Intimate Care Policy

Waterfoot Primary School

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 child’s needs. The child’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. The following policy is a model based on best practice.

Aims and Objectives

Waterfoot 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. We recognise 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.

Our Approach to Best Practice

- Individual Health/Intimate Care Plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child.
- The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned.
- The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child’s welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.
- Any child 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 child to do as much for him/herself as s/he can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves.
- 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.

- Each child's right to privacy will be respected.
- Where possible one child 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 in the Health/Intimate Care Plan.
- Always make other staff aware of what you are doing if you need to clean a child.
- 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.
- Ideally, staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, at Waterfoot Primary School this principle may be waived due to the lack of male staff and where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence.
- Intimate care arrangements can be reviewed by parents on demand and school will review as required. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account.
- The Healthcare/Intimate Plan allows school and parents to be aware of all issues and risks surrounding the task from the outset.
- 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 via CPOMs system on staff resource.
- Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a child who is soiled. 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). This bin should be collected on a weekly basis as part of the usual refuse. It is not classed as clinical waste.
- Staff should refer to the above advise if they find themselves in an unplanned situation where a child needs help e.g. has become soiled.

The Protection of Children

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

If a child 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 child’s needs remain paramount. If a child makes allegations against a member of staff, necessary procedures will be followed.

**Special Needs**

Children 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 children with special needs should be actively sought when drawing up or reviewing a care plan.

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.

**Physical Contact**

All staff engaged in the care and education of children 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 child or an observer. Staff must always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny (see Reasonable Force Policy).