



## MOWDEN HALL SCHOOL

### INTIMATE CARE POLICY (inc. EYFS)

#### **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 will require 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 shall 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.

#### **Aim**

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our intimate care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. Intimate care may be defined as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Such activities can include:

- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- toileting;
- first aid and medical assistance; and
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child on the initial needs form parents fill in on registration.

#### **Principles Of Intimate Care**

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based:

- every child has the right to be safe;
- every child has the right to personal privacy;
- every child has the right to be valued as an individual;
- every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- all children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- all children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account; and
- every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

### **School Responsibilities**

Mowden Hall 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. Mowden Hall 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.

### **Guidelines For Good Practice**

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs. Staff also need to be aware that some adults may use intimate care, as an opportunity to abuse children.

It is important to bear in mind that some forms of assistance can be open to misinterpretation. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

#### **Involve the child in the intimate care**

- Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his or her intimate care. Where a situation renders a child fully dependent, talk about what is going to be done and give them choices where possible.
- Check your practice by asking the child or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.

#### **Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.**

- Care should be carried out by a member of staff working in an area where they can be seen by others.

#### **Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.**

- As a child may have multiple carers a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.

#### **Be aware of your own limitations**

- Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ASK. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.

#### **Promote positive self-esteem and body image.**

- Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse.
- The approach you take to intimate care can convey lots of messages to a child about their body worth.

- When dealing with soiled clothes and reporting an incident, staff will use discretion with children and parents. For example soiled clothes will be wrapped in a nappy sack and bag to limit the embarrassment and placed in the child's drawer so only the parents involved are aware of it.
- Your attitude to a child's intimate care is important. Keeping in mind the child's age, routine care can be both efficient and relaxed.

### **If you have any concerns you must report them.**

- If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling, report it immediately to the designated safeguarding leads.
- If a child is accidentally hurt during the intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child's personal file.

### **Our approach to best practice**

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.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained in setting (including Child Protection and Health and Safety training in lifting and moving) and are fully aware of best practice. Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/occupational therapist as required.

Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. Wherever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of children/young people will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex education to the children/young people in their care as an additional safeguard to both staff and children/young people involved.

The child 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 he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the child 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 child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child is toileted.

### **The safeguarding of Children**

All children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the safeguarding leads Mrs Kirsten Knight, Mr Neal Bailey or Mrs Nicola Bailey.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order 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.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed.

### **Showers/changing clothes**

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing 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 or teasing does not occur. This means that adults 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, eg adults must not change in the same place as children or shower with children.