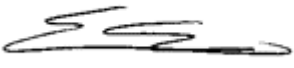




St. Helen's Catholic Primary School

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Policy Type	Recommended
Review Period	Annual
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Next review	Autumn 2027
Approved by Local Governing Committee and signed by Elsa Corr, Chair of Governors	
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POLICY FOR INTIMATE CARE

MISSION

Our Mission

Respect yourself.

Respect everyone in our school community.

Respect everyone in our local community.

Respect everyone in our global community.

But most of all, respect God our Father in Heaven.

Policy Statement

At St Helen's Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child is created in the image and likeness of God and is therefore deserving of dignity, respect, compassion and the highest standards of care.

Intimate care is sometimes necessary to enable a child to participate fully, safely and confidently in school life. It will never be treated as an inconvenience or as something for which a child should feel embarrassed or ashamed. Our approach reflects our commitment to ambitious inclusion: removing barriers to participation while promoting independence, respecting individual difference and ensuring that every child experiences a genuine sense of belonging.

Our school value of Respect is particularly important in intimate care. Children will be listened to, their privacy protected and their communication needs understood. They will be involved in decisions about their care as far as they are able, and staff will explain what they are doing before and during any intimate care intervention.

We recognise that children develop independence at different rates and that some children, including those with SEND, medical needs or developmental differences, may require additional or longer-term support. Such needs will always be approached sensitively, without judgement and in partnership with the child, their family and relevant professionals.

Our aim is always to provide the least intrusive level of support necessary while safeguarding the child's health, wellbeing and dignity and helping them to develop the greatest possible independence.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure that every child who requires intimate care is treated with dignity, respect, sensitivity and compassion;
- safeguard the health, safety, privacy and wellbeing of children receiving intimate care;
- ensure that a need for intimate care never becomes a barrier to a child's inclusion, participation, attendance or access to an ambitious education;
- promote each child's independence and self-care skills according to their individual development, needs and abilities;

- ensure that children are listened to and involved in decisions about their care in ways appropriate to their age, understanding and communication needs;
- provide clear, safe and consistent expectations for staff undertaking intimate care;
- ensure that intimate care is provided in a way that safeguards both children and adults;
- promote effective partnership and communication between school, families and relevant professionals; and
- ensure that planned intimate care arrangements are personalised, proportionate and regularly reviewed.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- SEND/Inclusion Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- Allergy Safety Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Low-Level Concerns Policy;
- Dealing with Allegations against the Workforce Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy; and
- relevant procedures and guidance contained within *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Principles of Intimate Care

The following principles underpin all intimate care at St Helen's:

- 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;
- every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their ability;
- every child has the right to communicate their views, preferences or discomfort about their intimate care and to have these taken seriously; and
- every child has the right to receive appropriate, consistent and individualised intimate care.

The intimate care, safety and wellbeing of our children are central to the life and ethos of St Helen's. We seek to develop children's independence wherever possible while recognising that there will be occasions when a child requires additional support with personal or intimate care.

Intimate care will always be provided professionally, sensitively and respectfully. Staff will consider the individual child's age, development, communication, SEND and medical needs and will provide only the level of assistance that is necessary. No child should experience unnecessary distress, discomfort, embarrassment or pain as a result of intimate care.

What is Intimate Care?

Intimate care is care involving direct or indirect contact with, or support relating to, parts of the body normally considered private. It may include:

- supporting a child with toileting;
- changing a child who has wet or soiled themselves;
- assisting with dressing or undressing where this involves intimate areas;
- supporting menstrual care;
- supervising or supporting a child undertaking intimate self-care;
- supporting a child with continence products;
- assisting with feeding where the nature of the child's needs requires close intimate care; or
- carrying out a specific medical or healthcare procedure that involves intimate care and which the child is unable to undertake independently.

Some children may require intimate care occasionally; others may require it regularly as part of an agreed care plan.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should inform the school of any known or anticipated intimate care needs relating to their child and provide relevant information that will enable staff to support them safely and appropriately.

Where a child has an ongoing or predictable intimate care need, a personalised Intimate Care Plan will normally be agreed between the school, parents/carers and, wherever appropriate, the child. Relevant healthcare or other professionals may contribute where necessary.

Parents/carers should inform the school promptly of any change in their child's needs, medical circumstances, continence arrangements or care routines.

Assisting a child to change their clothes

This is more common in EYFS but applies to all pupils. Occasionally, a child may require assistance with changing if, for example, they have a toileting accident, become wet or muddy outside, or have vomit on their clothing. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided. However, if assistance is required this will be given.

The child will be offered privacy appropriate to their age and needs while ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements are maintained. Staffing arrangements will take account of the child's individual needs, any agreed Intimate Care Plan and the nature of the assistance required. Where appropriate, another member of staff should be aware that intimate care is taking place and be readily available.

If a child becomes distressed, reluctant or uncomfortable, staff will stop wherever it is safe to do so, reassure the child and consider what alternative arrangements are necessary.

Supporting a Child Following a Toileting Accident or Soiling

If a child wets or soils themselves in school, their dignity, comfort and wellbeing will be the immediate priority. A child will never be shamed, criticised or made to feel that their care needs are an inconvenience.

Wherever possible, children will be encouraged and supported to clean and change themselves independently. The level of assistance provided will reflect the child's age, development, ability, communication and individual needs.

The school will maintain appropriate supplies of wipes and spare clothing, with families of younger children or children with known needs encouraged to provide individual spare clothing where appropriate.

Where a child cannot manage independently, staff will provide appropriate assistance. Parents/carers will be informed where necessary and, for recurring or predictable needs, arrangements should be agreed through an Intimate Care Plan.

