

St Helens Primary School



Intimate Care Policy

Reviewed by: FGB

On: 7th February 2024

Next review due: February 2025

Co-Chairs of Governors: Gary Booth Matthew Searle
Signature:

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Introduction

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet personal care needs of an individual child. Staff in school have a responsibility to work in partnership with children, parents and other professionals involved with the child's needs.

Intimate care can include feeding, oral care, washing, dressing/undressing, toileting, medical procedures resulting in e.g. feed tubes or catheter etc.

Most children achieve continence before starting full-time school. However there are some pupils in mainstream education who are not fully independent. Some individuals remain dependent on long-term support for personal care, while others progress slowly towards independence.

Principles of Intimate Care

- Every child has the right to be safe
- Every child has the right to privacy
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted and to express their views to the best of their abilities.

The achievement of independence in intimate care is an important self-help skill improving the person's quality of life and self-esteem. Children with toileting problems who receive support and understanding from those who act *in loco parentis* are more likely to achieve their full potential.

Children with intimate care needs are a very diverse group. However broadly speaking, they can be divided into the following groups.

1. Late developers – the child may be developing normally but at a slower pace.
2. Children with some developmental delay – this may include pupils with SEN.
3. Children with physical disabilities e.g. cerebral palsy, spina bifida, for whom long term continence development/management plans are likely to be needed.
4. Children with emotional difficulties including attachment needs.

Rationale

The purpose of these guidelines is to set out procedures that safeguard children and staff by providing a consistent approach within a framework and to recognise the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in providing intimate care.

Principles and responsibilities

1. Every effort should be made to encourage independence before a child arrives at school.
2. Some children achieve independence more easily than others. Children should not be excluded from everyday educational activities solely because of a manageable condition.
3. Staff at St Helens Primary School should plan for the development of independence skills, especially for children who are highly dependent upon adult support for personal care.
4. Children should be treated with dignity and respect by carers who are aware of the importance of helping them develop as far as possible towards independence in personal care. Confident self-assured children who feel their body belongs 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.
5. Before admitting a child who has a self-care need problem, educational settings should draw up a care plan agreed by the setting, parents/carers and colleagues from the school nursing team. The child should also be consulted, if appropriate, as well as the staff involved in carrying out the care. The plan should include information about when and where the child will be cared for, and the practices to be used if necessary. It must specify the people who will be carrying out the care duties. Parents should be informed if there is a change of staff. The care plan will be signed by all involved in drawing it up, and must include parental consent and a review date.
6. Ensure effective communication is maintained throughout any intimate care procedure, including good eye contact, correct language and talk through the procedure as you are carrying it out.
7. **The school will use its best endeavours to ensure that two members of staff are** present when providing intimate care for a child to safeguard both child and carer. There may be times in cases of emergency that only one adult will be able to attend and this will be recorded in the log of care.
8. Staff carrying out care responsibilities are required to follow basic hygiene precautions.
9. The school will ensure that staff have appropriate information and training, including a regular review of procedure and practice.
10. Systems of care should be implemented that:
 - Preserve the dignity of the child or young person and avoid the risk of ridicule or bullying from peers or staff.
 - All staff are aware that abuse/ bullying from peer to peer can take place in a variety of different ways including sexting and cyberbullying and the school works hard with all stakeholders, including parents in order to be vigilant to such issues.
 - Carry out the care plan as agreed in the assessment.
 - Provide adequately trained school- based care staff.

Safeguarding

In order to safeguard children and maintain their dignity whilst acknowledging professionals' fear about allegations of abuse it's imperative that each individual:

- Informs a colleague when a child needs to be taken to the toilet to avoid them carrying out intimate care alone.
- Makes a record of each occasion, including time and duration.
 - All staff are aware that children with disabilities/SEN present additional challenges due to their vulnerability including and assumptions are that indicators of possible abuse relate to the child's disabilities. There is potential for these children to be suffering abuse without showing outward signs and there may be communication barriers and difficulties.
- If you observe any unusual markings, bruising or swelling or any unusual emotional or behavioural responses report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Practice

Written permission to give intimate care must be obtained from the parent/carer using Appendix 1. Children's Social Care must be informed for children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Staff will use appropriate protective equipment e.g. gloves.

Parents will supply the necessary equipment or clothing needed.
The occasion must be recorded and the parent must be informed.

Any child protection concerns should follow the normal routes (See Safeguarding Policy).

Reviewed by: SENCO and SEN Governor

On: September 2021

Next review due: September 2022

Signature SENCO: *Heather Grimes*

Signature of SEN Governor: *Peta Rainford*



ST HELENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

APPENDIX 1

My child may need personal care whilst in school. I understand that a record will be kept of who carries out this care and the number of times it is necessary. The school will endeavour to ensure there are two adults present unless there is an unavoidable situation within school. This will always be recorded in the care log. The care will be given in line with the school's Safeguarding procedures, and the child's dignity and self-esteem will be preserved at all times.

Signed _____ Parent

of _____ Date _____