



pathfield
SCHOOL

Inspiring interaction

Intimate Care Policy

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Pathfield School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy will support, promote and be applied with due regard to the requirements of the

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Introduction

Intimate Care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a pupil after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. In the case of a specific procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should undertake the procedure, (e.g. the administration of rectal paracetamol).

The issue of Intimate Care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There will be a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers, and other professionals as appropriate, to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Pathfield School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. The school recognises that there is a need to treat all children, whatever their age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation, with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress, pain, ridicule or exposes them to an unacceptable level of risk.

1) Principles

1.1 The Governing Body will act in accordance with [Section 175 of the Education Act 2002](#) and the Government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at this school.

1.2 This Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It applies to everyone involved in the intimate care of children. It will be adhered to when plans and procedures are put in place as an individual plan to be followed.

1.3 The Governing Body recognises its duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 which requires that any pupil with an impairment that affects his/her ability to carry out day-to-day activities must not be discriminated against.

1.4. Child focused principles of intimate care.

The following are the fundamental principles upon which the Policy and Guidelines are 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.
- Every child has the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account.
- Every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.
- Every child has the right to be provided assistance which promotes independence and self-care (with the understanding that their needs will change over a period of time with training).

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 some pupils 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 pupils involved in intimate self-care.

Our Approach to Best Practice

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

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.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection and Health & Safety training in moving and handling) and are fully aware of best practice. Meeting a pupil's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding, and knowledge of all safeguarding policies and procedures must be known to each member of staff prior to them providing any intimate care. This includes an understanding of how staff should be mindful of actions which could be seen as inappropriate to an observer.

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 he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. In certain circumstances, individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular children 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 to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child is toileted. Where possible, one child will be cared for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having more adults present. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented on the intimate care plan.

Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers 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, whilst at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

Wherever possible staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, in certain circumstances this principle may need to be waived where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence for example, female staff supporting boys where there is no male member of staff available. The religious views, beliefs and cultural values of children and their families should be taken into account, particularly as they might affect certain practices or determine the gender of the carer. Where religious beliefs and cultural differences mean that specific instructions are needed, this will be prominently identified on the pupil's Intimate Care Plan. Any procedure conducted which could give rise to distress arising from religious or cultural sensitivities must be reported to a member of SMT to prevent any re-occurrence wherever possible.

Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded. The needs and wishes of both the child and parents/carers will be recorded in the individual care plan and/or the intimate care plan. Where a care plan or IEP is NOT in place, parents/carers will be informed the same day if their child has needed help with meeting intimate care needs (e.g., has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled him/herself). It is recommended practice that information on intimate care should be treated as confidential and communicated in person by telephone or by sealed letter, not through the home/school diary. Where regular monitoring is required a separate diary/book will be put in place specifically for that purpose.

There must be careful communication with each pupil who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc) to discuss their needs and preferences. Where the pupil is of an appropriate age and level of understanding permission will be sought before starting an intimate procedure.

Staff who provide intimate care should speak to the pupil personally by name, explain what they are doing and communicate with all children in a way that reflects their age and level of understanding.

Adults who assist pupils with intimate care will be employees of the school, not students or volunteers, and therefore have the usual range of safer recruitment checks, including enhanced DBS checks.

All staff should be aware of the Pathfield School's Staff Code of Conduct. Sensitive and confidential information will be shared only with those who need to know.

On occasion, parents/carers will be in attendance at school and wish to attend to their own child. This is permissible as long as they have parental responsibility. Staff should withdraw to allow privacy for the child whilst ensuring that other pupils are not receiving intimate care or using the toilet facilities independently at the same time.

The Protection of Children

Child Protection procedures will be adhered to at all times.

All children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.

From a child protection perspective, it is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching private parts of a pupil's body. In this school best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those who are involved in intimate care and others in the vicinity) should be always vigilant, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.

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 manager/designated person for child protection and the school nurse.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a pupil's presentation, e.g., unexplained marks, bruises, etc s/he will immediately report concerns to one of the Designated Senior Safeguarding Leads or Headteacher. A clear written record of the concern will be completed, and action will be taken in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. Parents/carers will be asked for their consent or informed that a referral is necessary prior to it being made but this should only be done where such discussion and agreement seeking will not place the child at increased risk of suffering significant harm.

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. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff this will be treated very seriously, all necessary procedures will be followed under the explicit direction of the Headteacher.

All staff are to be made aware of the school's Whistleblowing Policy – and the procedures concerning the reporting of Child Protection issues.

Similarly, any adult who has concerns about the conduct of a colleague at the school or about any improper practice will report this to the Headteacher or to the Chair of Governors, in accordance with the child protection procedures and Whistleblowing Policy.

