

**DURDAN'S PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL
INTIMATE CARE
POLICY**



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Introduction

Durdan's Park Primary 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. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child will be attended to in any way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain.

This Intimate Care Policy and Guidelines regarding children have been developed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some children are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing. It also includes supervision of children involved in intimate self-care.

Aims

- To safeguard the rights and well-being of Durdan's Park pupils regard to dignity, privacy and safety
- To ensure children are treated with sensitivity and 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 a clear procedure for intimate care
- To inform parents/carers in how intimate care is administered
- To ensure parents/carers are consulted in the intimate of care of their children

Our Approach to Best Practice

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and because of this management of all children with intimate care needs must be carefully planned. There shall be a high awareness of Child Protection issues. The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance to us.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so and are fully aware of Child Protection protocol and best practice. Suitable equipment and facilities are provided to assist with children who need special arrangements. 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. 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/herself as s/he can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Where a child has a consistent issue individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for that child as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child. Each child's right to privacy will be respected.

Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation. Specific intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's intimate care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents/carers will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing. We see the importance of using the opportunities during intimate personal care to teach children and people about the value of their own bodies, to develop their personal safety skills and to enhance their self-esteem.

Working with Parents/carers

Partnership with parents/carers is an important principle in any educational setting and is particularly necessary in relation to children needing intimate care. Much of the information required to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible is available from parents/carers, including knowledge and understanding of any religious/cultural sensitivities. Ideally, prior permission must be obtained from parents/carers before intimate care procedures are carried out. As this is a new policy, our school will in future on its admission form ask parents/carers to give permission for the school to provide intimate care support to their children in terms of soiling, washing and toileting.

For parents/carers who have not filled in written permission forms, our procedure is as follows:

If a parent/carer does not give consent the school will contact the parent/carer giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. If the parent/carer or emergency contact is able to come within a few minutes, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent/carer arrives. Children are never left on their own whilst waiting for a parent/carer to arrive. An adult will stay with them, giving comfort and reassurance. The child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed.

If a parent/carer cannot attend, the school seeks to gain verbal consent from parents/carers for staff to clean and change the child. This permission will be sought on each occasion that the child requires intimate care. If the parents/carers cannot be contacted the Head teacher will be consulted. If put in an impossible situation where the child is at risk, staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child. Where this occurs parents will be informed at the end of the day in person or by a phone call. When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.

Protocol

If a child needs to be cleaned, staff will make sure that:

- Protective gloves are worn.
- The procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process.
- The child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible.
- Physical contact is kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning.
- Privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation (the welfare toilet is used to change a child).
- All spills of vomit, blood or excrement are wiped up and flushed down the toilet.
- Any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet.
- Soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child (double bagged).

Equipment Provision

Parents/carers should provide nappies, disposal bags, wipes, changing mat etc if needed, and parents/carers should be made aware of this responsibility. Our school is responsible for providing gloves, plastic aprons, a bin and liners to dispose of any waste.

Health and Safety

Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied on a weekly basis and it can be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classed

as clinical waste. Staff must be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy section which highlights this.

First Aid and intimate care: Staffing

Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult is present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.

Additional Guidance

Introduction

There are a number of issues to consider when responding to an individual child's needs. The following advice/strategies are some suggestions as possible ways to actively promote inclusion and the welfare of pupils.

Physical Contact through Touch

All staff engaged in the care and education of children need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact. The expectation is that staff will work in "limited touch" cultures and that when physical contact is made with pupils, this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the child, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Physical contact which is repeated with an individual child may raise questions. It is therefore of paramount importance that the justification for this is formally agreed by the child, school and those with parental/carer responsibility.

Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of "limited touch" will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each child. Staff use appropriate levels of touch to support and comfort pupils when they may need reassurance or at times of need, such as a caring parent/carer would give. This is considered to be important in combatting distress, giving reassurance and providing a sense of security and well-being for our pupils and contributes to the development of self-awareness, interpersonal skills and relationship building.

Alternatively, there may be occasions when restrictive physical intervention through touch is appropriate if a child is hurting either him or herself, others, or is damaging property and is so out of control that all verbal attempts to engage him or her have failed. Such necessary interventions are fully in line with guidelines set out in our Restraint Policy. Touch of a sexual nature is forbidden. Should any such touch be used it would be deemed as the most serious breach of the Code of Conduct warranting the highest level of disciplinary action.

The arrangements regarding the above must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Where possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the above arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it is to be documented and reported. Extra caution may be required where a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child without causing them a negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

All plans will be clearly recorded to ensure clarity of expectation, roles and responsibilities. They will reflect all methods of communication including emergency procedures between home, school and the medical service. A procedure will also be included to explain how concerns arising from the intimate care process will be dealt with.

