etc.) some pupils might be short of funds and would be embarrassed or singled out if this were known. It would be acceptable for the school to subsidise a child.

It will be reviewed every two years.

This policy was last reviewed June 2020.

Appendix 1

Intimate Care Policy Parental Agreement Form

Please complete and sign

Child's Name:

Class:

Parent's Name:

Please delete as appropriate

I understand the procedures outlined in the Intimate Care Policy and I agree/I do not agree that my child may be changed/cleaned in accordance with the procedure.

Signed: (Parent /Guardian)

Date: