

# Early Childhood Intimate Care Policy

<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Early Years Assistant Principal</b>
<b>Formally endorsed by</b>	<b>Council of Trustees</b>
<b>Endorsement Date</b>	<b>December 2023</b>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>December 2025</b>

Statement of intent:

Early Childhood at Michael Hall understands the importance of its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Pupils may require assistance with intimate care as a result of their age, medical needs or due to having SEND. In all instances, effective safeguarding procedures are of paramount importance. This policy has been developed to ensure that all staff responsible for providing intimate care in the Early Childhood settings at Michael Hall always undertake their duties in a professional manner and treat children with sensitivity and respect.

The school is committed to providing intimate care for children in ways that:

- Maintain their dignity.
- Are sensitive to their needs and preferences.
- Maximise their safety and comfort.
- Protect them against intrusion and abuse.
- Respect the child's right to give or withdraw their consent.
- Encourage the child to care for themselves as much as they can.
- Protect the rights of all others involved.

### **What is intimate care?**

For the purpose of this policy, "intimate care" is the hands-on, physical care in personal hygiene, as well as physical presence or observation during such activities.

Intimate care includes the following:

- Body bathing other than to the arms and face, and to the legs below the knee
- Application of medical treatment other than to the arms and face, and to the legs below the knee
- Toileting, wiping and care in the genital and anal areas
- Dressing and undressing

## **Principles of Good Practice**

- Children who have difficulties in controlling their bladder/bowels or those who have not developed toileting skills have sometimes had a difficult start on the road to personal independence. Therefore, these children must be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity. They should be offered choice and control in every way possible.
- Sensitive arrangements need to be put in place to allow children to toilet themselves at intervals to suit their needs and not at the demands of school routine or class requirements.
- It is important to take into consideration a child's preferences, if the child indicates a preference for a particular sequence, then this should be followed rather than a sequence imposed by a member of Practitioners. As long as all the necessary tasks are completed for the comfort and wellbeing of the child, the order in which they are completed is not important.
- Practitioners should encourage and promote independence and self-help skills as much as possible and give the child sufficient time to achieve. If handled correctly this can be one of the most important self-help skills achieved, improving the child's quality of life, independence and self-esteem. If handled incorrectly it can severely inhibit an individual's inclusion in school and community.
- Children should be encouraged and supported to achieve the highest levels of independence and autonomy that are possible, e.g. in cleaning, toileting, undressing and dressing themselves.
- A positive body image should be encouraged; routine care should be relaxed, enjoyable and fun, with lots of praise and rewards for when the child has achieved goals
- Confidentiality and the child's dignity should be respected at all times with regards to sharing of information between Practitioners.

## **Safeguarding:**

When providing intimate care, it is essential that the member of staff helping the child must discreetly notify another member of staff, protecting the privacy and dignity of the child, when they are going alone to assist a pupil, and must ensure another member of staff is in the vicinity and visible or audible.

All children will be expected to wash their hands after using the toilet and we encourage all parents to reinforce this practice at home.

Pupils who require regular assistance with intimate care have written support plans, agreed by staff, parents/carers. Ideally, the plan should be agreed at a meeting at which all key staff are present. The plan should be reviewed as necessary, but at least termly, and at any time of change of circumstances, e.g. staff changes (where the staff member concerned is providing intimate care).

Accurate records should also be kept when a child requires assistance with intimate care; An intimate care record slip is to be completed whenever intimate care is provided. The record

includes date, time and who was present and any other relevant comments. The record will be kept in the child's file.

Regardless of whether a support plan is in place, all 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) and a copy of the filled in Intimate Care Record Slip is passed over.

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

The Safeguarding Policy along with staff training in child protection also serves to maximize safety for the child and protect staff.

If a situation arises that causes concern to staff helping with personal care, they should call the second member of staff if necessary and report and record the incident. Staff will record the incident on CPOMS and discuss with the Early Childhood Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

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 the Early Childhood Deputy Safeguarding Lead or associate member of the safeguarding team.

Parents are encouraged to share any information with staff about their child with regards to intimate care, and to keep them advised of any changes or concerns they might have.

### **Consent:**

Consent education begins when children start at Michael Hall.

This includes:

- Using correct, scientific vocabulary to describe their body parts
- Teach children bodily autonomy: the concept that an individual has control over what happens to their body, including who gets to touch it. With intimate care, practitioners will ask a child to try to take care of their own wiping first and then ask to help after a child.

### **Health and Safety:**

- Some children are more susceptible to infection due to the personal nature of their medical needs, in this instance hygiene procedures are crucial in protecting children and staff from the spread of infections. Practitioners involved with toileting and personal care should be trained in correct hand washing techniques and hygiene precautions. The educational setting

should provide disposable vinyl gloves, aprons, liquid hand soap, disposable, paper towels and ensure there is access to hand washing facilities in close proximity to the changing area.

- Children should not be left alone or unattended during toileting or changing procedures.
- All bodily fluid/human waste or marked items should be disposed of correctly in sanitary bins if possible and all staff should be made aware of these procedures. Arrangements should be made with the parents for soiled clothing to be taken home and they should be stored in a designated place.
- Any changing mat or bench should be thoroughly cleaned between each use with appropriate cleaning materials and detergents.
- Any spillages or leakages should be cleaned immediately using the appropriate equipment and cleaning materials. All Practitioners should aim for high standards of hygiene around the changing/medical facilities.

**Medication/Ointments** If requests are made by parents for application of medical ointments/creams, these should be prescribed by the GP and clearly labelled with the child's name. They should not be shared between other children and should be stored in a locked storage facility in line with the school's storage of medicines policy.

## **References:**

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

First Aid Policy

Staff Code of Conduct