Recruitment

Parents/carers must feel confident that relevant staff have been carefully vetted and trained helping to avoid potentially stressful areas of anxiety and conflict. At Durdan's Park Primary School, recruitment and selection of candidates for posts involving intimate care will be made following the Ealing Safeguarding, Criminal Records Bureau checks, equal opportunities and employment rights legislation. Candidates will be made fully aware of what will be required and detailed in their job description before accepting the post.

Volunteers are NEVER permitted to attend to pupils' personal care

Links with other Agencies

Positive links with other agencies will enable school based plans to take account of the knowledge, skills and expertise of other professionals and will ensure the child's well-being and development remains paramount. The school nurse will be informed of all children requiring intimate care and provide training to enable the school to fully meet individual needs.

Staff Professional Development

- Staff will receive training in good working practices which comply with Health and Safety.
- All staff will receive Child Protection training every year.
- Staff will be trained in the specific types of intimate care that they carry out and fully understand the Intimate Care policy and guidelines within the context of their work.
- Newly appointed staff will be closely supervised until completion of a successful probationary period.
- Whole school staff training will foster a culture of good practice and a whole school approach to intimate care.
- The school and individual staff will keep a dated record of all training undertaken.
- Induction programmes for all new staff will be provided to ensure that they are made fully aware of the individual Intimate Care protocols for the children they are supporting.
- Ensure staff are aware of the set procedures, the Child Protection Policy and Intimate Care Policy.
- Ensure staff understand the needs of refugee children, asylum seekers and children from different racial and cultural backgrounds and specialist advice is sought when necessary.
- Ensure staff know who to ask for advice if they are unsure or uncomfortable about a particular situation.
- Ensure staff understand our whole school approach to intimate care.
- The following guidelines will be used in training appropriate staff and those identified to support intimate care.

Staff members should be able to:

Ensure that sensitive information about a child is only shared with those who need to know, whether it is parents/carers or members of staff specifically involved with the child. Other personnel will only be given information that keeps the child safe.

Consult parents/carers about arrangements for intimate care.

Writing an Intimate Care plan

Where a routine procedure is required an intimate care plan should be agreed in discussion with the child, school staff, parents/carers and relevant health personnel. The plan should be signed by all who contribute and reviewed on an agreed basis.

Invasive Procedures

As a rule two adults will be present when implementing intimate care. These are in normal circumstances the Welfare Officer. However, in the case of taking a child to the toilet, even though it is recommended that two adults are present when invasive procedures are performed, whilst this may be seen as providing protection against a possible allegation against a member of staff, it further erodes the privacy of the child.

Taking this into account we ensure that there is always a member of staff nearby when intimate care of this nature takes place.

Environmental

Considerations we have in place include:

- Facilities with hot and cold running water.
- A private area where cleaning and changing re: soiling can take place.
- Protective clothing including disposable protective gloves – provided by the school.
- Labelled bins for the disposal of wet and soiled nappies/pads (soiled items being double bagged' before being placed in bin).
- Supplies of suitable cleaning materials; anti-bacterial spray, sterilising fluid, deodorisers, anti-bacterial hand wash.
- Supplies of appropriate clean clothing, disposal bags and wipes.
- An effective system to alert staff for help in an emergency.

The Protection of Children

Child Protection Procedures and Multi-Agency Child Protection procedures will be adhered to. If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate designated person for child protection. 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. If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice s/he must report this immediately to the Child Protection Lead. Similarly action will be taken immediately should there be a discrepancy of reports between a child and the intimate carer, particularly with reference to time spent alone together. If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed through use of the Ealing 'Allegations Against Staff' procedures.

Safeguarding Children and Staff

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. Staff providing intimate care must be aware of the need to adhere to good Child Protection practice in order to minimise the risks for both children and staff. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice will safeguard children and staff.

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 give choices where possible. Check your practice by asking the child or parent/carers 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.

Care should not be carried out by a member of staff working alone with a child.

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. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs 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.

Vulnerability to abuse

Children should be encouraged to recognise and challenge inappropriate assistance and behaviour that erodes their dignity and self-worth. Staff should be encouraged to listen. It is of paramount importance that all staff are familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures. The following are factors that can increase a child's vulnerability: Children who need help with intimate care are statistically more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

- Children with disabilities may have less control over their lives than others.
- Children may have not received sex and relationship education and may therefore be less able to recognise abuse.

Conclusion

Intimate care is a sensitive but necessary aspect of the well-being of our children. Our school is committed to the highest standards of practice and in doing so will ensure that our pupils will gain the safety, sensitivity and respect all children have as their right.

Monitoring

The Child Protection Lead will meet with all staff involved in intimate care to ensure procedures are being followed. The Child Protection Lead will meet with parents/carers of children involved in intimate care. The Child Protection Lead will ensure that correct record keeping is being completed by staff involved with intimate care on a regular basis and that school processes are being followed.