

Village Infants Intimate Care Policy



Introduction

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a pupil after they have soiled themselves) 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. In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure.

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and requires staff to be respectful of the pupil's needs. The pupil's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There will always 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.

The following policy is a model based on best practice.

Aims and Objectives

Village Infants School is committed to ensuring that:

- Intimate care is carried out properly by staff, in line with any agreed plans
- The dignity, rights and wellbeing of children are safeguarded
- Pupils with intimate care difficulties are not discriminated against, in line with the Equalities Act 2010
- Parents are assured that staff are knowledgeable about intimate care and that the needs of their children are taken into account
- Staff carrying out intimate care work do so within guidelines (i.e. health and safety, manual handling, safeguarding protocols awareness) that protect themselves and the pupils involved
- Pupil's should not be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

Creating an Intimate Care Plan

Where an intimate care plan is required, it will be agreed in discussion between the school, parents, the child (when possible) and any relevant health professionals.

The school will work with parents and take their preferences on board to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible, dealing with needs sensitively and appropriately.

Subject to their age and understanding, the preferences of the child will also be taken into account. If there's doubt whether the child is able to make an informed choice, their parents will be consulted.

The plan will be reviewed twice a year, even if no changes are necessary, and updated regularly, as well as whenever there are changes to a pupil's needs.

Our Approach to Best Practice

The management of all pupils with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The pupil who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the pupil's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Any pupil with intimate care needs 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 as they can for themselves. This may mean, for example, giving the pupil responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child.

Each pupil's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each pupil's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a pupil is toileted. Where possible, one pupil will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having more adults present. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented. Ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the pupil who will provide the relevant care.

The school will share information with parents as needed to ensure a consistent approach. It will expect parents to also share relevant information regarding any intimate matters as needed.

Staffing

Staff will receive:

- Training in the specific types of intimate care they undertake
- Regular safeguarding training
- If necessary, manual handling training that enables them to remain safe and for the pupil to have as much participation as is possible

They will be familiar with:

- The control measures set out in risk assessments carried out by the school
- Hygiene and health and safety procedures

They will also be encouraged to seek further advice as needed.

The Protection of Children

Education Child Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures will be adhered to. All pupils will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding. If a staff member has any concerns about a pupil's physical changes (bruises, marks etc) they will immediately report concerns as per school procedures.

If a pupil becomes distressed or unhappy regarding being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into, parents will be consulted and outcomes recorded. Staffing schedules will need to be altered until the issue is resolved as the pupil's needs remain paramount. If a pupil makes allegations against a member of staff, necessary procedures will be followed.

Pupils Wearing Nappies

Any pupil wearing nappies will have an intimate care plan which must be signed by the parent/carer. This plan will outline who is responsible in school for changing the pupil, and where and when this will be carried out. This agreement allows school and parents to be aware of all issues surrounding the task from the outset. A record will be kept of pupils who need regular intimate care support, detailing who provided the care and the times it was administered.

Health & Safety Guidance

Staff should always wear gloves when dealing with a child who is soiled or when changing a nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag and sealed. The bag should then be placed in a bin, (with a liner) specifically designed for such waste. This bin should be collected on a weekly basis as part of the usual refuse. It is not classed as clinical waste.

Special Needs

Pupils with special needs have the same rights to privacy and safety when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities (any physical disability or learning difficulty) must be considered when drawing up care plans for individual children. Regardless of age and ability, the views and emotional responses of pupils with special needs should be actively sought when drawing up or reviewing a care plan.

Physical Contact

All staff engaged in the care and education of pupils and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact. Staff must be aware that even well-intentioned contact might be misconstrued by the pupil or an observer. Staff must always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny. The expectation is that when staff make physical contact with pupils it will be:

- For the least amount of time necessary (limited touch)
- Appropriate, given their age, stage of development and background
- In response to the pupil's needs at the time

Arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs and consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Where possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation from the agreed plan must be documented and reported.

Extra caution may be needed where a child has previously suffered abuse or neglect. This may lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Many such children are needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child, seek witnesses and document and report the incident.

Links with other policies

- Accessibility plan
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Health and safety
- SEN
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

October 2024