

Gracehill Primary School



Caring, Learning, Achieving Together

Intimate Care Policy

September 2021

Intimate Care Policy

At Gracehill Primary School, we aim to ensure children feel safe and secure in the absence of their parents/carers. This policy represents the agreed principles for intimate care throughout the school. It has been agreed by all staff and governors within the school.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

- To safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of the children
- To ensure children are treated with sensitivity, respect and in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one
- To safeguard adults required to operate in sensitive situations
- To raise awareness and provide clear guidelines for intimate care
- To inform parents/carers about how intimate care is administered
- To ensure parents/carers are consulted about the intimate care of their children

Principles

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as sensitively as possible. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young persons' right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

Definition

Intimate care is one of the following:

- Supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing
- Providing comfort or support for a distressed pupil
- Assisting a pupil requiring medical care, who is not able to carry this out unaided
- Supervising/cleaning a child who has soiled/wet themselves, has vomited or feels unwell

School Responsibilities

- All members of staff working with children are vetted by Education Authority.

- Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school are involved in the intimate care of children.
- Intimate care arrangements must be agreed between the school, parents and the child (if age appropriate), at the start of each school year.
- Consent forms/letters are signed by the selected member of staff, the parent and the child and stored in the Intimate Care File. These arrangements are reviewed on a 6 monthly basis, at parent/teacher meetings in February each year.
- Only in emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents and school. Parents would then be contacted immediately and a record kept, which will be countersigned by a witness. Records will be kept by DT for Child Protection in the Intimate Care File. (Appendix 1)

Guidelines For Good Practice

(Ref: Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Policy and Procedures April 2005)

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.

Members of 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 both children and staff. If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, he or she must report this to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

1. 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 where possible, give choices. Check

your practice by asking the child or parent about any preferences while carrying out the intimate care.

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

A lot of care is carried out by one staff member alone with a child. The practice of providing one-one intimate care of a child alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the child or the child prefers two persons.

3. 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.

4. Be aware of your own limitations

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask.

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.

Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong 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. 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.

6. If you have any concerns you must report them.

If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling, report it immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the designated teacher. 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if necessary.

Next review: October 2024

Appendix 1

Gracehill Primary School

Record of Intimate Care Provision

Name of child	
Date of Incident	
Where did the incident occur?	
Why did the incident happen?	
If the pupil involved had an injury, give details:	
Have parents been informed? How?	
Member of staff involved with child	

Name of staff member making the report: _____

Signature of staff member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of DT: _____ Date: _____