

Highwoods Community Primary School

Intimate Care Policy

October 2024

To be reviewed September 2026



The Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. The policy applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children.

The intimate care policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024)

Definition

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the genitals. Examples include care associated with continence as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing or bathing.

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Intimate Care Policy is based:

- Every child has the right to be safe
- Every child has the right to personal privacy
- Every child has the right to be valued as an individual
- Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Every child has the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities

Unexpected Intimate Care

This policy outlines the care which will be given to children with long term special needs or recurring problems, for example, due to medication. However, there are some situations where children without these long-term needs require assistance with intimate care and class staff members will deal with their needs:

1. When children have an unexpected continence accident, they are encouraged to clean and change themselves. Younger children may be supervised as they do this, but the adult will not assist with cleaning, wiping or washing intimate areas.
2. If the soiling is more excessive, the adult will give verbal support to clean intimate areas and will clean areas such as the back, waist and lower legs, if the child is happy for them to do so. Where it is possible, the school will contact the parents to inform them and gain verbal consent to clean the intimate area if necessary. However, the wellbeing and comfort of the child remains our priority and the child will be cleaned and made comfortable as promptly as possible.
If it is suspected that the child has diarrhoea, the parent will be asked to take them home as they are unwell.

Intimate Care Due to Special Needs or Other Recurring Need

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

Children who require regular assistance with intimate care have intimate care plans agreed by staff, parents/carers and any other professionals actively involved. When writing the plan, staff will also consider the wishes of the child alongside any possible constraints, such as staffing, equal opportunities legislation and the agreement of members of staff to carry out the procedures. A record of care will be kept.

When children are changing for swimming, adults do not assist with the drying. Verbal instructions are given when necessary.

Role of parents/carers

Where a child has continuing intimate care needs around toileting, parents are expected to work with school to develop and work to a plan to toilet train their child and to provide spare clothes, nappies and wet wipes. Parents are expected to wash and return any spare clothes belonging to school. They are expected to clean their child when the child is refusing to be cleaned with the support of school staff, or is not adequately clean despite the best efforts of the staff member and child.

Role of Staff

School staff understand that not all children in school will be fully continent. Staff will work with parents to develop a toileting plan which will be followed in school as much as is practical. The roles and responsibilities involving intimate care need to be agreed by individual staff members completing the support for the child. Staff will deal with children respectfully and with dignity when they wet or soil themselves. Children will be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff will inform another member of staff and let them know where the intimate care will take place. LSAs will usually provide intimate care, and will be named on the intimate care agreement. To ensure safeguarding needs are met, the child will be attended to by one of a small number of adults, to ensure that relationships do not become over-familiar and the safety of both the child and the adult is paramount. Those informed of the intimate care taking place (class teacher, LSA, head or deputy) will make random checks when care is taking place. The school recognises that it is best practice to have 2 adults present for intimate care. Wherever possible, and appropriate, the school will seek to action this. All staff involved with intimate care will be DBS checked. If the child cannot be cleaned due to behavioural difficulties, being too upset or refusing to clean themselves, parents will be informed and expected to clean their child in school or at home.

Staff will assist children with the following:

- Removing wet or soiled clothes
- Cleaning skin area below the knees, on the back and above the waist
- Instructing the child, with words and actions, how to clean themselves effectively

- Helping to change into clean clothes which are either the child's own or those provided by school
- Wrapping wet or soiled clothes in plastic bags and giving them to the parent to take home

A small amount of spare clothing is available, but parents of children under an intimate care plan are expected to supply their own spare clothes.

All staff will ensure a child is cleaned and changed as soon as it is brought to their attention. A child will not be left in wet or soiled clothes for any part of the day, unless they are refusing to be changed. Staff will then make further attempts to persuade the child to change, before a parent is called.

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

Child Protection

Child Protection and Multi-Agency Child Protection procedures will be adhered to at all times.

All members of staff carrying out intimate care procedures are DBS checked. It is not appropriate for volunteers to carry out intimate care procedures.