



# Intimate Care Policy

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Adapted from: Devon County Council with permission

Nominated Governor: Sue Stepney

Signed: *A. Ashworth*

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## **Introduction**

Heltwate 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. Heltwate 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, embarrassment or pain. Any concerns should be raised with the leadership group/ parents and School Nurse as soon as possible.

## **Definition**

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demands direct or indirect contact or exposure of the genitals. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing or bathing after a soiling accident. In the cases of a specific procedure only staff suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure.

## **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 at all times.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so. Staff have a high awareness of child protection issues, are trained in Health and Safety, moving and handling and are fully aware of best practices. Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from Physiotherapist/School Nurse/ Occupational Therapist as required.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff behavior is open to scrutiny and staff at Heltwate work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

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. Whenever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of children will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex and relationships education to the children in their care as an additional safeguard to both staff and children involved.

There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, object of reference etc.) to discuss the child's needs and preferences. The child is made aware of each procedure that is being carried out and the reasons for it are appropriate discussed with them at a level that they will understand.

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/her self as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves.

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. 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. Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; there will be a rota of carers known to the child who will take turns in providing care.

Staff providing the intimate care towards our children will dispose of bodily waste and fluids in the appropriately way in line with current Health and Safety guidelines and regulations. Whenever possible staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, in certain circumstances this principle may need to be waived where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence for example, female staff supporting boys in our school, as no male staff are available.

Parents / Carers will be involved and consulted on a regular basis about their child's intimate care arrangements. A clear account of the child's agreed arrangements will be recorded and communicated to parents/carers as necessary. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account whenever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

### **The Protection of Children**

Child Protection Procedures and Multi-Agency Child Protection procedures will be adhered to.

Where appropriate all children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of ability, 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. She/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate manager / designated person for child protection. A clear record of the concern will be completed in line with Heltwate's safeguarding policy and referred to Children's Social Care and/or the Police Child and Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit if necessary. Parents will be asked for their consent or informed that a referral is necessary prior to it being made unless doing so is likely to place the child at greater risk of harm.

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.