INTIMATE CARE PROCEDURE

NYES | Health and Safety

GENERAL STATEMENT

This procedure represents the agreed principles for intimate care throughout our establishment.
The purpose of this procedure 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 of care of their children

PRINCIPLES

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position. Given the right approach, intimate care can provide opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self-esteem. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young persons' right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

DEFINITION

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some children are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing.

BEST PRACTICE

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed particularly in Early Years. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff (particularly children in EYFS). 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.

Medical procedures (See Policy on Medicines)

If it is necessary for a child to receive medicine during the school day parents must fill out a permission form 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. It must be made clear to parents that staff administration of medicines is voluntary.

Medicines are kept in the school office in a secure fridge and cabinet, not accessible to pupils: but arrangements must be in place to ensure that any medication that a pupil might need in an emergency is readily available.



Wetting and Soiling
If a child wets him/herself the child is encouraged to wash him/herself and change into a spare pair of pants and clothing.

Children wearing Nappies
See Nappy Changing Procedure

Restrictive Physical Intervention
There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain children physically to prevent them 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 restraint the incident must be documented and reported. Staff are fully aware of and trained in the school's Physical Intervention/Positive Handling Policy, which complies with national guidelines.

Under no circumstances would it be permissible to use physical force as a form of punishment, to modify behaviour, or to make a pupil comply with an instruction. Physical force of this nature can, and is likely to, constitute a criminal offence.

Out of school visits, 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 policy and all 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 embarrassed or singled out if this were known. It would be acceptable for a member of staff to subsidise a child, provided that this was disclosed to colleagues.
Meetings with pupils away from the school premises where a chaperone will not be present are not permitted unless specific approval is obtained from the head teacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority. Staff should not place themselves in a position where they are in a vehicle, house or other venue alone with a child.

If staff come into contact with pupils whilst off duty, they must behave as though in their professional role and not give conflicting messages regarding their own conduct.

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

Safeguards for children
All staff are DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) checked on application and cannot undertake tasks on site until all checks are completed satisfactorily. The DBS's aim is to help organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children or other vulnerable members of society.

Personal and professional references are also required and unsuitable candidates are not permitted to work within the organisation. All those working with children should be closely supervised throughout a probationary period and should only be allowed unsupervised access to children once this has been completed to their supervisor's satisfaction.

It is not appropriate for volunteers to carry out intimate care procedures.

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