



# Intimate Care Policy

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## Introduction

Heltwate School takes seriously its responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in its care. An important aspect of this safeguarding duty is meeting the intimate care needs of our students as and when required.

We are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. It is acknowledged these adults are in a position of great trust.

Staff will continually endeavour to work in collaborative partnership with students, parents and carers and other professionals to share information effectively and thereby a high standard continuity of care.

Heltwate School recognises that there is a need to treat all children with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. No child should be supported and attended to in a way that causes them distress, embarrassment or discomfort. Any concerns should be raised with the leadership group/ parents and Welfare Manager as soon as possible.

Our school policy and practice is based on the following fundamental principles;

- Every child has the right to be and feel safe
- Every child has the right to personal privacy
- Every child has the right to feel and be valued as an individual
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Every child has the right to be consulted regarding their own intimate care needs to the best of their abilities
- Every child has the right to express their views regarding their own intimate care needs and to have such views taken seriously and into account
- Every child has the right to experience consistent levels of intimate care

## 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. Intimate care also includes supervision of pupils involved in intimate self-care.

In the cases of a specific procedure only staff who have had an enhanced DBS check through Heltwate School, are 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 will be 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 will have a high and current awareness of child protection issues, and are trained in Health and Safety, moving and handling and are fully aware of best practices.
- They will be made aware of the best practice regarding infection control and prevention of cross contamination, including the requirement to always wear disposable gloves and aprons if circumstances require this.
- Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from Physiotherapist/School Nurse/ Occupational Therapist as required.
- Any historical concerns, such as past abuse will be carefully considered and taken into account when delivering Intimate care.
- Where relevant, it should be agreed with the pupil and parents/carers that appropriate terminology for private parts of the body and functions will be used in line with the child's biological age.
- Children's dignity will be preserved, and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff behaviour will always be fully open to scrutiny and staff at Heltwate will 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.
- There will be careful attempts at 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, opinions and views.
- The child will be made aware of each procedure that is being carried out and the reasons for this discussed with them at an appropriate level that they will understand.

- Staff providing intimate care will address the student personally by name, explain what is taking place and communicate with them in a way that reflects their biological and not their developmental age.
- Students 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.
- Where possible, intimate care should ideally take place with two or more members of staff in the same area and in a joint session. 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 or their personal needs supported.
- Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; there will be a rota of staff known to the child who will take turns in providing personal care.
- **Staff should always inform the class teacher or lead when they are going alone to assist a pupil with their personal care needs during lesson time.** As all of our student community all have learning difficulties and SEND to differing extents, we appreciate that it is unrealistic for staff to keep a written record of when they require adult support with their personal care needs, which may occur frequently and repeatedly throughout the school day. However, staff will endeavor to remain open and transparent about the need to support a student and will share their intention to do so with at least one other member when they are not in the classroom environment. ie during break and lunch and at all other times
- The religious beliefs and cultural values of students and their families should be considered, particularly as faith may influence or dis-allow certain practices and determine the gender of the staff realistically allowed to support the child with their personal care needs.
- Staff providing the intimate care for students 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.

- **Adults who assist with personal care needs should only be employees of the school or those contracted to supply agency care who have been fully DBS checked. and not work experience students or volunteers.** Such staff will all have a current enhanced DBS check in place. New staff joining the team will desist from personal care and other regulated activity until such time as the DBS check has been received.
- All staff will be made aware of the school's policy on confidentiality and any sensitive information will only be shared on a need to know basis.
- No staff will carry a mobile phone or other similar recording device whilst undertaking personal care or toileting of students

### Additional Care needs

- Therapies such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy will only be carried out under the guidance of a health care plan implemented and developed by a medical professional.
- Under no circumstances should school staff be expected to carry out massage, exercise, or physio plans of their own design or those requested by a parent or carer. This however does exclude planned interventions such as TACPAC and sensory tactile communication regulation.
- Pupils who require support with invasive or non-invasive medical procedures such as administration of rectal medication, management of catheters or colostomy bags will have a health care plan in place which has been developed by medical professionals in collaboration with parents and carers. Such plans and support will only be delivered and carried out by school staff who have been specifically trained and who are signed off to do so. It is particularly important that such staff should follow infection control guidelines and ensure that any medical resources used are disposed of correctly and safely.
- Any staff designated to administer first aid will have received appropriate training in accordance with LA guidance. If a student requires examination in an emergency situation, it is advisable to have two adults present so that due regard is given to the child's privacy and dignity
- If an intimate examination is required in the event of accident or injury, having two members of staff present is essential.

## The Protection of Children

- Child Protection Procedures and Multi-Agency Child Protection procedures will be strictly 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 visible physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc., they should immediately report concerns to the class teacher or lead and/or the Safeguarding & Welfare Manager or other member of the Safeguarding team without delay by means of a log of concern form. 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 significant harm. In such situations full and detailed records with reasons for decisions made will be kept securely and confidentially.
- 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 and outcomes shared transparently with parents & carers as required.
- If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed in accordance with LA Safeguarding guidance

## Policies which directly relate to Intimate Care Procedures

- Current Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children in education settings
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Health & Safety Policy & Procedures
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- 'Lifting & Manual Handling' Policy

## Monitoring of Procedures

Procedure Aim	Outcome required	Monitored by	Reported to
To ensure that all intimate care needs for all students are carried out within the parameter of either individual (if required) or whole school procedures	Plans will be in place for those students requiring additional support outside of this guidance and policy. Such plans will be updated on at least a yearly basis or amended as required in the interim	Senior leadership will review individual care plans to ensure their effectiveness on a termly basis, and will review this policy on a 2 yearly basis to ensure it remains in line with statutory guidance	Deputy head teacher
To ensure that relevant staff are aware of agreed practices and the planning process involved to implement them effectively	All staff will have access to relevant documents, related policies and procedures  All staff will be given training in order to implement an individual child's intimate care plan	Senior leaders will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to ensure they are fully aware of school procedure	Deputy head teacher
To ensure that where required and possible, all individualized intimate care plans are written with the involvement of the pupil, their family and any other relevant agencies	Plans will be shared, signed and agreed and reviewed on a timely basis	Senior leaders will review individualized plans with consideration given to who requires involvement	Deputy head teacher