

# **INTIMATE AND PERSONAL CARE POLICY FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

## **Health, Safety & Wellbeing Guidance – Schools**

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# **Intimate and Personal Care Policy**

## **Introduction**

Derbyshire Children's Services Department is committed to providing the highest quality care, which meets the individual needs of children, and promotes their dignity, privacy and independence.

This policy provides an outline for the development of guidance and procedures related to the personal and intimate care of children in the foundation stage. It applies to all staff involved in the intimate and personal care tasks of young children.

This document is intended for those working with children in the foundation stage, (in both non maintained and maintained settings), who do not currently have their own Personal and Intimate Care Guidance. These settings will be required to develop their own policies in line with this guidance.

Settings need to ensure the provision of adequate staffing to fulfil all personal and intimate care requirements, including supervision, and catering for emergencies such as when a member of staff is absent. This needs to be balanced in line with the duty of care in the Childcare Act 2006. Any member of staff carrying out any personal or intimate care tasks must do so in accordance with this policy.

Any member of DCC staff working to this policy will be indemnified by the Local Authority. Non-Maintained settings should check indemnity with their own insurers. Those settings who already have guidance in place such as Residential Care establishments should continue to follow their existing guidance taking the opportunity to refer to this document as a base standard.

Teachers' conditions of service are listed in the STPC document which makes no reference to care tasks. Teachers are not required to and should never be requested or expected to fulfil any personal and intimate care tasks under any circumstances, or to supervise or accompany support staff who are carrying out these roles, including in emergencies such as when another member of staff is absent. This statement also applies to teachers who are employed by the Local Authority on Central Contracts

## **Aims**

This guidance has the following aims:

- To safeguard the rights of children
- To safeguard the rights of staff who are involved in providing personal and intimate care.
- To ensure inclusion for all children

- To ensure continuity of care between parents/carers and practitioners/teachers in settings
- To ensure all staff involved in personal and intimate care have access to appropriate training.

## Definitions

The definitions described here are new. Previously Derbyshire referred to all care (including personal and intimate) as 'personal care'. All job descriptions, person specifications and contracts previously issued that predate this document which use 'personal care' are referring to both 'personal and intimate' care.

**Personal care** tasks can be defined as those that involve touching which is socially acceptable is non-personal or intimate. Such tasks are generally aimed at helping with presentation or enhancing social functioning and may include:

- administering medication
- helping a child to eat or drink
- brushing a child's hair or teeth
- helping a child to dress or undress
- washing a child's non personal body parts
- encouraging a child to go to the toilet.

**Intimate care** tasks are defined as those associated with bodily functions, body products, and personal hygiene routines which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure to the genitals, including tasks such as:

- dressing and undressing (underwear)
- helping with the use of the toilet
- changing continence pads/nappies (faeces and/or urine),
- bathing/ showering
- washing personal and intimate parts of the body

## Guiding principles

This guidance is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- Assistance with intimate and personal care must be provided in a manner which is respectful of the child's rights to feel safe and secure, to remain healthy, and to be treated as an individual.
- Children have a right to information, in a format which is understandable, so that they can ask questions or express their concern about personal and intimate care routines.
- Children should be consulted as far as possible and encouraged to participate in decision-making about their intimate and personal care.
- Decisions and plans about intimate and personal care are made in partnership with parents/carers.

Practitioners who work with very young children (those under two) accept that their roles will involve assisting children with intimate and personal care routines. Non maintained early year's settings, and more frequently schools are now admitting younger children who are in receipt of nursery education funding; some children now attend school from the age of two. In addition, more children with complex learning needs and disabilities are now accessing mainstream provision. Young children have "accidents" and settings must plan for such eventualities and how they will deal with them. The 'Ready for school in Derbyshire' policy, September 2015, describes core skills that children should have mastered, before they begin in Reception. One of the expectations is that before starting in Reception, children should be able to go to the toilet on their own and wash their hands. Schools are not expected to routinely teach children how to use the toilet. Therefore unless a child has a disability or defined medical condition it is expected that parents/carers will have helped their children to be clean and dry by the time they start in Reception.

## The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 in relation to disability and additional needs provides protection for anyone who has a physical, sensory or mental impairment that has an adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The effect must be substantial and long-term. It is clear therefore that anyone with a named condition that affects aspects of personal development must not be discriminated against. Education providers have an obligation to meet the needs of children with delayed personal development in the same way as they meet the individual needs of children with delayed language, or any other kind of delayed development. Children should not be excluded from normal activities because of incontinence.