A child will not ordinarily be required to leave school solely because they have wet or soiled themselves. Where there are exceptional circumstances affecting the child's health, wellbeing or ability to remain comfortably in school, staff will discuss the most appropriate response with the parent/carer.

Staff providing intimate care will:

- explain to the child what they intend to do;
- seek and respond appropriately to the child's verbal or non-verbal assent;
- encourage as much independence as possible;
- protect the child's privacy and dignity;
- use appropriate personal protective equipment, including disposable gloves;
- follow appropriate hygiene and infection-control procedures;
- place soiled clothing in an appropriate sealed bag for return home;
- remain alert to any signs of distress, injury or safeguarding concern; and
- record the care provided where required by the child's care plan or where the circumstances are unusual or significant.

For children in EYFS, and for other children who require additional assistance, staff will provide the support necessary to ensure that the child is clean, comfortable and able to return to learning as soon as possible.

Children with Medical Conditions

Some children with medical conditions may require intimate care as part of the support necessary for them to access school safely and fully.

Where this is the case, arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers and relevant healthcare professionals and recorded within an appropriate Individual Healthcare Plan and/or Intimate Care Plan.

Only staff who have received appropriate information, instruction and, where required, specific training will undertake medical procedures. Staff must work within the limits of their training and competence.

The administration of medication will be undertaken in accordance with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Swimming

Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing their clothes; however, there must be an appropriate 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. Sometimes, younger children may need support when dressing or undressing.

Where a child requires assistance with dressing or undressing, this will be provided sensitively and in accordance with the principles of this policy and any individual care arrangements. Supervision will be proportionate to the age and needs of the children and will protect both their privacy and their safety.

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 extracurricular activities, although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, staff are still guided by our Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures as well as all other school policies. Some specific intimate care issues may arise in a residential context.

Children are entitled to dignity, respect and appropriate privacy when changing clothes or showering. Staff must balance this with the level of supervision necessary to safeguard pupils and ensure that bullying, teasing or other inappropriate behaviour does not occur.

Staff should announce their intention before entering changing or bedroom areas and should not remain unnecessarily while children are changing. Adults must not change or shower in the same area as pupils.

Children's bedrooms should normally be regarded as private spaces. Staff or other pupils wishing to enter should knock and announce themselves before doing so, except where an emergency or immediate safeguarding concern makes this inappropriate.

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 their clothes
2. Change a child who has soiled themselves
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. Where intimate care is unexpectedly required during a residential visit, staff will follow the principles of this policy. Another member of staff should normally be made aware that the care is

taking place and should be readily available. The child's dignity, privacy and immediate needs must remain central to the response.

School Responsibilities

The school will ensure that:

- staff undertaking intimate care are suitable to do so and have been appointed and checked in accordance with the school's safer recruitment and safeguarding procedures;
- staff are familiar with this policy and understand the expectations placed upon them;
- appropriate training is provided where a child's care requires specific knowledge or skills;
- ongoing and predictable intimate care needs are appropriately planned and documented;
- children and parents/carers are involved in planning care wherever appropriate;
- suitable facilities, equipment and personal protective equipment are available;
- the child's dignity, privacy and safeguarding remain central to all arrangements;
- care arrangements are reviewed when the child's needs change; and
- concerns about the conduct or practice of another adult are reported immediately in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding, Low-Level Concerns, Staff Code of Conduct and Dealing with Allegations against the Workforce policies.

Intimate care must not be undertaken by volunteers or other adults unless this forms part of an expressly agreed and appropriately safeguarded arrangement.

Guidelines for Good Practice

Intimate care places adults in a position of particular trust and responsibility. Staff must therefore ensure that their practice protects the dignity, safety and wellbeing of the child while also maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

Some children, including younger children, children with SEND, children with communication differences and children with previous adverse experiences, may be particularly vulnerable during intimate care. Staff must know the child, understand how they communicate comfort or distress and remain alert to changes in their response or behaviour.

Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard both children and staff:

1 Involve and communicate with the child. Encourage independence wherever possible. Explain what you are going to do before doing it and continue to communicate throughout the care. Offer appropriate choices and pay attention to verbal communication, body language, behaviour, facial expression and any other means by which the child communicates comfort, assent or distress.

2. Protect dignity and privacy. Provide privacy appropriate to the child's age, needs and circumstances while maintaining safe professional practice. The presence of a second adult should be determined by the child's individual needs, the nature of the care, any relevant risk assessment or care plan and safeguarding considerations. Where care is provided by one member of staff, another adult should normally know that the care is taking place and be readily available.

3. Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent. As a child may have multiple members of staff supporting them, a consistent approach to care is essential. Effective communication between all parties ensures that practice is consistent.

4. 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 received appropriate training and have been assessed as competent to undertake them

5. Respond to and report concerns. If, during intimate care, a member of staff observes an unexplained injury, unusual marking, swelling, significant change in the child's presentation or behaviour, or anything else that gives rise to a safeguarding concern, they must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report the matter promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care, becomes significantly distressed, or appears to have misunderstood or misinterpreted an interaction, staff should ensure the child is safe and reassured and report the incident promptly.

Safeguarding concerns and significant or unusual incidents must be recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the school's recording procedures. Routine intimate care should not automatically be recorded on CPOMS unless there is a safeguarding, welfare or other significant concern. Where routine care needs to be recorded for monitoring, communication or care-planning purposes, the agreed care record should be used.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently and that staff understand their responsibilities.

Individual Intimate Care Plans will be reviewed when a child's needs change and at appropriate intervals in partnership with parents/carers, the child where appropriate, and relevant professionals.

The school will review this policy in accordance with its policy review cycle and sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school practice.