

Intimate Care Policy

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School



Last reviewed on:
July 2023

Next review due by: July
2024

This policy is underpinned by the school's mission statement: **'Loving and Learning'**

Introduction

It is our intention at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching, or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a child 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.

Only those members of staff that have been given permission by parent/carers should normally offer intimate care. In extreme circumstances or in the case of staff absence, it may be necessary for other staff to do so. Only those staff who have agreed to carry out intimate care will be expected to do so.

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of a child's needs and any child protection issues. A child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice, and control. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children wherever possible.

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. Our school recognises that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

What is intimate care in our school?

Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child in partnership with the parent, carer, and the child. In school this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. All children are always encouraged to be independent therefore the child should be encouraged to do as much cleaning and removal of clothes as is practical. If a child needs intimate care parental permission must be obtained and an agreement signed (Appendix 1). The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g., assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

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. Children wearing nappies**
 - 4. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care**
 - 5. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child and limited touch**
 - 6. Swimming**
 - 7. Residential trips**
 - 8. Periods**
 - 9. Positive handling**
 - 10. Providing first aid assistance**
 - 11. Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.**
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* 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.

1. Assisting a child to change his / her clothes

On occasions an individual child may require some assistance with changing if, for example, gets wet outside, or has vomit on his/her 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 sent for and asked to assist their child and informed if the child becomes distressed.

2. Changing a child who has soiled him/herself

If a child soils him/herself in school a professional judgement must 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 his / her underwear in private and carry out this process themselves.
- School will have a supply of clean underwear and spare uniform for this purpose. (Supplies of clean underwear and spare uniforms are available in in the Reception kitchen, Year 3 classroom and at the back of the stage in the Hall)
- If a child is not able to complete this task unaided, school staff will contact the emergency contact to inform them of the situation.
- If the emergency contact can 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 change the child. 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.

3. Children wearing nappies

Parents are asked to sign a simple agreement form outlining who will be responsible, within the school, for changing the child and when and where this will be carried out. This agreement allows the school and the parent to be aware of all the issues surrounding this task right from the outset (see Appendix 1). All staff should follow the procedure for nappy changing (Appendix 2). This should be displayed in all changing areas. Due to this being a long-term intervention an Individual Care Plan will need to be completed. As part of our good practice staff will have a home/school book to record who changes a child, how often this task is carried out and the time it occurred. This provides reassurance for parents that systems are in place and that schools have implemented procedures for staff to follow.

4. Supervising a child involved in intimate self-care

Some children may still to be supervised while using the toilet. Children are encouraged to toilet themselves independently, however at times they may need assistance.

5. Providing comfort to an upset or distressed child and limited touch

All staff engaged in the care and education of children and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact. The expectation is that staff will work in 'limited touch' cultures and that when physical contact is made with pupils this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the child, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each child. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it should be documented and reported.

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must always remain self-aware to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and not subject to misinterpretation. Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil's distress, their age, the extent, and cause of the distress. Care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time.

Extra caution may be required where a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

6. Swimming

Our KS2 classes participate in a swimming programme at Sandwell Aquatic Centre. Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes however there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people regarding health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying, teasing or other unacceptable behaviour does not occur. Sandwell Aquatic Centre has an open changing room with cubicles as an option. This supports effective and discrete supervision and privacy for our children when changing. Where a child needs additional support for changing parental permission will be sought and an individual care plan will be drawn up to maintain dignity but increase independence.

7. Residential trips

Staff should take particular care when supervising children 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 policy regarding out of school activities.

Residential educational visits are an important part of our Year 5 and Year 6 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. If they do, then seek advice from the Head teacher.

8. **Periods**

Some children will begin menstruating during their Primary Education. They should be supported and encouraged to keep their own supply of sanitary protection without having to request it from staff/carers (A central bank of sanitary protection will be stored in the Year 6 classroom). However, it should be recognised that some children will not know how to deal with menstruation, and they will need guidance and support to manage their periods appropriately. This should be provided by female staff or carers in a positive manner and is taught through the Ten:Ten RSE curriculum (details on our website). There should also be adequate provision for the private disposal of used sanitary protection. If a child needs further assistance seek advice from the Headteacher.

9. **Positive handling**

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 all cases of Positive Handling the incident must be documented and reported in the record book kept in the School Office. Staff must be fully aware of the school's Positive Handling Policy.

10. **Providing first aid assistance**

Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other children are present.

During the administering of First Aid, the pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g., assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

11. **Assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure**

Our Medications Policy outlines arrangements for the management of most medications in school. **Parental permission must be given before any medication is dispensed in school- This form is available from the school office.** These forms are subsequently filed in the folder in each class in the cupboard clearly labelled with a First Aid sticker.

A small number of children will have significant medical needs and will have an Individual Care Plan. If required, school staff will receive appropriate training.

