

Mid-Essex Primary Schools' Intimate Care Policy

Aims

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- 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;
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent. The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching programmes 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 personal care includes hands-on physical care in personal hygiene, and physical presence or observation during such activities.

The Mid Essex Schools' are 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, for example, creams.

(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. A personalised Intimate Care Plan will be created in agreement with the parents and all relevant staff.

Assisting a child to change his / her clothes

This is more common in EYFS. On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, they have an accident at the toilet, gets wet outside, or has vomit on their clothes 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 will always 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 contacted 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 themselves in school, a professional judgement has to be made whether it is appropriate to change the child in school, or request the parent/carer to collect 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 will be given the opportunity to change their underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.
- School will have a supply of wipes, clean underwear and spare uniform for this purpose for EYFS only.
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will attempt to contact the emergency contacts given to the office to inform them of the situation.
- If an 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 emergency contact cannot attend, school will seek verbal permission for staff to support the child to change their clothing. If none of the contacts can be reached, the Headteacher is to be consulted and the decision taken on the basis of loco-parentis and our duty of care to meet the needs of the child.

- The member of staff who has assisted a pupil with intimate care will comply with Child Protection/Safeguarding Guidelines
- The school will ensure that the action taken is necessary, get verbal agreement and then proceed. Pastoral Care Procedures will be adhered to and staff will ensure the child is happy with who is supporting them.
- The school will be responsive to any distress shown and follow basic hygiene routines
- Staff will always wear protective, disposable gloves.
- Any soiled clothing will be sealed in a plastic bag and returned to parents.

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. Parents will be contacted as soon as it is practical to do so.

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.

Our LIFE Trust Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy outlines arrangements for the management of the majority of medication in school. Parental permission must be given before any medication is dispensed in school, this form is also available on the LIFE Trust Website, in the Policies section A small number of children will have significant 'medical' needs and in addition to the arrangements included in our 'Administration of Medications Policy' will have an Individual 'Care Plan'. This Care Plan will be formulated by the relevant medical body. If required, school staff will receive appropriate training.

Swimming

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.

Residential Trips

Residential educational visits are an important part of our Year 5 and 6 school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting. As with extracurricular activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures as well as all other school policies. Some specific intimate care issues may arise in a residential context. Showering 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 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. It is established practice that the children's bedrooms 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 their clothes
2. Change a child who has soiled themselves
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 appointed following 'Safer Recruitment' expectations. This includes students on work placement and volunteers who may be left alone with children. Vetting includes DBS checks and two references. Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other policies of the school are 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. Parents would then be contacted immediately. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the designated leader for Child Protection.

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 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, 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 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 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 Leader for Child Protection. 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 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.