Any admission policy that sets a blanket standard of continence for all children, is discriminatory and therefore unlawful under the Act. Settings and schools must make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of children with disabilities, including those who are not continent.

Asking a parent or carer to come and change a child is likely to be a direct contravention of the Equality Act 2010 and leaving a child in a soiled nappy for any length of time pending the return of the parent is a form of abuse and wholly unacceptable.

When a child has a disability which includes complex continence or moving and handling needs, it may be appropriate for the relevant health professionals to draw up a health care plan. Any plan should be reviewed every six months or sooner if the child's needs suddenly change.

### **Links with other policies/Guidance**

This policy should be considered in conjunction with other relevant policies and/or guidance, related to the following aspects:

- Safeguarding
- Administration of medication
- Moving and Handling
- Health and Safety
- Cleaning of Bodily Fluid Spillages
- Intimate and Personal Care Policy for children in Key stage one and above
- Inclusion
- Equality and diversity
- Complaints Procedure
- Existing Residential Care Guidelines

### **Ensuring carer competency**

- Staff need to be given information during the recruitment process about the types of intimate and personal care they may be required to carry out and this should be included in any job description/role profile.
- All staff working with children must have been through an appropriate safer recruitment process.
- Staff must be given appropriate initial and on-going instruction/training in how to carry out intimate and personal care activities. This may include both generic training, and specific instruction in how to assist particular children.



- Staff should have access to a set of procedures which give detailed guidance on how to carry out specific activities related to intimate and personal care and any individual care plan which is in place for a child.
- Staff should also have attended other relevant training as necessary, including safeguarding disabled children, moving and handling (where appropriate), and administration of medication.

### **Safeguarding the dignity of children when providing intimate care**

- The number of adults involved in giving intimate and personal care should be based on individual need. Under usual circumstances, the child's need for privacy would indicate that one adult is sufficient. However, two or more adults may be required on occasion, for example where this is necessary to support a child with behavioural needs, where more than one adult is needed to assist with moving and handling, or where it is known that allegations by a child are likely to be made. Where more than one adult is present the reasons must be clearly documented.
- A student on placement should not change a child's nappy without supervision.
- There is a need to strike a balance between protecting the child's dignity by not drawing on too large a pool of adults who are involved in intimate care routines, and on protecting the child from over-dependence on one person.
- The child's preferences about gender of carer should be respected wherever possible

### **Developing, documenting, and communicating intimate care procedures**

- Parents/carers must be consulted, and their views respected regarding personal and intimate care.
- Parents/carers are expected to provide settings with information about their child's intimate care needs. This information will be sought as part of the induction process.
- Parents/carers will be expected as part of the plan to supply the setting with a sufficient supply of clean clothing and nappies/pull ups etc. relevant to their child's needs.
- Planning for outings and trips must take into account how the child's intimate and personal care needs will be met when away from the setting.

## **Procedures and facilities for intimate care routines**

- If it is not possible to provide a purpose-built changing area any alternative changing arrangements must give due consideration to protecting both the posture of staff and the child from injury. Where appropriate and possible it is perfectly acceptable for children to be changed whilst standing up (staff should be provided with suitable seating at an appropriate height to avoid stooping where this is a regular occurrence).
- Staff must wear disposable gloves and an apron while carrying out intimate care tasks
- Soiled nappies should be double wrapped. They can then be placed in the normal waste collection. If the number produced each collection period exceeds 7kg in total then additional nappies should be placed in a hygienic disposal unit and separate collection of these by a suitable contractor will need to be arranged.
- The changing area must be cleaned after use.
- Hot water and liquid soap should be available for adults and children to wash their hands after intimate care routines. A hot air dryer or paper towels must also be available.

## **Guidance for personal and intimate care procedures**

The following general guidance should be followed:

- Children/young people should be enabled to communicate their needs and preferences during personal and intimate care activities.
- When referring to care routines or body parts care should be taken to use appropriate language.
- When staff are not sure how to carry out a personal or intimate care routine, guidance should be sought from their manager.
- Care must be taken to communicate with the child throughout the activity.
- Children should be encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves.
- The utmost care must be taken to ensure dignity and privacy. Adults should also keep the child's body and genital area covered as much as possible.
- For children who present with challenging behaviour who require intimate care, this must be included within their behaviour plan and individual risk assessment.