Nobody should be delivering intimate care on their own. If intimate care is taking place parental permission (Appendix 1) should have been obtained.

Individual Health Care Plan

Individual Health Care plans will be drawn up for children requiring ongoing intimate care to suit their individual circumstances. It is vital that these plans are prepared prior to admission, and where possible opportunities are made for the child and family to meet the staff who will be providing intimate care. The plan should be signed by all who contribute and reviewed on a regular basis.

When writing a plan, whole school and classroom management considerations should be considered, for example:

- The importance of working towards independence
- Arrangements for home/school transport, sports days, school visits, swimming etc
- Substitutes in case of staff absence
- Strategies for dealing with bullying/harassment
- A system to leave class with minimum disruption
- Avoiding missing the same lesson
- Awareness of discomfort that may disrupt learning
- Implications for PE (changing, discreet clothing etc.)

Any plan should be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities, and expectations. A procedure should be included to explain how concerns arising from the intimate care process will be dealt with. **This is the responsibility of the child's teacher. These will be reviewed on a termly basis and discussed with the parents/carers.**

Responsibility of staff

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children. The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of independence that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can.

Any member of staff may provide intimate care, provided it does not require unusual procedures or techniques (e.g., lifts or hoists). Volunteers are not to provide intimate care, but they may be used as a witness. Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children considering developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation.

Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care. However, in some cases, parents/carers may limit who/the number of carers (this needs to be indicated on the permission letter). Wherever possible staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, this principle may need to be waived where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence for example, the constraints of staffing e.g., female staff supporting boys in a primary school, as few or no male staff are available.

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties when participating in games, demonstrating an exercise or the use of equipment. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of misinterpretation. Where it is anticipated that a pupil might be prone to misinterpret any such contact, alternatives should be considered, perhaps involving another member of staff or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.

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 another 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 meet pupils whilst off duty, they must behave as though in their professional role and not give conflicting messages regarding their own conduct.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, they should seek further advice, from their line manager or other appropriate person.

Resources

The dignity and privacy of the child is of paramount concern. An area will be made private when a child is to be changed. If a changing mat is being used, it should not be situated in a thoroughfare, as it will have to be used on the floor when a child is to be changed. This is the recommended method of changing a child, as it avoids an adult having to lift a child and cause possible back injury.

School will ensure that they have:

- hot running water and soap
- paper towels
- aprons and gloves
- nappy bags (provided by the child's parent/ carer)
- cleaning equipment
- bin
- a supply of spare nappies and wipes (provided by the child's parent/ carer)
- spare clothes (provided by the child's parent/ carer)

Staff should always wear gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled or when changing a soiled nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied on a weekly basis, and it can be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classed as clinical waste. Staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy.

The Protection of Children

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g., marks, bruises, soreness etc. they will immediately report concerns to the appropriate manager/ designated safeguarding lead for child protection.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be investigated, and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

Monitoring and Review

The Principal, Vice Principal and Senior Leadership team will monitor the effectiveness of this policy throughout the academic year. The Principal and assigned Link Governor will report to the Local Governing Board on the effectiveness of the policy annually and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.

Appendix 1

Permission form for the Provision of Intimate Care

If a child wets or soils themselves while they are at school, it is important that measures are taken to have them changed (and if necessary cleaned) as quickly as possible.

Our experienced staff will carry out this task if you wish them to do so or, if you prefer, the school can contact you or your emergency contact who will be asked to attend without delay.

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School has an Intimate Care Policy which is available to view on our website (<https://www.st-gregorys.sandwell.sch.uk/>) or ask for a copy at the office.

Please fill out the consent slip below stating your preference and return to school.

Name of Child..... Class.....

Please tick box as appropriate:

I give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned by staff if they wet/soil themselves while in the care of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School.

OR

I do not give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned if they wet/soil themselves. The school will contact me, or my emergency contact and I will organise for my child to be cleaned and changed. I understand that if I (or the emergency contact) cannot be contacted the staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact to support the child as part of the basic duty of care.

Signature of Parent/Carer..... Date.....

Important Reminder: Please remember that school cannot provide nappies, pull-ups, wipes, and nappy bags for your child. If your child requires these items in school, it is the parent's responsibility to provide them. School staff will keep you informed if they are running low on any specific item

Appendix 2

Procedure for Changing

1. Consider whether the child can be changed in a toilet cubicle (standing up)
2. Wash your hands
3. Assemble the equipment
4. Place the child on the changing mat/
5. Put on gloves
6. Remove wet/ soiled nappy
7. Fold the nappy inwards to cover faecal material and place into designated covered bin
8. Used wipes and gloves are to be disposed of in a bin with a disposable liner
9. The bin should be emptied at least once a week and the liner replaced
10. Once the child has been changed and returned safely to the, e.g., nursery area, thoroughly clean the changing area
11. Hands should be washed thoroughly