



POLICY INTIMATE CARE

*Throughout this document 'staff' refers to staff and undergraduate students working with children at NICE.

Introduction

Staff who work with young children/young people who have special needs will realise that the issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of children's needs.

Definition

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves, but what some children are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence and menstrual management 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.

Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

- assisting a child to change his/her clothes
- changing or washing a child who has soiled him/herself
- assisting with toileting issues
- supervising a child involved in intimate self-care
- providing first aid assistance
- providing comfort to an upset or distressed child
- feeding a child
- providing oral care to a child
- assisting a child who requires a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided.*

* In the case of a specific procedure, only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure. Parents have the responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

Ethos

Children's dignity will be preserved, their safety and comfort will be maximised and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff that provide intimate care to children all have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at NICE work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible. All children 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 his/herself as possible.

The Curriculum

All staff deliver a full personal safety curriculum, as part of Personal, Social and Health Education/Physical Development, to all children as appropriate to their developmental level and degree of understanding. This work is shared with parents who are encouraged to reinforce the personal safety messages within the home.

Our Commitment

NICE 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. NICE 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 or pain.

Our Approach to Best Practice

All children who attend NICE will at some time require intimate care and are treated respectfully at all times. Every child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Staff Training

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection and Health and Safety training in moving and handling) and are fully aware of best practice. Resources will be 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.

Communication with Children

There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc) to discuss the child's needs and preferences. The child is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.

As a basic principle, children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy possible given their ages and abilities. Staff will encourage all children to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing him/herself.

Respect and Privacy

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many staff might need to be present when a child needs help with intimate care. Where possible, one child will be cared for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having two adults present e.g. for safe manual handling reasons. Although the adult will never be left on his/her own in the room with the child (child protection).

Wherever possible, the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on every occasion; there will be a number of staff known to the child who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, while at the same time, guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different members of staff.

In school groups, we ensure that girls' intimate care is provided by female staff, in particular when they have reached puberty and are dealing with menstrual cycles.

Any visitors to the groups are required to leave while children are involved in intimate care activities unless the parent of the child has particularly requested that another professional involved with the child needs to see the child using the toilet or changing, e.g. an occupational therapist. In these circumstances, only the named child will be involved and the credentials of the professional concerned will be checked in advance.

First Aid, Administration of Medication and Intimate Care

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 another member of staff should be in the vicinity.

All staff administering any type of emergency medication will have received training in the procedure. This training is updated annually and staff volunteer to administer this medication. A list of staff willing to administer emergency medication is kept in the school group on the back of the classroom door and on the office information board by the Milestone Club room.

Involvement of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be involved with their child's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints; e.g. staffing and equal opportunities legislation. The religious views and cultural values of families should be taken into account, particularly as they might affect certain practices or determine the gender of the carer.

All children/young people will be made aware that they can communicate any issues or concerns to the Leading Conductor or Director of Services about the quality of care they receive.

The Protection of Children

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and 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 about a member of staff, child protection procedures laid down by Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board will be followed. Please see the policy for Safeguarding and Child protection for further details.

Also see Policy for Child Protection.