

Watermill School



INTIMATE CARE POLICY

Policy Information		
Policy Author: Jen Lomas Governing Board approval date/date policy is in effect from: Autumn 2024		
Latest Review information:	Summary of amendments	Date of next review:
Date: September 2024 Name of reviewer/s: J Lomas	Revised and reviewed Added appendix for staff guide to intimate care.	September 2026

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INTIMATE CARE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

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 and menstrual management as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing or changing clothing /swimming.

Staff who work with young children or 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 and aware of the safeguarding and wellbeing implications.

Children's dignity will be preserved, and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children will need to have a high awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at Watermill school need to work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Staff provide intimate care, as part of Personal, Social and Health Education, 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.

Watermill School have worked closely with the NSPCC and Together for Children to develop safeguarding messages for pupils and this information is linked to the policy.

OUR AIM:-

Watermill School 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.

Watermill School 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 require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

- Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Safeguarding and Health and Safety training in moving and handling) and are fully aware of best practice. Equipment will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/ occupational therapist as required.
- Hoists are always to be used for any child over the 4.5 Stone (22.7K)
Staff must be over 18 and trained to use the hoist. Two staff must always operate the hoist.
- 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. Wherever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of children/young people will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex and relationship education to their children/young people as an additional safeguard to both staff and children/young people involved.
- 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 that is possible, given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing, pulling up clothing.
- It is of the upmost importance that moving and handling procedures are followed. That specialist equipment is always used such as Hoists, Tracking hoists
- 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 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. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented.
- Wherever possible the same child will not be cared for by the same adult on a regular basis; 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, while at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.

- Parents/carers will be involved with their child's intimate care arrangements on a regular basis; a clear account of the agreed arrangements will be recorded on the child's care plan. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be carefully considered alongside any possible constraints; e.g. staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

3.0 THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

- Safeguarding procedures will be accessible to staff and adhered to.
- Where appropriate, all children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.
- 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 designated person for safeguarding with the information recorded on C-POMS system.
- 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, all necessary procedures will be followed.
- Watermill school believe that it is imperative that children are comfortable with the process of changing and familiar with staff. Therefore, staff new to the school will not change children within the first month of working at the school. This will also give time for staff to familiarise themselves with procedures.

** where 'children' are mentioned in this document, the term will also include young people.*

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or in the light of changes.
Review at September 2026

Intimate Care Policy

Appendix – code of conduct for staff engaging in Intimate Care.