



Longacre School Intimate Care Policy

This policy includes the Early Years Foundation Stage

Policy Reviewed: November 2024

Policy to be reviewed: November 2025

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 and is referred to in the schools Safeguarding Policy. The principles and procedures apply to everyone involved in 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:

- feeding
- oral care
- washing
- changing clothes
- toileting
- first aid and medical assistance
- 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.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To safeguard the rights and promote the best interests of the children
- To ensure children are treated with sensitivity and respect, and in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one
- To safeguard adults required to operate in sensitive situations
- To raise awareness and provide a clear procedure for intimate care
- To inform parents/carers in how intimate care is administered
- To ensure parents/carers are consulted in the intimate of care of their children.

Definition

Intimate care is one of the following:

- Supporting a pupil with dressing/undressing
- Providing comfort or support for a distressed pupil
- Assisting a pupil requiring medical care, who is not able to carry this out unaided
- Cleaning a pupil who has soiled themselves, has vomited or feels unwell.

Principles

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position. Given the right approach, intimate care can provide opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self esteem. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young persons' right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

The following are the fundamental principles of intimate care upon which our policy 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
- all children have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities
- all children have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have their views considered
- every child has the right to have levels of intimate care that are appropriate and consistent.

School Responsibilities

All staff working with children are vetted and hold an enhanced DBS check as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy. Vetting includes criminal record checks and two references.

All staff are familiar with the intimate care policy and other pastoral care policies of the school and are therefore involved in the intimate care of children. Students on work placement, GAP Students and volunteers are not required to undertake any intimate care procedures and are advised of such during their induction procedure. Such staff are required to seek the support and assistance of employed staff.

Where anticipated, intimate care arrangements are agreed between the school and parents and, if appropriate, by the child. Only in emergency would staff undertake any aspect of intimate care that has not been agreed by parents and school other than the standard requirements of young children such as toileting and changing. Parents would then be contacted immediately. The views of all relevant parties should be sought and considered to inform future arrangements.

If a staff member has concerns about a colleague's intimate care practice he or she must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as outlined by the Safeguarding Policy.

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. 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. Adhering to the following guidelines of good practice should safeguard children and staff.

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 give choices where possible.

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 and do not carry out the care ensuring someone else has taken over. Some procedures must only be carried out by members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed, for example first aid.

5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image.

Confident, self-assured children who feel their body belongs 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 Lead (DSL) as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and use the guidelines given to support your actions. If a child is accidentally hurt during the intimate care or misunderstands or misinterprets something, reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident immediately to the DSL. Report and record any unusual emotional or behavioural response by the child.

Supporting dressing/undressing

Sometimes it will be necessary for staff to aid a child in getting dressed or undressed particularly in Early Years. Staff will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided.

Soiling

Intimate care for soiling should only be given to a child after the parents have given permission for staff to clean and change the child. Parents who have children in the Pre-Prep may sign a permission form so that the Pre-Prep staff can clean and change their child in the event of the child soiling themselves.

If a parent does not give consent, the school will contact the parents or other emergency contact giving specific details about the necessity for cleaning the child. If the parents/carers or emergency contact is able to come at once, the child is comforted and kept away from the other children to preserve dignity until the parent arrives. Children are not left on their own whilst waiting for a parent to arrive, an adult will stay with them, giving comfort and reassurance and the child will be dressed at all times and never left partially clothed.

If a parent/carer or emergency contact cannot attend, the school seeks to gain verbal consent from parents/carers for staff to clean and change the child. This permission will be sought on each occasion that the child soils him or herself.

If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be contacted the Head will be consulted. If put in a situation where the child is at risk, staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child.

When touching a child, staff should always be aware of the possibility of invading a child's privacy and will respect the child's wishes and feelings.

If a Pre-Prep child needs to be cleaned, Pre-Prep staff will make sure that:

- Protective gloves are worn;
- The procedure is discussed in a friendly and reassuring way with the child throughout the process;
- The child is encouraged to care for him/herself as far as possible;
- Physical contact is kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning;
- Privacy is given appropriate to the child's age and the situation;
- All spills of vomit, blood or excrement are wiped up and flushed down the toilet;
- Any soiling that can be, is flushed down the toilet;
- Soiled clothing is put in a plastic bag, unwashed, and sent home with the child.

Hygiene

All staff must be familiar with normal precautions for avoiding infection, must follow basic hygiene procedures and have access to protective, disposable gloves.

Protection for staff

Members of staff need to have regard to the danger of allegations being made against them and take precautions to avoid this risk. These should include:

- Gaining a verbal agreement from another member of staff that the action being taken is necessary;
- Allow the child, wherever possible, to express a preference to choose his/her carer and encourage them to say if they find a carer to be unacceptable;
- Allow the child a choice in the sequence of care;
- Be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions.

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 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 (DSL) and make a written record; and 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; and
- treat the child as an individual with dignity and respect.

Permission for the Provision of Intimate Care at Longacre School

Parents are given a uniform list and a document with details of what every child will need to have in school. This list will include changes of clothes, shoes, nappies (if the child is still in them) and wipes.

Before starting each parent signs the below permission on the Engage portal.

If a child wets or soils themselves while they are at Longacre it is important that measures are taken to have them changed (and if necessary cleaned) as quickly as possible. Our Pre-Prep staff are experienced and trained at carrying out this task if you wish them to do so or, if preferred, the school can contact you or your emergency contact who will be asked to attend without delay.

Please fill out the permission slip on the Engage portal stating your preference.