

Southgate School Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

- At Southgate School, staff working with children or young people who have special needs will realise that the issue of intimate care is a difficult one; they will be respectful of young people's needs and requirements at all times. We recognise that, in this area, their wishes and choices must be fully respected and adhered to. Often it will not be within the role of a school to cause a child or young person any upset or distress in this area even in their own interests. Only after the elimination of all alternatives explored in partnership with parents and relevant health professionals, and the establishment that there will be no long term ill-effect, would school agree to protect a pupil's health by undertaking intimate care against their wishes.
- 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 bathing. It also includes high levels of supervision of young people involved in intimate self-care.
- Southgate School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of young people will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. Southgate School recognises that there is a need to treat all young people with respect, consideration and dignity at all times.
- All pupils will access developmentally appropriate curriculum around PSHCSRE, including personal safety, relationship education and personal care routines.
- All staff have a duty of care to all young people, and therefore may be asked to help with intimate care.

Best Practice

- Young people's dignity will be a main priority and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided. All staff are aware of confidentiality procedures and sensitive information will only be shared with those who need to know.
- Staff regularly involved in intimate care will be trained to do so, including Safeguarding. Health and safety training in moving and handling or using specific equipment will be provided where necessary. This may be provided by external agencies but is often 'cascaded' within the staff team.
- Staff will be trained to be fully aware of best practise regarding infection control, including the need to wear disposable gloves and aprons, disposable sheets on beds and to clean equipment after each use.
- Staff at Southgate School will work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to young people wherever possible. For young people who need regular intimate care (monthly or more frequent), an Intimate Care Plan will be written with input from parents, staff and other agencies if appropriate e.g. physiotherapists or school nurses.
- If a child has had an 'accident' or needs one-off help with intimate care, best practice will be followed by 2 members of staff and parents will be promptly informed.
- In Foundation Stage, Key stage 1 & 2, intimate care may be appropriately delivered by cross gender support (where all parties feel comfortable with that arrangement). In Key Stage 3 & 4 (or at the onset of puberty if earlier) intimate care will only be delivered by same gender members of staff. If instances of a genuine emergency arise, cross gender care may only be delivered by 2 members of staff. **Young people will have staff known to them to support their care where ever possible.**

- It is not always practical or necessary for 2 members of staff to assist with intimate care and this does not always take account of the young person's privacy. This will be discussed and agreed by all parties within an Intimate Care Plan and precautions taken to ensure that staff are open and clear about the timings of, and reasons for, the care. Time away from witness will be minimised.
- Staff will develop their knowledge and practice, in relation to the needs of individual young people, taking into account developmental and personal changes such as medical issues and the onset of puberty and menstruation.
- Young people will be encouraged to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Each young person will be supported to do as much for themselves as they can.
- There is careful communication with each young person, using their preferred method of communication, to understand their needs and preferences. Where there is appropriate developmental understanding, consent should be sought before starting in intimate procedure.
- The religious views and cultural values of families should be taken into account. Particularly as this may affect certain practices or determine the gender of carers.

Child Protection

- The school Safeguarding Policy and Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures will be accessible to staff and adhered to.
- From a safeguarding perspective, it is acknowledged that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it will involve staff touching private parts of a young person's body with cleaning materials. It is unrealistic to expect to eliminate these risks completely, but in this school best practice will be promoted and all adults will be encouraged to remain vigilant at all times.
- If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a young person's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. he/she will immediately report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and complete a clear record of the concern on CPOMS or on a 'Cause for Concern' sheet. This will then be dealt with following the Safeguarding Policy.
- If a young person 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. The young person's needs and wishes will always be given priority and rotas will be altered accordingly.
- If a young person makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- Any adult who has concerns about a member of staff, regarding improper practise, will report this to the Headteacher (or to the chair of governors if the concern is about the Headteacher).

Other areas to consider

- Massage is now commonly used with children with complex needs in order to develop sensory awareness, tolerance to touch and as a means of relaxation. It is recommended that massage by school staff should be limited to parts of the body such as hands, feet and face. Parental permission must be gained in principle and parents must be informed and offered an 'opt-out' for each event.
- Some children may require assistance with invasive or non-invasive medical procedures, such as rectal medication. This will be outlined within a Health Care Plan and only carried out by appropriately trained staff.
- If an examination of a young person is required for emergency First Aid it is advisable to have another adult present.

- Children who have physiotherapy whilst at school should have this carried out by a trained physiotherapist. If a member of school staff needs to implement part of a physiotherapy regime with a young person, this should only be done after appropriate demonstration and documented guidance from a physiotherapist.

April 2011 V.A.Tipling

Reviewed 2014 N Rogers

Amended and reviewed 2017 Ruth Perfitt