Intimate Care Policy

Hampton Lakes Primary School

Policy last reviewed:	May 2025
Next review due:	May 2027
Member of staff responsible:	Mrs Ashleigh Watson
Ratified by:	LGB

1. Rationale

1.1. At Hampton Lakes, it is our intention to develop independence in each and every child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our Intimate Care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff.

1.2. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in the intimate care of children. Children are generally more vulnerable than adults, and staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs. Intimate care may be defined as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident.

1.3. Such activities can include:

- toileting;
- feeding;
- oral care;
- washing;
- changing clothes;
- first aid and medical assistance;
- supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

1.4. Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

2. Principles of Intimate Care

2.1. The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy guidelines are based. Every child has the right to:-

- be safe;
- personal privacy;
- be valued as an individual;
- be treated with dignity and respect;
- be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities;
- express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account;
- have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

3. School Responsibilities

3.1. All members of staff working with children are DBS checked to ensure they are safe to do so. Only those members of staff who are familiar with the intimate care policy and all school safeguarding documentation are involved in the intimate care of children.

3.2. Anticipated intimate care arrangements, which are required on a regular basis, are agreed between the school and parents and, when appropriate and possible, by the child. Intimate care arrangements for any pupil who requires this support on a regular basis will be reviewed at least every six months.

3.3. Only in an exceptional circumstance would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by the parents. This act of intimate care would be reported to a member of staff and parents at the earliest possible time following the event.

3.4. If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Head of School, in line with our Whistleblowing Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

4. Guidelines for Good Practice

4.1. All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with a child's intimate care need to be particularly sensitive to their individual needs. Members of 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.

1) Involve the child in the intimate care taking place. 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, where possible, give choices. Check your practice by asking the child or parent 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. The practice of providing one-to-one intimate care of a child alone is supported, unless the activity requires two persons for the greater comfort/safety of the 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) Be aware of your own limitations. Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed.
5) Promote positive self-esteem and body image. Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong 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.
6) If you have any concerns, you must report them. If you observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Personnel. If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Personnel. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be kept in the child's Child Protection file.

5. Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

5.1. There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care. The intimate care of boys and girls can be carried out by a member of staff of the opposite sex with the following provisions:

- When intimate care is being carried out, all children have the right to dignity and privacy, i.e. they should be appropriately covered, the door closed or screens/curtains put in place.
- If the child appears distressed or uncomfortable when personal tasks are being carried out, the care should stop immediately. Try to ascertain why the child is distressed and provide reassurance.
- Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Personnel and make a written record.
- Parents must be informed about any concerns.

6. Communication with Children

6.1. It is the responsibility of all staff caring for a child to ensure that they are aware of the child's method and level of communication. Depending on their maturity and levels of stress children may communicate using different methods – words, signs, symbols, body movements, eye pointing, etc.

6.2. To ensure effective communication;

- make eye contact at the child's level;
- use simple language and repeat if necessary;
- wait for response;
- continue to explain to the child what is happening even if there is no response;
- treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

7. Monitoring and review

7.1. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

7.2. The Head of School, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, will monitor the effectiveness of this policy.