

Willerby Carr Lane

Primary School



Intimate Care Policy

POLICY MANAGEMENT

Approved by	Full Governing Body
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Definition

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene including those which require direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the genitals. Examples include care associated with continence management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing. Staff who work with young children realise that the issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and that they need to be respectful of children's needs.

Staff Guidance

Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and the situation. Privacy is an important issue. Much intimate care is carried out by one staff member along with one child. This practice should be actively supported unless the task requires two people. Having people working alone does increase the opportunity for possible abuse. However, this is balanced by the loss of privacy and lack of trust implied if two people have to be present – quite apart from the practical difficulties. It should also be noted that the presence of two people does not guarantee the safety of the child or young person – organised abuse by several perpetrators can, and does, take place. Therefore, staff should be supported in carrying out the intimate care of children alone unless the task requires the presence of two people. For older children it is preferable if the member of staff is the same gender as the young person. However, this is not always possible in practice.

As a basic principle, pupils will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each pupil to do as much for themselves as they can.

Involve the child as far as possible in his or her own intimate care. Try to avoid doing things for a child that s/he can do alone, and if a child is able to help ensure that s/he is given the chance to do so. This is as important for tasks such as removing underclothes as it is for washing the private parts of a child's body. Support children in doing all that they can themselves. If a child is fully dependent on you, talk with her or him about what you are doing and give choices where possible.

Be responsive to a child's reactions. It is appropriate to 'check' your practise by asking the child – particularly a child you have not previously cared for – "Is it OK to do it this way?"; "Can you wash there?"; "How does mummy do that?". If a child expresses dislike of a certain person carrying out her or his intimate care, try and find out why. Conversely, if a child dislikes you for some reason, ensure the designated safeguarding officer is aware of this.

Never do something unless you know how to do it. If you are not sure how to do something, ask. If you need to be shown more than once, ask again.

If you are concerned that during the intimate care of the child:

- You accidentally hurt the child
- The child seems sore or unusually tender in the genital area
- The child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- The child misunderstands or misinterprets something

- The child has a very emotional reaction without apparent cause (sudden crying or shouting)

Report any incident as soon as possible to another person working with you and make a brief written note of it. **Then discuss immediately with the school's designated safeguarding officer.**

This is for two reasons: first, because some of these could be cause for concern, and secondly, because the child or another adult might possibly misconstrue something you have done. Additionally, if you are a member of staff who has noticed that a child's demeanour has changed directly following intimate care e.g. sudden distress or withdrawal, this should be noted in writing and discussed with the school's designated safeguarding officer.