

# **NORTHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Intimate Care Policy**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy 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 of how intimate care is administered
- To ensure parents/carers are consulted in the intimate 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 is one of the following:

- Supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing
- Providing comfort or support for a distressed pupil
- Assisting a pupil requiring medical care, who is not able to carry this out unaided
- Cleaning a pupil who has soiled him/herself, has vomited or feels unwell

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed particularly in Early Years Reception and Nursery Classes. 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 the Nursery and Reception Classes.
- Where children require physical support, staff need to be aware that physical contact should be appropriate to the child's age and level of development 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**

Children with disabilities might require assistance with invasive or non-invasive medical procedures such as the managing of catheters or colostomy bags, etc.

- These procedures will be discussed with parents/carers, documented in the care plan and will only be carried out by staff who have been trained to do so.
  - Any members of staff who administer first aid should be appropriately trained.
- If an examination of a child is required in an emergency aid situation it is advisable to have another adult present, with due regard to the child's privacy and dignity.

## **Soiling**

On occasion intimate care for soiling may be required within the EYFS Department.

This is discussed with Parents at the open days before the children join the Nursery or Reception classes. Clean spare clothing is available within the department.

If a child needs to be cleaned, staff will make sure that:

- The procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process
- Correct PPE should be worn (gloves, apron mask / visor)

The child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible

- Physical contact is kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning.
- Privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation
- All spills of vomit, blood or excrement are wiped up and flushed down the toilet
- Any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet

- Soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child

### **Hygiene**

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection and must follow basic hygiene procedures. Staff will have access to protective, disposable gloves, aprons, visors and masks).

### **Protection for staff**

In Early Years, it is not always practical for two members of staff to assist with an intimate procedure. It is advisable, however, for a member of staff to inform another adult when they are going to assist a child with intimate care. 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

### **School Trips / Residential**

Pupils that require additional support / medical needs will have an individual plan of care included as part of the risk assessment.

### **Swimming**

*See below.*

### **Residential Trips**

Residential educational visits are an important part of our school experience. Particular care is required when supervising pupils in this less formal setting. As with Extra-Curricular Activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Child Protection procedures, Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policies. Some specific Intimate Care issues may arise in a Residential context.

### **Showering / Swimming**

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 a member of SLT is informed beforehand.

### **Night Time Routines**

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 his / her clothes
2. Change a child who has soiled him / herself
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.
5. Monitor behavior.

### **Safeguards for children**

There is an obligation on local authorities to ensure that staff who have substantial, unsupervised access to children undergo police checks. All staff at Northcote School are DBS checked on application and cannot undertake tasks within school until all checks are completed satisfactorily. 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. Students should only do so under the supervision of a trained member of staff.

**Member of staff responsible :**  
**Date Policy updated:**

**Mr R Morgan**  
**January 2023**

**Date to be reviewed:**

**January 2024**

**Safeguarding Lead: J. Monks**