

Intimate Care Policy

Willow Grove Primary School



‘Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Positive’

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Approved by: Willow Grove Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team

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Created by: Headteacher/SENCo, Senior Leadership Team, SEND Governor and parent voice.

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1. Introduction

Willow Grove Primary School is a specialist Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) provider and provides outreach support to mainstream schools in the Wigan Borough.

All pupils at Willow Grove have an identified Special Educational Need (SEN), most of our pupil's primary area of need is SEMH. Many of our pupils have experienced early trauma and adversity, and many have attachment difficulties. Willow Grove is committed to providing an educational environment within which our pupils can heal, thrive, learn and play. All staff work in line with trauma-informed practices, and they have an excellent knowledge of the strategies and resources that are available to meet the needs of pupils with SEMH and additional SEN.

Rationale

It is our intention to develop independence in each child, however there will be occasions when help is required. Our Intimate Care policy has been developed to safeguard children and staff. It is one of a range of specific policies that contribute to our Safeguarding of pupils. 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. Such activities can include:

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

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

Principles of Intimate Care

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 considered; and
- have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

School Responsibilities

The majority of children are toilet trained before joining Willow Grove Primary School, however, no child will be excluded from participating in school who may, for any reason, not yet be toilet trained and who may still be wearing pull-ups or equivalent. To facilitate this:

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Work will be carried out with parents towards toilet training, unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why this may not be appropriate at the time.

Toilet training is seen as a self-care skill that children have the opportunity to learn with the full support and non-judgmental concern of adults.

All members of staff working with children are checked and vetted 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.

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.

In such cases, consent forms are signed and stored in the child's school based file. (Appendix 2)

The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements. Any amendments to the arrangements should be recorded and made available for all parties involved.

Only in an emergency 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.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice, he or she must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Menstruation

Willow Grove is committed to supporting children who begin or manage their periods during the school day. Staff will provide reassurance, respect privacy, and offer practical help when needed, such as access to sanitary products, clean facilities and spare clothing. Children will be encouraged to let a trusted adult know if they require support, and assistance will always be given in a calm, sensitive, and discreet manner. All care will be provided with the children's dignity, comfort, and choice at the centre. The accessible toilet, which has a sanitary bin inside, in the reception area will be offered to the children to ensure additional privacy.

Guidelines for Good Practice

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. These guidelines are designed to safeguard children and staff. They apply to every member of staff involved with the intimate care of children.

Young children and children with special educational needs can be especially vulnerable. Staff involved with their 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*

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.*

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. *Be aware of your own limitations*

Only carry out activities you understand and feel competent with. If in doubt, ask.

5. *Promote positive self-esteem and body image.*

Confident, self-assured children who feel their bodies belong to them are less vulnerable to abuse. 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 Lead.

If a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care or expresses discomfort, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child. A written record of concerns must be made available to parents and kept in the child's file.

Working with Children of the Opposite Sex

There is positive value in both male and female staff being involved with children. Ideally, every child should have the choice for intimate care but the current ratio of female to male staff means that assistance will more often be given by a woman.

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 Lead and make a written record;
- parents must be informed about any concerns.

Communication with Children

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. 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.

Appendix 1

Procedures for changing a child wearing a nappy or a pull-up:

- One member of staff will supervise the child whilst being overseen by second member of staff if the child requires assistance and support in changing.
- The child will be changed in an appropriate area to ensure their dignity
- Staff will use aprons, gloves, blue roll paper, yellow bags and baby wipes.
- Nappies/pull-up will be bagged in a yellow bag disposed of in the human waste disposal bin.
- The nappy/pull-up change will be recorded on the child's daily communication sheet and signed by both members of staff involved.
- If the child is able to change his/her own pull-up without assistance, this can be done independently in the toilet cubicle but the child should be provided with a yellow bag in which they place the soiled pull-up. This can then be passed to a member of staff to be disposed of correctly.

Procedures for changing a child who has wet/soiled themselves:

- One member of staff will assist in changing the child whilst being overseen by second member of staff.
- The child will be changed in the toilet area.
- Staff will wear an apron and gloves.
- Soiled/ wet clothes will be placed inside a bag with the bag handles tied.
- The change will be recorded on the record sheet in the changing room/ toilets and signed by both members of staff involved.
- Parents will be informed via a telephone call that their child has had a change of clothes following a wet/soiling accident.

Appendix 2

Permission form for Intimate Care Provision

PERMISSION FOR SCHOOL TO PROVIDE INTIMATE CARE	
Name of child	
Date of birth	
Name of parent/carer	
Contact details	
I give permission for the school to provide appropriate intimate care to my child (e.g. changing soiled clothing, washing and toileting) whilst they attend Willow Grove Primary School.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will advise the school of anything that may affect my child's personal care (e.g. if medication changes or if my child has an infection) whilst they attend Willow Grove Primary School.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the procedures that will be carried out and will contact the school immediately if I have any concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware that if I wish to retract my consent for Intimate care to be provided for my child, I will make school aware in writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>OR</u>	
I do not give consent for my child to be given intimate care (e.g. to be washed and changed if they have a toileting accident). Instead, the school will contact me or my emergency contact and I will organise for my child to be given intimate care (e.g. be washed and changed). I understand that if the school cannot reach me or my emergency contact, if my child needs urgent intimate care, staff will need to provide this for my child, following the school's intimate care policy, to make them comfortable and remove barriers to learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/carer signature	
Name of parent/carer	
Relationship to child	

PERMISSION FOR SCHOOL TO PROVIDE INTIMATE CARE	
Date	

Next review due by: September 2026