



Leigh Academy Rainham

Intimate Care Policy

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Sections

1.	Definition	1
2.	Purpose of Guidance	2
3.	Legislation	3
4.	Intimate Care arrangements	3

1. Definition

Intimate care may be defined as any activity required to meet the personal care needs of each individual child. Parents have the responsibility to advise staff of any intimate care needs of their child, and staff have a responsibility to work in partnership with children and parents.

Intimate care can include:

- Feeding;
- Oral care;
- Washing;
- Dressing/undressing - Supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing (Outside the usual support already given for PE lessons or with zips, buttons etc particularly in Nursery and Foundation Stage).
- Toileting - Assisting a pupil who has soiled him/herself, has vomited or feels unwell;
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care. Providing comfort or support for a distressed pupil and assisting a pupil requiring medical care, who is not able to carry this out unaided are also considered as intimate care.

2. Purpose of Guidance

This guidance refers to all children, of any age, who may require support for intimate/personal care from an adult on a daily basis and those who may require it occasionally or exceptionally.

As with all developmental milestones, there is a wide variation in the time at which children and young people develop and intimate/personal care may need to be provided at any stage.

Staff who work with children and young people or those with special needs will realise that the issue of intimate/personal care is a difficult one and will require staff to be respectful of children's needs. Intimate/personal care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate/personal nature, children and young people's dignity would need to be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control would need to be provided to them.

Schools/settings are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate/personal care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times at the appropriate developmental level and degree of understanding. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain. This guidance is to help ensure good practice in this area.

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. Adhering to these guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

- Involve the child in their intimate care - Try to encourage a child's independence as far as possible in his/her intimate care. When the child is fully dependent, talk to them about what is going to be done and give them choice where possible.
- Treat every child with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation.
- Make sure practice in intimate care is consistent.

3. Legislation

This policy and practice will support staff to overcome any challenges and be confident they are meeting the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Equality Act (2010) and related legislation. Please see LAR Medical policy link [LAR Medical Policy 2023/24](#) . Children and Families Act 2014 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted> Education Health Care Plans 37 – 50.

The Equality Act (2010) states that the responsible body of a school must not discriminate against a person:

- (a) In the arrangements it makes for deciding who is offered admission as a pupil.
- (b) As to the terms on which it offers to admit the person as a pupil.
- (c) By not admitting the person as a pupil.

It is not acceptable to ask parents to come to change their child if a child has a recognised disability as this is a direct contravention of the Act. Also leaving any child soiled for any length of time is considered a safeguarding issue since it places the child at risk of significant harm.

4. Intimate care Arrangements

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed, (Outside the usual support already given for PE lessons or with zips, buttons etc particularly in Nursery and Foundation Stage). Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

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 Conditions

If a child has a medical condition which is likely to lead to soiling and subsequent staff intervention, specific medical advice may be sought from outside agencies, such as the

school nurse, and the parents will be asked to sign a permission form so that staff can clean and change their child if necessary. If a parent does not give consent, the school will contact the parents or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. If the parents or emergency contact are able to come promptly, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives. If parents/guardians cannot be contacted - staff will decide on the most appropriate care to minimise any stress, discomfort or anxiety the child may be experiencing.

Soiling

Staff from LAR will work together in partnership with parents to support each child towards independent use of the toilet. If tending to a child who has soiled themselves during the school day staff will respond sensitively and professionally. If 'accidents' occur the child will change themselves into dry clothing, and wet items will be sent home for washing. The child's independence will be encouraged as far as possible in his/her intimate care and reassurance given. A record of the incident will be kept in school and the parent will be informed (by a note home, verbally at home collection time or phone call) and requested to return the borrowed items of clothing when laundered. If there is an occurrence of heavier soiling or vomiting, this may require staff to provide care at a more personal level. Staff will follow set procedures for this intimate care:

- If possible, the child will be removed to a less public place to maintain dignity and avoid a feeling of humiliation;
- If appropriate, the child will be encouraged, through guidance and assistance, to clean themselves to make them more comfortable.
- Parents should be contacted as soon as possible;
- Staff will provide further intimate care in the following situations:

1. If parents/guardians cannot be contacted - staff will decide on the most appropriate care to minimise any stress, discomfort or anxiety the child may be experiencing.
2. If the parents/guardians are unable to come to school.
3. If the child is very distressed or suffering unduly.
4. Intimate care will only be provided to older children in extreme circumstances. It is anticipated that older children will be able to manage any circumstances given guidance or assistance.

If incidents of soiling is a regular occurrence then a pupil care plan will need to be put in place after consultation between the school, the pupils' parents/guardians and if appropriate, other outside agencies.