



Intimate Care Policy

St Mark's 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. Unless children have special needs we will normally expect that parents and carers prepare their pupils for school by showing them how to dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene. Every effort should be made to encourage independence before a child arrives at school. Where children have the need for help with personal, intimate care we will ensure that the management of those needs will be carefully planned and that any child who requires such care is treated with respect and the child's welfare and dignity will be of paramount importance at all times. This policy will play an important part in the care of pupils and it has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children. We are committed to meeting the individual needs of each child and we will take into full account their age, special needs, disability and gender when providing personal, intimate care.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children carry out for themselves but which some are unable to do due to physical disability, special educational needs associated with learning difficulties, medical needs or needs arising from the child's stage of development. Care may involve help with drinking, eating, dressing and toileting.

In most cases intimate care will involve procedures to do with personal hygiene and the cleaning of equipment associated with the process. In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure.

Aims

The aims of this document and associated guidance are

- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff
- To ensure that children are treated with respect when intimate care is given
- To ensure that the intimate care of children must never cause worry, distress, humiliation or pain and that everything will be done to avoid embarrassment
- Each child's needs will be considered individually.
- To ensure that the provision of intimate personal care meets fully the requirements of the school's child protection and safeguarding policy

- To provide for the needs of children who are incontinent, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 as far as is reasonably practicable
- To ensure that parents are appropriately involved and where urgent or emergency care is given parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity

Strategies

1. Where the need for personal, intimate care is known in advance the members of staff who provide it will be properly trained to do so and will be fully aware of best practice
2. In the Early Years we will give particular attention to planning for the development of independence skills, particularly for children who are highly dependent upon adult support for personal care.
3. Children will be included in all school activities as much as is reasonably possible
4. Before admitting a child who has a continence problem, we will draw up a continence care plan agreed by the school with the parents/carers and colleagues from the appropriate Health Authority. The child will also be consulted, if appropriate, as well as the staff involved in carrying out the care. The plan will include information about when and where the child will be cared for and which members of staff will support and manage the plan.
5. In an emergency any member of staff may be asked to provide personal, intimate care and they will be guided by this policy, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and any other relevant policy. Ideally more than one member of staff would be present, although in practice this is often not possible. Situations may arise where the parent may be required to attend as this is deemed the most appropriate solution,
6. Good practice in providing personal, intimate care will include the following
 - Inform a colleague when a child needs to be taken to the toilet
 - Consideration should be given to providing intimate care to children of the opposite sex
 - In considering this issue, attention should be paid to the age of the child, his/her wishes and feelings, any expressed parental directions along with the wishes and feelings of the member of staff concerned.
 - Staff will use gloves and protective clothing, where a child has a care plan; parents will be expected to provide the school with a reserve of clothing. In an emergency the school will provide appropriate underwear and clothing. Parents will be expected to replace underwear and wash and return clothing.
 - Parents provide nappies, wipes etc, as and when needed
 - Staff providing personal, intimate care to a pupil will record the assistance given and inform parents

7. 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.
8. Where children have identified special needs that require personal and intimate care, individual care plans will be drawn up for children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child.
9. Wherever possible, staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, in certain urgent or emergency circumstances this principle may need to be waived.
10. Where a child with SEN has on-going intimate care needs, arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's care plan.
11. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account whenever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.
12. The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures will be adhered to at all times

Allegations of Abuse

Staff working in intimate situations with children can feel particularly vulnerable. This school policy can help to reassure both staff involved and the parents of vulnerable children. Where there is an allegation of abuse, the School's dealing with Allegations Against Staff procedures, based on the statutory guidelines taken from 'Working Together to keep Children Safe in Education' will be followed.

Policy to be reviewed September 2025