Intimate Care Policy

Document Status

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Rationale

This policy represents the agreed principles for intimate care throughout YEAT schools. It complies with statutory safeguarding guidance and with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Context

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.

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.

Purpose

- To safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of the children
- Children who require intimate care are not discriminated against, in line with the Equality Act 2010
- 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 care of their children and that children's individual needs are considered

Procedures

For children who need routine or occasional intimate care (e.g. for toileting or toileting accidents), parents/carers will be asked to sign a consent form (appendix 1).

Intimate Care Plans

For children whose needs are more complex or who need particular support outside of what's covered in the permission form, an intimate care plan (appendix 2) will be agreed in discussion between the school, parents/carers, the child (where possible) and any relevant health professionals.

The school will work with parents/carers 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/carers 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.

Where there isn't an intimate care plan or parental consent for routine care in place, parental permission will be sought before performing any intimate care procedure.

If the school is unable to get in touch with parents/carers and an intimate care procedure urgently needs to be carried out, the procedure will be carried out to ensure the child is comfortable, and the school will inform parents/carers afterwards.

Wetting and Soiling

If a child wets him/herself the child is encouraged to wash him/herself and change into a spare set of clothes.

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. Mobile phones and cameras must not be taken into the changing area and are checked into a safe store before changing commences.

Providing comfort or support

Children may seek physical comfort from staff. 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

Please refer to our Medical Policy

Restraint

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 must be fully aware of the school's Physical Intervention/ Positive Handling Policy. Under no circumstances would it be permissible to use physical force as a form of punishment, to modify behaviour, or to make a student comply with an instruction. Physical force of this nature can, and is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Out of school trips, clubs etc.

Employees should take particular care when supervising students 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 their school's/establishment's policy and any other relevant guidance regarding out of school activities.

To ensure students' safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on field trips, holidays etc. It is important to exercise caution so that a student 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 at the school who carry out intimate care will have been subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with a barred list check before appointment, as well as other checks on their employment history and cannot undertake tasks within school until all checks are completed satisfactorily. These checks aim 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 school. 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.

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 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

- Staff will behave in a nurturing way supporting pupils to achieve the highest level of independence possible. They will also communicate appropriately with pupils, and not "talking across a pupil"

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

Recording

To safeguard both children and staff and to enable any patterns to be identified, intimate care will be recorded using the school's cpoms system.

The following will be recorded:

- Date
- Time
- Reason for Intimate Care
- Actions taken to support the child's wellbeing
- Members of staff present
- Parents informed

Appendix 1 – consent form

PERMISSION FOR SCHOOL TO PROVIDE INTIMATE CARE	
Name of child	
Date of birth	
Name of parent/carer	
Address	
I give permission for the school to provide appropriate intimate care to my child (e.g. changing soiled clothing, washing and toileting)	□
I will advise the school of anything that may affect my child's personal care (e.g. if medication changes or my child has an infection)	□
I understand the procedures that will be carried out and I will contact the school immediately if I have any concerns	□
I **do not** give consent for my child to be washed and changed in case of a toileting accident. Instead, the school will contact me or my emergency contact and I/they will organise for my child to be washed and changed. I understand that if the school cannot reach me or my emergency contact, staff will need to wash and change my child, following the school's intimate care policy, to ensure comfort and remove barriers to learning.	□
Parent/carer signature	
Name of parent/carer	
Relationship to child	
Date	

Appendix 2 – Intimate Care Plan Template

PARENTS/CARERS	
Name of child	
Type of intimate care needed	
How often care will be given	
What training staff will be given	
Where care will take place	
What resources and equipment will be used, and who will provide them	
How procedures will differ if taking place on a trip or outing	
Name of senior member of staff responsible for ensuring care is carried out according to the intimate care plan	
Name of parent or carer	
Relationship to child	
Signature of parent or carer	
Date	

CHILD	
How many members of staff would you like to help?	
Do you mind having a chat when you are being changed or washed?	
Signature of child	
Date	