Changing Facilities

Pathfield School's facilities have toilets suitable to be used by children and adults with a disability. The dignity and privacy of the person with the disability is always of paramount concern. Parents have a role to play when their child is wearing continence products. The parent should provide continence products, wipes and creams, and parents will be made aware of this responsibility. The school is responsible for providing gloves, plastic aprons, a bin and liners to dispose of any waste which will be treated as clinical waste.

Health & Safety

Staff always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled or when changing a soiled continence product. Any soiled waste is placed in an appropriate clinical waste disposal bag. This bag is then placed in a bin (as provided by the School) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. Staff should be fully aware of best practice regarding infection control.

Guidance to Safeguard Children and Staff Regarding Situations Which May Lead Themselves to Allegations of Abuse (I.e., Physical Contact, First Aid, Showers/ Changing Clothes, Off-Site Activities, and Photography)

Physical Contact

All staff engaged in the care of Pathfield pupils will exercise caution in the use of physical contact.

Staff must 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 will be open to scrutiny.

With special needs children often more physical contact is required to assist their everyday needs. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each child. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the arrangement is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it should be documented and reported.

Extra caution will 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 being 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 a negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

Massage

Massage is now commonly used with pupils who have complex needs and/or medical conditions in order to develop sensory awareness, tolerance to touch and as a means of relaxation.

Massage undertaken by school staff will be confined to parts of the body such as the hands, feet and face in order to safeguard the interest of both adults and pupils. No child will receive massage whilst in a state of undress at Pathfield School.

Any adult undertaking massage for pupils must be suitably qualified and/or demonstrate an appropriate level of competence. Care must be exercised in the use of oils and creams as well as the techniques used by all personnel.

Care plans should include specific information for those supporting children with bespoke medical needs.

Pupils in Distress

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must always remain self-aware to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and not subject to misinterpretation.

The judgement of staff will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil's distress, their age, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the child needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the child's relative/carer.

Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time. Dependence for repeated reassurance or contact demanded by a pupil from one member of staff should be avoided, and advice sought from senior staff on how to manage the needs of the pupil.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice, from their line manager or other appropriate person.

First Aid and Medical Procedures

Some pupils might require assistance with invasive or non-invasive medical procedures such as the administration of rectal medication, managing catheters or colostomy bags. These procedures will be discussed with parents/carers, documented in the health care plan and will only be carried out by staff who have been trained and deemed competent to do so.

It is particularly important that these staff should follow appropriate infection control guidelines and ensure that any medical items are disposed of correctly.

Any members of staff who administer first aid should be appropriately trained in accordance with LA guidance. If an examination of a child is required in an emergency aid situation it is advisable to have another adult present, with due regard to the child's privacy and dignity.

Physical Exercise

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties when participating in games, demonstrating an exercise or the use of equipment.

Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of misinterpretation.

Where it is anticipated that a pupil might be prone to misinterpret any such contact, alternatives should be considered, perhaps involving another member of staff or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.

Showers / Changing Clothes

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations. This means that staff should announce their intention to enter changing rooms. They should avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour.

When supervising children in a state of undress, the dignity of the child must be protected at the same time as safeguarding both them and the member of staff working with them. It is acceptable for only one member of staff to be supervising but this should not be done in a locked space and other staff should be informed prior to the activity taking place. Other staff should be aware of the estimated time to be taken. This allows other staff to be aware when additional assistance may be required. If staff feel vulnerable, they must ask another member of staff to be present. Staff will not change in the same place as children or shower with the children.

Education Visits and Day Trips

All staff and volunteers should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere while off site. The standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within the school itself. They should also take into account procedures for education visits and day trips. Pathfield School follows the laid down policy and procedure for Devon, Torbay & Plymouth. Additionally, Pathfield School has its own procedures which will be followed.

Photography, Videos and Mobile Phones

Staff are made aware of the potential for such mediums to be used for the wrong purposes. The potential for founded and unfounded allegations of abuse requires that careful consideration be given to the use of this equipment, for example Therapy sessions.

Consent to participating in these activities is sought from the child's parents/carer and a signed agreement sought. All material produced should be viewed for acceptability by another member of staff. Its circulation should be in accordance relevant arrangements with parents – such as for use within publicity material or for display purposes. If a parent/carer has not given consent for such medium to be used, then the pupil will not be included in any such activity.

No member of staff will carry a mobile phone, camera or similar recording device whilst providing intimate care. Any member of staff found with such equipment in this circumstance may be liable to disciplinary action as defined in the conduct policy.