

**ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY
SCHOOL
CARNACAVILLE**



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Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There shall be a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Principles of Intimate Care

- ❖ Every child has the right to be safe
- ❖ Every child has the right to personal privacy and to be treated with dignity and respect
- ❖ Every child has the right to be valued as an individual
- ❖ Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account

Our Approach to Best 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.

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 children and staff.

1. Involve the child in the 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 give choices where possible. 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 must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.

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. 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 Teacher for Child Protection.

If a child is accidentally hurt during the intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Teacher. 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. 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 personal 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 Teacher for Child Protection and make a written record; and 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.

In the event of a toileting or Wet Play Accident:

- ❖ The child will be taken discreetly to the toilet area
- ❖ The child will be encouraged to change into clean clothes themselves and assistance will only be given if they are having difficulty
- ❖ At all times the child's right to privacy will be respected
- ❖ At no time will the child be left in full view of other children
- ❖ Members of staff will remain in view of others when dealing with a child
- ❖ Students will not be left to change a child, but may assist a member of staff
- ❖ parents will be informed of changing details and a record kept
- ❖ Incident to be recorded in 'Personal / Intimate Care Record' book which will be held in the office

A classroom assistant or teacher will not change a child if they soil themselves. A parent/carer will be asked to make themselves available for the task.

Out of School Trips, Clubs etc.

Staff should take care when supervising in the less formal atmosphere of a school trip or after school activity. Staff must still approach every situation requiring intimate care attention in the same manner.